

Economic Development & Tourism

March 11, 2021

Present: Chair Ron Luethe, Nodji VanWychen, Wallace Habegger

Cedric Schnitzler

Advisory Members: Heidi Prestwood, Tina Thompson, Jarrod Roll, Roxie Anderson

Citizen Members: Terry Green, Tucker Gretabeck

Others: Tina Osterberg, Adrian Lockington, Richard Folkedahl

Approved Absent- Brett Larkin, Brad Hanson,

Chris Hanson, Fort McCoy

The meeting was called to order in the Monroe County Board Assembly Room at 9:04 a.m. by Chair Ron Luethe

Introductions

Minutes Approval- Motion by Nodji VanWychen second by Wallace Habegger to approve February 11, 2021 meeting minutes. Carried 3-0

5 Minute Reports-

Monroe County land Use Planner- Roxie Anderson-

- EMS Monitor System Update- 5 Stations under preparations to install. Site location and measurement and security and signage starting Monday/equipment list.
- Grant Buy-out properties and demolition

7 Rivers- Chris Hardie-

- Discussion on Biden Administration, small business funding based on income rather than profit. New rules on the paycheck protection plan released. More details will be released in the upcoming weeks.
- Discussion on Child Care, major challenge since the pandemic. Believes there could be a crisis. Programs in the new budget proposal.
- Business retention – how to standardize across the region- tourism survey Department of Tourism

Fort McCoy- Chris Hanson

- Reviewed 2021, continuing training- #'s were cut due to pandemic, were able to train over 65,000 soldiers in 2020.
- Vaccinations provided to soldiers and staff working with CDC.
- Wrapping up winter training moving into spring/summer training. Winter Rec ski hill will be closing soon, campground was successful last year, will hope for another successful year this season.

Sparta Chamber- Heidi Prestwood-

- Updates on recent events- March and April will be focused on summer planning.
- Bike Expo will be in May for opening day for trails.
- Concert series and doubling pianos. Music in Mueller square- new this year- General Guthrie, Martin Trucking and Mathews Bow, discussed employment – collaborative workforce program for short term staff, military spouses- creating resources to pool work together.
- Comments on Fall Fest & goals.

Hidden Valleys- Rob Wilson-

- Magazine Update: Tuesday was final proof and was approved. La Crosse Graphics has started the printing process. Will have guides within two weeks. Tradeshow discussion, still uncertain to which ones will be happening.

Tomah Chamber- Tina Thompson-

- Updates on downtown Thursday nights starting July 1st.
- Tractor Pull and fair still moving forward.
- Working with Fire Department- 150 year anniversary August 28th will have a fire truck parade, trucks attending from all over the state. Demonstrations and rec park will open, tour displays,
- Music – September 18 rotary club rally for the record- ATV parade trying to break record of 1800 to participate- activities and entertainment.
- Nasa- phase 3 of all ability park in Tomah- playground equipment will be installed in Veterans Park, ground breaking event in April to kick off summer with squirrel event-will have raffles food etc.
- Free medical care discussion- internet interference- get more details via email*

Local History Room- Jarrod Roll-

- Updates with the capacity limits and moving forward with the current reservation process.
- Weekends are still great for visitors, For the warmer months looking to hold exhibits outside along the trail side program history along the trails— games, promotes the history of community and bike trail.
- Dairy Breakfast- moving forward with plans to hold event
- Annual report was sent about the Wegner Grotto. Increase visitation for 2020 and preservation upkeeps. Art outdoor in August on the Grotto Grounds will be held.
- Monroe County Craft show of the Historical Society- this Saturday in Tomah at Cranberry County Lodge and Best Western Hotel

ITBEC- International Trade, Business and Economic Development Council- Nodji VanWycken-

- No updates since last meeting, as they meet every other month. Next meeting will be in April

Financials/Invoices- Tina Osterberg-

- February- \$4485.00 for the Bike Repair Stations will be paid when they arrive/invoice comes in. Other items, Mileage for Rob Wilson from Hidden Valleys, Dues for WEDA \$325.00 conference and \$350.00 membership. Marketing WIX website platform \$264. This will be the final renewal for this as we move forward with WebTeam/merge.

County Administrators Report- Tina Osterberg-

- County Board meeting last night 5/24/24 option for new Rolling Hills Nursing home-finalizing design and construction plan. City of Sparta did approve the new zoning for that site. Bids go out in April due by mid-May approve at May 20 County Board Meeting with a ground breaking ceremony before
- American Rescue Plan by President Biden. Allocations 9 Million to Monroe County. At this time not sure townships/villages allocation amounts. Discussion of holding a meeting that will bring everyone to the same table. Broadband discussion that can be done together to bring back the economy.
- Attended the March 2-3 Legislative Exchange Conference- State Budget. Still in the early stages but provided good information, promising funding to help county and climate change task force.
- Redistricting census, deadlines have been pushed back. Should receive info by September 30- this means it will not be complete in time for elections. Waiting on info from state.

Website merge review- discussion/action-

- Comments/Discussion on pages show. Page should be LIVE soon.

Jaron McCallum Wisconsin Public Service Commission on Broadband Presentation-

Ron Luethe makes introductions-Overview, Jaron McCallum is the State Broadband Director

Jaron provides presentation that gives insight to what they do, grant programs, FCC speed regulations. Comments on the internet connection technologies- fiber, the home, cable, telephone line service, fixed wireless, mobile wireless, satellite

Expansion grants, broadband forward, telecommuter forward, broadband apps and planning tools internet discount finder, print your own coverage map and covid-19 response pandemic response special providers/offering public WIFI locations/phone help line

Infrastructure grants used from cares funding

Comments on the Broadband expansion grant program- who may apply

Gives priority to applications that include any of the seven factors listed in the statute

24 million in grant funding avail for 2021 – grant window opening sept 1st2020 due December 1st 2020

124 applications received requesting over 62million dollars. Awards given in March 2021

<https://psc.wi.gov/pages/programs/broadband/grants.aspx>

Jaron has heard of GEO Partners and is a 3rd party entity. Grants open up timing and funding levels are TBD based on budget proposal. Will be similar time frame from previous year. Governor Ever's budget proposal sign in grant fund \$150 million

How to find partners- recommendations- he could search and assist with connections and intro's
Can send list of options-

<http://dpi.wi.gov/broadband/speed-test>

Bike Repair Stations- Update-

- Ron has been working with the DNR- for the site locations. Cost estimates about 3x4x4 concrete \$350.00 cost and installation.

Next month agenda items-

- Greg Evans- publication options
- Broadband Discussion and GEO Partners
- Wisconsin County Association booth in La Crosse
- Bike Repair Station Update

Next meeting date April 15th 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in the Monroe County Board Assembly room
Motion to adjourn by Nodji VanWychen second by Wallace Habhegger carried 3-0 10:54a.m.

Recorded By: Adrian Lockington
Administrative Office Specialist