

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE  
MONTHLY MEETING – 8-15-19 – County Board Room - Sparta**

**PRESENT:**

**Committee Board Members (CB):** Nodji Van Wychen; Dean Peterson

**Citizen Members (CM):** Kevin Ravenscroft – Timberwood Bank

**Advisory Members (AM):** Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy; John Hendricks – Sparta Chamber of Commerce;  
Tina Osterberg – County Administrator

**Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator:** Steve Peterson

**Absent:** Mark Halverson (CB); Jarrod Roll – Local History Room (AM); Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce (AM)

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:07am by Chair Nodji Van Wychen. Roll call was taken.

**Next Month's Meeting** – Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup> – 9:00am – Tomah. S. Peterson will look at options for meeting locations. He will contact Eric Prise at Tomah Health and see if we could possibly meet at the new hospital or will coordinate a location with Tina Thompson at the Tomah Chamber.

**Minutes** – Motion by D. Peterson to approve the minutes. Second by K. Ravenscroft. Motion carried.

**Financial/Invoices** – S. Peterson reported there were no invoices to approve. He mentioned that the approved \$1,000 payment to Map-N-Tour from last month's meeting will be paid on 8/16.

**EDCT Committee 2020 Plans** – The Committee discussed in depth the direction to go for the 2020 budget cycle. It was unanimous that the Committee re-submit the County Economic Development Coordinator contract into next year's budget. Initially the contract was not going to be renewed if a County E.D. Corporation could be formed in 2019. That will not happen, and the Committee wants the Coordinator's position put back into the proposed budget. N. Van Wychen stated that not only should this contract be continued, but an increase should be made since S. Peterson has not seen an increase ever during his 6+ years of contracted work. D. Peterson supported Van Wychen and said an increase should be made to reflect the many years that Peterson didn't even get an inflation adjustment like other County employees have gotten over the years. The Committee also recognized that expenses continue to increase each year for Peterson and the contract should be increased to offset those increased costs that he incurs. There was discussion of increasing the contract from \$80,000 to \$90,000 to offset the years of no increases. The Committee is also going to look at any other line item budget dollars that could be extracted and used to aid in the \$10,000 increase. They felt that it would show the County Finance committee that the EDCT Committee was willing to move money inside their budget to aid in the increase. T. Osterberg added input on how the Committee should move forward with this budget request. Motion by D. Peterson to recommend the E.D. Coordinator contract be included in the 2020 budget plans at \$90,000. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Van Wychen. Approved.

**County Campground Brochure** – S. Peterson presented a proof of a new revised County Campground & Rustic Lodging Guide to the Committee. Peterson said it took a lot of time to get in contact with all the destinations to get their current information for the guide. The old guide was done in the late 1990s and there were some locations that aren't in business anymore, some businesses that have opened and

that many of the amenities needed upgrading. Peterson obtained bids for 2,500 and 5,000 tri-fold full color guides from Evans Printing in Sparta and Minuteman Press in Tomah. It was decided by the Committee to just do 2,500 guides because there may be changes in the future and we can always reprint. It was also recommended that "2020" be placed on the guide as a reference point of the year it was done. Peterson said that for 2,500 guides, Evans Printing's bid was \$750 and Minuteman Press's bid was \$715.22. Motion by D. Peterson to accept Minuteman Press's bid since it was the lowest. 2<sup>nd</sup> by N. Van Wychen. Approved. Peterson said he would contact both bidders and the guides would be printed and distributed right away.

**GO MONROE COUNTY Activities Guide RFP** – the Committee was presented a copy of a past RFP from 2014 for the Go Monroe County Activities Guide. J. Hendricks said that the initial outline was fine but there needed to be more specific requirements given to the printer for a future guide. He also stressed that getting the new guides by January 1<sup>st</sup> is needed because of the trade shows he attends before the normal February release. Hendricks also was concerned with the late date of this process, that we probably will need to stay with Evans Printing for another year, if they want to do it again, because it's too late to get another company to take this on. T. Townsell felt that there are many print companies nationwide we could tap into in the future as with today's technology they don't have to be physically here. S. Peterson reiterated that this RFP is very different from a normal print one because we are having the bidder do everything from selling the ads, doing the graphic layout and printing the guide. Most of the time you locally get the ads sold, hire a graphic person to do the layout and then RFP for the printing of the magazine. The Committee appointed S. Peterson and J. Hendricks to review the RFP and add the missing requirements and guidelines we need in the future. Peterson suggested that T. Thompson be included too with their experience doing their own tourism guide. The subcommittee will address it and Peterson offered to talk to Greg Evans about next year's guide and what we are planning for an RFP. The Committee felt that G. Evans should attend our next month's meeting for an update and to finalize the 2020 agreement. It will be added to the agenda.

