

2025 Spring Business Meeting AGENDA

In Person Only at Riviera Maya

Sunday, May 11th at 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Please double check final agenda for any changes to the timing



Agenda for Business Meeting, September 26, 2024

- I. Call to order (Todd Wessell)
- II. Welcome and President's Report (Todd Wessell)
- III. [Approval of Fall 2024 Business Meeting Minutes](#) (Todd Wessell)
- IV. [Secretary's Report](#) (Wendy Pramik)
- V. [Treasurer's Report](#) (Damaine Vonada)
 - September 2024 - April 2025 Treasurer's Report
- VI. Active VP Report (Wendy Pramik)
- VII. Associate VP Report (Rob Gard)
- VIII. Committee Reports
 - a. Sites - (Mary Bergin)
 - b. GEMmy Awards - (Todd Wessell)
 - c. Clips Contest (Jamie Rhein)
- IX. Other business/announcements
- X. Adjourn

2024 Fall Business meeting Minutes

Minutes by Josh Duke

Call to order (Todd Wessell) 1:20 CST (Branson time)

Welcome and President's Report (Todd Wessell)

MTJA is having a good year. Finances are in good shape. Have conference sites in waiting. Website advancing for users to see our work.

New members:

Katie Blake - Missouri Tourism

Makenzie Wolters, Visit KC

Ritz Dasgupta, Visit KCK

2025 Spring Conference Announcement

Megan Weissner from ALG Vacations provided a presentation about them and the host destination. (Zoom recording)

Riviera Maya, Mexico, May 10-14, 2025, at Secrets Moxche Playa Del Carmen

There may be pre- and post-conference extensions for an extra fee on your own.

There will be extra excursions offered as part of the conference at no additional fee (part of the conference)

Registration fees

\$150 - Actives

\$200 - Associates

\$250 - Guests

Estimated \$399 airfare non-stop from the three gateways (Chicago, St. Louis & Cleveland)

Supplement lodging fee hasn't been determined yet for actives

There is shopping and other things that participants can do on their own within a cab ride.

Secretary's Report (Wendy Pramik)

Highlights:

89 total members 46 active and 43 associates

3 board positions will be open in spring

Treasurer's Report (Damaine Vonada)

Highlights: balance on June 1 \$32,709.70; balance on Aug. 31 \$30,173.58

Suzanne Corbett makes motion

Barb Ostmann seconded

Motion passes unanimously

Active VP Report (Wendy Pramik)

Highlights: Wendy has been working on speakers for this and future conferences. She has made good progress and is open to suggestions from other members.

Jamie: We may want to create a document for members to add to the speaker list.

Talked about doing roundtables or even having members speak.

Associate VP Report (Rob Gard) - Rob wasn't in attendance, so no report.

Committee Reports

Sites - (Lisa Waterman Gray & Mary Bergin)

Been in contact with Appleton, WI, North Shore, LA, Traverse City, MI, Cincy, Springfield, IL, MSC Cruises and others.

Question about number of conferences - still doing two

GEMmy Awards - new form is now available (Todd Wessell)

Shining a light on travel gems that might fly under the radar. New forms are available to be filled out and have two others back you up. Question if the nominees can be from anywhere, and everyone believes that is the case.

MTJA Membership Renewal - (Wendy Pramik)

Renewals open on October 1, 2024, and are due by November 15, 2024. Hope to have new directories out by the first of the year.

Website (Wendy Pramik)

Website revamp is in the works. Working with Neapolitan Labs, adding more photos, member profiles with a priority of clips to show potential host destinations and associate members and prospective members what the actives can do for them. Changes include large engaging hero images on the homepage that rotate, display our social media channels, tabs for a member section, clips area, professional development section, accolades, award winners, milestones, etc.

Elizabeth Hay suggested that MTJA creates a LinkedIN account

Clips Contest (Jamie Rhein)

Doing it twice a year.

