



Discover Boone County Meeting Minutes

February 17, 2026

Present:

Tim Beyer
Amanda Cecil
Justin Hage
Wendy McMann
Dustin Plunkett
Courtenay Smock
Kevin VanHorn
Doug Weisheit
Allyson Gutwein (CEO)
Katie Sheets – Board Attorney

Not Present:

Matt Gentry
Vacant Lebanon appointment

Pursuant to Ind. Code § 5-14-15-1 *et seq.*, Discover Boone County discloses the name of each appointed officer serving on the board, along with the appointing authority and board term of each appointed officer:

1. Tim Beyer – Boone County Commissioners appointee – Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2026
2. Kevin VanHorn – Boone County Council appointee – Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2026
3. Courtenay Smock – Whitestown appointee – Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2027
4. Matt Gentry – Lebanon appointee – Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2027
5. Dustin Plunkett- County Council appointee- Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2026

The following individuals also serve on the Discover Boone County board, along with the appointing authority and board term of each board member:

6. Amanda Cecil- Zionsville appointee- Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2027
7. Justin Hage – Zionsville appointee – Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2027
8. Wendy McMann- Boone County Commissioners appointee- Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2027
9. Doug Weisheit- Whitestown appointee- Jan 1, 2026, to Dec 31, 2027

Note: One vacant spot on the Board as of February 17, 2026

Opening of the Meeting:

The Discover Boone County (DBC) Board of Directors met on February 17, 2026, in the Discover Boone County building. The meeting was called to order by President Amanda Cecil at 4:30 p.m.

Confirmation of New Board Member:

County Council appointee Dustin Plunkett was introduced to the board.

Social Media Updates:

Courtney Cook was introduced to the board as our new social media content creator. She gave a presentation of the reports she will be providing to give updates on social media engagement. There was additional discussion about connecting with the different youth groups about sharing ideas and helping to gather content.

In the Matter of Public Comment:

No public comments.

In the Matter of Consent Agenda – Director’s Report, Treasurer’s Report, and December 2025 Meeting Minutes:

Doug Weisheit made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Motion was seconded by Wendy McMann. The motion carried 8-0.

In the Matter of Old Business:

CEO Report: Allyson Gutwein reported strong January and year-end lodging data from IDDC. Boone County ranked 4th in the state for lodging growth, up from 37th in 2022 and 21st in 2023. Overall lodging numbers increased across the board, with 2025 ending at 71% occupancy, highlighting continued demand and the need for additional lodging availability for larger groups.

Much of the growth is attributed to activity related to the LEAP District. It was noted that stays longer than 30 days are not subject to the Innkeeper's Tax, which can impact reporting figures. While the average daily rate has decreased slightly due to long-term stays, Boone County remains above the state average for overall growth, with continued growth anticipated into 2026.

Amanda Cecil proposed holding a strategic planning session with the Board in April or May 2026 to develop a 3-5 year strategic growth plan. The session will be led by a facilitator.

Treasurer Report: Wendy McMann reported that she is still trying to obtain the Innkeeper's Tax report. She also reported that 2025 ended under budget. Amanda commended Wendy and Doug for their efforts in managing and monitoring the budget.

Committee Lists: Amanda Cecil presented a proposed committee list for review.

Finance Committee Report: Doug Weisheit discussed a request involving the Boone County Tourism Commission, Discover Boone County's sister organization (as the Commission will not meet again until April) the committee recommended that this board approve a \$250,000 draw from the 2027 funds collected in 2026 to fulfill the Commission's request in the amount of \$250,000. Doug Weisheit made a

motion to request that the Tourism Commission draw \$250,000 in April for the customs request. Tim Beyer seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0.

Doug Weisheit made a motion that at that meeting they request to begin doing monthly draws, to be put in a dedicated account for the Tourism Council, so that Discover Boone County can oversee the money and gain interest income. Wendy McMann seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0.

Doug Weisheit reported a request was received from the Boone County Head Start to rent a portion of the upstairs space in the Discover Boone County building. After review, the leadership group determined it would not be a good fit for Discover Boone County. The decision was based on the organization not being tourism-related and their mission not aligning with Discover Boone County's mission or the intended use of the building. It was also noted that the request was for low or no rent. The Board had previously agreed that any future tenants in the building should fall within the organization's mission and ideally serve as a partner aligned with tourism efforts. Doug made a motion to deny the request. Dustin Plunkett seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0.

Doug Weisheit reported that there was \$250,000 in the budget for special projects, with \$150,000 for America 250 related projects. It was recommended that of that \$150,000, \$50,000 would be spent to market the projects that receive funds. The Community Engagement Committee will be responsible for review of the fund requests. Doug Weisheit made a motion to use the funds as presented. Justin Hage seconded the motion. The motion carried 8-0.

Attorney Update and Comments: Katie Sheets, Board Attorney, updated the board on the status of the Innkeeper's Tax. The General Assembly permitted raising the Innkeeper's Tax from 5% to 8%, contingent on county council ordinance. The ordinance was adopted mid-September, so the statute became effective October 1. Certified letters were sent to hotels in September. She received no calls in response to the letters. In November, she learned that hotels were not collecting the extra 3%.

When the innkeepers called with questions, they were told that the collection of this increase did not become effective until January 1, 2026. A reminder letter was sent in January 2026 by Discover Boone County to all of the properties.

The reports submitted to Discover Boone County stopped listing hotel names in November due to taxpayer confidentiality concerns, though statute may have an exception for innkeeper's tax. Several hotels did not begin collecting as expected starting in October nor in January. It was estimated that the non-collection of this increase resulted in lost revenue of approximately \$200,000 (Oct-Dec) plus approximately \$50,000 (Jan).

Discover Boone County reached out to all innkeepers to confirm the date they started to collect the 8%.

Allyson Gutwein is requesting an explanation and accountability for the loss of revenue.

A meeting will be set with the county council and commissioners, auditor, treasurer, and Discover Boone County board members (Wendy McMann, Dustin Plunkett, Kevin VanHorn, Tim Beyer, Katie Sheets, and Allyson Gutwein). The Tourism Council will discuss the liability for the lost revenue.

In the Matter of New Business:

Board Meeting Scheduling: The March board meeting will be moved to March 19, 2026, due to the Indiana Tourism Association conference. April 21, 2026, the Tourism Council will meet at 3:45pm. The Discover Boone County board meeting will be at 4pm. The July board meeting date change has not been decided yet.

Board members are asked to vote on a date for the upcoming strategic planning session.

New Hotel Discussion: There is a new proposal for a full-service hotel in Whitestown. The Planning Commission will review in March.

Honoring Boone County, IN Revolutionary War Patriots Update: Two of the six wreath-laying ceremonies have been completed with great success. The final presentation was approved to be on the Boone County Courthouse lawn on June 24, 2026. Activities are being planned to make this a larger celebration.

Wendy McMann made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Justin Hage. The motion carried 8-0. With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Leigh Ann Akard.

Revised 3/19/26 to update the April 21, 2026, board meeting time to 4:30pm and to add term information for all board members.