**County Administrator's Report** – T. Osterberg reported that the 2020 County Census Committee has been approved and training is taking place. She said that the preliminary equalized values for construction in the County were just released with a 2% increase in construction in 2019 and a 5% increase in equalized value. A slight increase but some neighboring counties saw decreases this year. A resolution for buying out the Revolving Loan Fund will be on the County Board agenda. This buyout allows the County to recoup that money through special projects from the State. This whole process is due to the federal control and mandates of RLFs being dissolved and moved to the State level. The County can continue to collect the current RLF loan payments and maybe look at continuing a County RLF program under their own rules and regulations. Osterberg hopes the County considers the buyout for many positive reasons for the County in the future.

### **Monroe County Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator Report**

#### **PROSPECTS**

##### **Phase 1 – initial contact**

1. natural vitamin/supplement distribution – Tomah
2. fishing equipment/guide superstore – Monroe County
3. Ice fishing vehicle manufacturer – Monroe County
4. insect organic fertilizer plant – Monroe County

5. Foreign employment service – Monroe County
6. medical software company – Tomah
7. metal coating fabrication – Monroe County
8. meat processing facility – Monroe County

**Phase 2 – narrowing down potential locations and/or site visits**

1. Garbage truck manufacturer – Tomah/Sparta
2. Transfer/distribution center – Tomah
3. Food processing plant – Sparta
4. Hydroponics plant – Cashton
5. Distribution center – Tomah
6. Food flavoring coating plant – Monroe County
7. Organic compost company – Cashton/other rural areas

**Phase 3 – in the finals**

1. Coffee additive company – Cashton
2. Industrial Hemp CBD Oil Processing – Kendall
3. Corn Board processing plant – Sparta/Tomah/Kendall
4. Grocery food outlet pods – Kendall/Wilton/Norwalk
5. Hotel – Tomah
6. Restaurant/Bar & Grill – Tomah
8. Franchise Retail store – Tomah (dealing with broker and name of company is a secret yet)

**IN THE WORKS**

**Prospect Site Visits** – Minnesota company spent 2 days in the County looking at potential sites, meetings with businesses and financial assistance reps. Decision could come later this fall.

**Community Venture Network** – Will be traveling to the Twin Cities on 8/8 to meet with 14 prospects.

**Dollar General** – working with a potential site in Kendall. Involves possibly working out an agreement with the DNR on some of the right of way land adjacent to the bike trail through the community.

**Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail – Kendall Depot** – working with the DNR on final contracts with the Kendall Depot. This includes mass cleaning/repairs on the building and grounds along with the inside of the Depot. The Depot will be open very soon, selling passes, souvenirs and snacks. Other activities are planned each weekend until the end of the season. The Village of Kendall Board approved supplying the liability insurance for the Depot grounds this year and in 2020. The Depot will be open all season in 2020 as well.

**South Pointe Business Park – Sparta** – Sparta Dentistry opened up on July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The AMS Micromedical building is finished and should be opening soon. A new Martin Warehousing building has been started and they expect to move into that facility by mid-summer. Working with 2 other prospects that are looking at potential expansions in Wisconsin, specifically at South Pointe.

**Financial changes in Tomah** – F&M Bank became CCF. Partnership Bank became Bank First. 1<sup>st</sup> Community Credit Union had groundbreaking event. River Bank began construction on their new Union Bank location.

**Sparta building recruitment** – a building will become available and recruiting businesses to look at that venue for future relocation or expansion.