To increase participation, they are drawing a winner each month from those who have submitted clips to receive \$25. Anything you get published counts once. If it is a conference site, you get two entries if you attended the conference. Once you submit a form it goes into a spreadsheet and then Jamie goes in and finds articles that show a range of what is being produced to put on the website. Added what type of article it is to the form.

Jamie then drew winners for the past 8 months during the meeting -128 entries - The group decided you can win no more than twice per drawing

Mary Bergin - twice

Jackie Sheckler Finch

Randy Mink - twice

Katherine Rodeghier

Carla Waldemar

Amy Lynch

Adjourn

Barb Ostmann motioned

Lisa Waterman Gray seconded

Secretary's Report

Spring Business Meeting May 11, 2025

Prepared by Jody Halsted, April 25, 2025

Current Member Counts

71 total members

37 active members

34 associate members- includes state tourism (9), associates, 22, and alternates (3)

Member counts in 2024

87 total members

45 active members

42 associate members - includes state tourism (9), associates (28), and alternative associates (5)

MTJA Board Actions since Fall Business Meeting

The Board has been strongly focused on conference sites in the past few months. Our Sites Committee has been working continuously to arrange interesting, article worthy locations for future conferences.

The Fall Business Meeting was held in Branson, MO on September 25, 2024

October's board meeting was highly focused on membership renewals and future sites.

In November the board reviewed renewals and a letter of interest for a future conference site. Ideas for additional income generation for the association were also discussed.

In December the board accepted the proposed operating budget for 2025. The membership renewals committee also proposed a more streamlined approach to renewals for those who work in multiple categories and don't meet one single requirement.

January was highly focused on Spring Conference and future sites.

A membership drive was discussed but the board didn't feel that there was enough time to run it pre-conference.

A new GEMmy nomination was approved for the North Dakota Heritage Center.
A new member invitation email was drafted and each board member was given a list of recruits to contact to gauge interest and hopefully increase membership.
The clips contest winners for Q3 & Q4 were drawn.

In March the board approved a Fall 2026 conference site.

In April the Nominating Committee filled all open Board position nominees and elections opened April 10 (results below).

Our Associates shared that they are looking at the challenge of America 250 and what it means for Midwest locations (many of which were not a state 250 years ago). If you have ideas, share them with any associate.

2025 Elections

3 Board positions were up for election this year

Active Director - Cindy Ladage elected to a 3 year term ending in 2028

Secretary - Jenn Gjerde elected to a 3 year term ending in 2028

Associate Director - Gabriella Blauert elected to a 3 year term ending in 2028

Midwest Travel Journalists Association Treasurer's Report
2025 Spring Conference Business Meeting
May 2025

Period Covered: Sept. 1, 2024 – Apr. 30, 2025 (eight months)
Per the Attached Income & Expense Report

May 1, 2025

RE: MTJA Checking Account, Sept. 2024 – Apr. 2025

The checking account balance on Sept. 1 per Chase Bank's Sept. 2024 statement was \$30,173.58.

The checking account balance on Apr. 30 per Chase Bank's Apr. 2025 statement was \$41,782.32.

Therefore, during the last eight months, the checking account had a net increase of \$11,608.74.

RE: MTJA Income and Expenses, Sept. 2024 – Apr. 2024

Income totaled \$22,333.90.

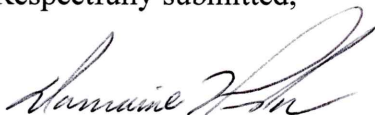
- The primary income sources were Membership Dues; 2025 Spring Conference Registration fees collected on behalf of the DMO (ALG Vacations); Directory Ads; the Tourism Office of Spain; a 2024 Spring Conference Remittance to MTJA from the DMO (Bismarck-Mandan) per the RFP; a Mark Twain Contest Sponsorship from Door County; and 2024 Fall Conference Registration fees collected for the DMO (Branson) and retained by MTJA per the RFP.
- Secondary income sources were Bank Interest Earned on MTJA's Chase Certificates of Deposit; Membership Application fees; and Late Fees.

Expenses totaled \$18,513.55.

- Primary expenses were E & B Management's administrative services fees; payments associated with the Clips Contest and Mark Twain Awards; MTJA's Web site revamp and assorted Web-based subscriptions and services including SiteLock, Jotform, Authorize.net, and Paymentech; 2024 Fall Conference Registration Fees paid to the DMO (Branson) per the RFP; approximately half of the 2025 Spring Conference Registration fees paid to the DMO (ALG Vacations) per the RFP and the Board's okay at its April meeting; Professional Development; printing and mailing the Directory; and Corporate Insurance.
- Secondary expenses were for the Board Dinner at the 2024 Fall Conference; Shipping and Postage; miscellaneous Conference expenditures; and the Wisconsin Annual Report Filing Fee.

Therefore, during the last eight months, MTJA had a positive cash flow of \$3820.35.

Respectfully submitted,



Damaine Vonada, Treasurer
 Midwest Travel Journalists Association, Inc.

8:03 AM

05/02/25

Cash Basis

Midwest Travel Journalists Association, Treasurer
Income & Expenses, Sept. 1, 2024 - Apr. 30, 2025
 2025 Spring Conference, May 2025

	Sep '24 - Apr 25
Income	
4010 Active Memberships	4,625.00
4020 Associate Memberships	6,970.00
4030 Alternate Assoc.Membership	525.00
4040 Late Fees	85.00
4050 Membership Applica. Fees	100.00
5010 Mark Twain Contest Sponsor	1,000.00
5021A Spring Conf. Reg.for DMO	
5021A-1 Actives Spring for DMO	1,950.00
5021A-2 Assoc. Spring for DMO	1,000.00
5021A-3; Guest Spring for DMO	500.00
5021A-4;Prof. Dev. Presenter	0.00
Total 5021A Spring Conf. Reg.for D...	3,450.00
5021B SpringConf.Reg.Remittance	1,312.50
5022A Fall Conf. Reg.for DMO	900.00
5023 Tourism Office of Spain	1,500.00
6010 Directory Ads	1,550.00
7010 Bank Interest Earned	316.40
Total Income	22,333.90
Gross Profit	22,333.90
Expense	
1000 Web	
1001 Website Development	400.00
1002 Site Lock	400.00
1003 Jotform Usage per E&B	90.00
1005 Constantcontact.com	260.04
1006 Website Misc.	800.00
1007 Authorize.net Fees	80.00
1008 Paymentech Fees	735.99
1009 ZOOM Account	170.69
Total 1000 Web	2,936.72
2000 Conferences & Prof. Devel.	
2001A SpringConf.Reg.FeestoDMO	1,260.00
2001B Fall Conf.Reg.FeestoDMO	2,695.00
2001C Conf. Expenses Misc.	105.24
2002 Prof. Development	1,138.12
2004 Board Dinners	602.14
Total 2000 Conferences & Prof. Dev...	5,800.50
5000 Government Obligations	25.00
8000 Administrative	
8001 Admin. & Profess. Services	4,500.00
8003 Corporate Insurance	800.00
8006 Shipping & Postage	361.05
8007 Directory	
Press Cards,Sent with Directory	55.29

8:03 AM
05/02/25
Cash Basis

Midwest Travel Journalists Association, Treasurer
Income & Expenses, Sept. 1, 2024 - Apr. 30, 2025
2025 Spring Conference, May 2025

	Sep '24 - Apr 25
8007 Directory - Other	894.35
Total 8007 Directory	949.64
Total 8000 Administrative	6,610.69
9000 Awards	
9002 Clips Contest	400.00
9003 MT Writing Contest Awards	2,175.00
9004 MT Writing Contest Judge	500.00
9005 MT Writing Contest Misc	65.64
Total 9000 Awards	3,140.64
Total Expense	18,513.55
Net Income	3,820.35