**St. Mary's Ridge Creamery building** – recruiting businesses for this building.

**Cashton Feed Mill/Tobacco Warehouse buildings** – recruiting businesses for these 2 vacant buildings.

**E.D. website/3-D Mapping System** – recently launched new site and upgraded 3-D Mapping software.

**Monroe County Campground Brochure** – updating a new guide for campgrounds & rustic lodging in the County. Includes new layout, updated information and amenities grid. Time consuming because last brochure was printed in the late 90's.

## MEETINGS

- WI Downtown Action Council Board Meeting – Green Bay
- Hidden Valleys Board meeting – Darlington
- Village of Kendall Board Closed Session
- D.N.R. meetings - Kendall
- Impact Seven meeting - Tomah
- WI Rural Partners Executive Board meeting – Madison
- WI Rural Partners Board meeting – Tomah
- 11 – Bio-Sunn conference calls regarding their project in Monroe County
- WEDC Board meeting – Milwaukee
- Construction Contractors on potential development projects in the County

S. Peterson updated the Committee on the latest with the proposed Kendall project and that a formal announcement will be coming within a few short weeks. Peterson also reported that the Village of Kendall Board has reached an agreement with the WI Dept. of Natural Resources on reopening the Kendall Depot as the official headquarters of the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail. Peterson said that his wife Lori will be subleasing the Depot from the Village for the rest of this year and the bike season in 2020. The goal is to have the Depot open by Labor Day weekend and do an aggressive marketing campaign to let bicyclists know the Official Headquarters of the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail is open for business.

Peterson reported on a prospect he met with that is a hiring service for at home moms called Bus Stop Mamas. He hopes to have a pilot program set up with that company for Monroe County in a few weeks.

## REPORTS:

**Hidden Valleys** – S. Peterson reported that progress continues with the new Story Road phone app project and that the HV sales team have been trained on selling that feature along with their magazine ad sales. He said that the HV board voted for a 2-year contract with Story Road and will actively sell accompanying packages with the magazine ad sales throughout their coverage area. Launch of the Story Road app will be by the end of the year.

**SW-ITBEC** – S. Peterson & N. Van Wychen reported that SW-ITBEC held their meeting at Brambleberry Winery in Jackson County. The goal of the group for the rest of the year is to recruit new member Counties and create a new branding campaign as ITBEC is not an easy name to market.

**Local History Room** – No report.

**Fort McCoy** – T. Townsell reported that the final Saturday opening for the Commemorative area at Ft. McCoy is this weekend. The final opening will be on Sept. 3 – 9:00am – 3:00pm. She noted that it has been a success with good traffic this summer. Townsell said that medical and combat training continues at a high level on the base. The Community Appreciation Night will be on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. A change this year due to higher security, convoys of guests will be driven to McCoy's from the gate area. Townsell commented on the reporting of possible contaminated drinking water at Ft. McCoy and that is not true. There is a contaminated area where firefighter training takes place as the chemical used in the water is a contaminant but is contained and monitored constantly with no leakage. She said the drinking water at the base is one of the highest quality water you will find.

**Sparta Chamber of Commerce** – J. Hendricks reported that Business after 5 will be taking place at the Best Western and he urged people to stop in and see all the upgrades the owners have done with the hotel. This Saturday, over 900 bicyclists will be traveling through Sparta as part of the Ride Across Wisconsin event early in the morning. N. Van Wychen commented that the riders will also be stopping in Warrens after they leave Sparta. Hendricks reminded the Committee about the upcoming Business after 5 in September at South Post at Ft. McCoy. The Chamber is in its 4<sup>th</sup> week of a 9-week Entrepreneur Class which is going well. Hendricks also commented on a grant that has been received for a carpooling service in Sparta involving Enterprise Job Share. He said the progress of the new bicycling murals in the downtown area is going well and receiving many positive comments.

**Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center** – no report.

**7 Rivers Alliance** – S. Peterson reported that the board continues to work on the WISE Plan initiative and has some very positive things in the works for 2020.

**Upcoming Events/Activities around the County** – K. Ravenscroft reminded the Committee that the final Thursday Night Concert in Tomah was this evening. Very large crowds, averaging over 1,200 people each week for the concert series.

**Agenda Items for next month:**

- EDCT Committee 2020 Plans
- Go Monroe County Activities Guide Report & RFP discussion

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by K. Ravenscroft. Meeting adjourned at 10:36am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson