

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
**MONTHLY MEETING – 10-11-18 – Warrens Cranberry Festival Office - Warrens**

**Present:**

**Committee Board Members:** Dean Peterson, Nodji Van Wychen

**Citizen Members:** Dennis Berg, Kevin Kravenscroft

**Advisory Members:** Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy

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

**Absent:** Mary Jo Hill, Mark Halverson, Bernie Arena, John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce, Jarrod Roll, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce, Jim Bialecki

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:11am by Chair Nodji Van Wychen. Roll-call was taken.

**Welcome** - Kevin Kravenscroft from Timberwood Bank was introduced as the newest Citizen Member of the Committee. Kravenscroft replaces Pete Reichardt on the Committee.

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

**Financial/Invoices** – S. Peterson presented invoices to be approved.

- Reimbursement of \$225.00 to S. Peterson for the registration to the WEDA Fall Conference in Green Bay and the \$55 registration for the CEDA Awards Banquet in Madison. S. Peterson paid for the lodging expenses. (To be taken from the Marketing/Promotions line item in the E.D. budget.) Motion by D. Berg. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Peterson. Motion carried.
- Reimbursement of \$45 for the registration to the Governor’s Freight Industry Summit in Madison. (To be taken out of the Marketing/Promotions line item in the E.D. budget) Motion by D. Peterson. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Berg. Motion carried.
- Web site annual hosting fees for November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019 Motion by D. Peterson. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Berg. Motion carried.
  - [www.gomonroecountywi.com](http://www.gomonroecountywi.com) - \$300 (taken from the Marketing/Promotions line item in the E.D. budget)
  - [www.gomonroecounty.com](http://www.gomonroecounty.com) - \$300 (taken from the Contracted Services line item in the tourism budget)
- N. Van Wychen instructed S. Peterson to compile a financial summary for next month’s Committee meeting, breaking down where funding is still available and potential projects that the Committee should be considering.

**Monroe County E.D. Coordinator position** – it was announced that the proposed 2019 County Budget was released and the E.D. Coordinator contract was cut from the budget. The Committee had a lengthy discussion on what to do to get the contract back into the budget. The Final Budget hearing is scheduled for November 7 at 6pm at the Monroe County Board room. Members of the committee were going to contact potential speakers to speak in support of keeping the E.D. Coordinator position and adding it back into the budget. Members were also going to pass the word to supporters to call their County Board Supervisors to voice their support and urge the supervisors to add it back into the budget.

S. Peterson said that he had been contacted by many people who wanted to either write letters of support or speak at the budget hearing. S. Peterson pointed out that with all the economic development positions being added or already in place in neighboring Counties, this is a very bad move by the County to drop their position. He also pointed out that when the contract ends, so does all the work for the past 5 years that has been done with the County, including web sites, marketing tools, prospect recruitment, department connections, E.D. Conference and more.

N. Van Wychen, with the support of committee members, urged everyone to keep communicating and work on support for putting the contract back in the budget at the November 7<sup>th</sup> budget hearing.

**Monroe County Economic Development Conference** – S. Peterson told the committee that he was still moving forward with setting up the 2019 Conference on Feb. 27-28 at Three Bears Resort in Warrens, despite the cutting of his position in the current budget. Topics will include workforce issues, apprenticeships, internships, Inspire, veterans, corrections hiring sources. Others are workplace issues & solutions, featured businesses, tourism topics and marketplace. Many speakers have been secured and more details will be coming over the next few weeks and months.

**Monroe County EDCT Booth – WCA Convention** – we did not have a booth at this year’s convention in La Crosse because spaces were sold out. The County did have exposure at the ITBEC booth at the marketplace event.

**Potential projects** – the committee reviewed the balance of their budget and discussed some possible projects that could be done this year yet. One was doing an updated reprint of the County Parks brochure. It has been many years since it was first printed and had outdated material. N. Van Wychen asked that it be looked at again in detail at next month’s Committee meeting.

**County Administrator’s Report** – no report

#### **Monroe County E.D. Coordinator Report**

##### **PROSPECTS - (updated from last month in bold)**

This past month has been hit hard with flood issues for local businesses. Many meetings and coordinating information outlets across the County.

A lot of activity continues with prospects. Some have held off decisions for the time being, but it doesn’t take long for me to either find or have discussions with a new prospect interested in the County.

**Prospect 1** – continued dialogue about a lodging facility near the hospital/clinic construction in Tomah. Because of those projects, naturally there is quite a bit of interest in that area for lodging, food, professional offices. **Met with developers and just need to finalize another investor and the project will move forward..**

**Prospect 2** – restaurant facility near the hospital/clinic location. Same reasons as the lodging interest. **Business is waiting on the finalization of the lodging facility.**

**Prospect 5** – retail business looking at the north side of Tomah near Wal Mart. **Land is being finalized but name of business is unknown. We expect to find out who it is by the end of the year.**

**Prospect 6** – competed against 27 other locations in the Midwest for this food processing company. They are looking at either expanding or relocating and Monroe County is their only Wisconsin location in the final 3. I’ve been working with this prospect for 3 ½ years. **We are in the final cut and expect much more dialogue in the upcoming weeks now that South Pointe is open for business.**

**Prospect 8** – manufacturing company looking to relocate from Minnesota. Targeted area is Tomah or Sparta in Wisconsin. They are landlocked in the Twin Cities currently and would use their current location as research and development and build a new manufacturing plant elsewhere. **Continued negotiations but torn about leaving the metro area in the Twin Cities.**

**Prospect 9** – Established distribution outlet in the State is looking to expand with a possible location in Tomah because of the Interstate access. **Land options have been looked at and waiting to hear more from them.**

**Prospect 10** – meeting with a development company looking at possibly adding at least 1, if not more assisted living apartment complexes in the County. There is a real interest on their end. **Having follow up meetings and a possible feasibility study being discussed.**

**Prospect 11** – working with a company already located in the County who is looking at expanding with a potential distribution center. **We are a finalist but waiting for the company's decision.**

**Prospect 12** – working on a potential project with the current Dr. Rodamacher chiropractic facility that is for sale outside of Kendall on Highway 71. **Very tough property to move but dialogue is continuing on both sides. Possible site visit in late November.**

**Prospect 13** – working with prospect on setting up a 3 day site visit in mid-August. Looking at options in Sparta, Tomah, Cashton and Norwalk. **Because of the flooding issues, any visits to the County will not occur until later this year.**

**Prospect 14** – came back to the table after dropping us an option. Working on another meeting in the County with them in late August, early September. They are opening plants in Nebraska and Colorado but still feel Wisconsin has a ton of promise. **They are coming back to the area for another round of talks with sites and potential investors.**

**Prospect 15** – California company looking to expand into other regions of the country. Midwest has intrigued them and Monroe County is on their radar for a variety of reasons including transportation values and raw product being close by. **This is a long term negotiations as the company is on hold with any expansion right now.**

**Prospect 16** – Health based company that is intrigued with the hospital/clinic project in Tomah. Initial talks look promising but a long ways to go. **Had very productive talks so far and a County visit is being planned before the end of the year.**

**Prospect 17** Up and coming company that is looking at production & distribution of new product lines they have created. Intrigued with the County and highway system for distribution. Long term project. **Initial talks have been productive but they are being very heavily recruited.**

**Prospect 18 (new)** – Finalizing their patents on their product line which could be a game changer for organic, natural cleaning solutions. **Lots of areas recruiting this company, but we are in the running because of our highway networks for distribution throughout the Midwest.**

**Prospect 19** – a prospect that I had worked heavily with a year ago that didn't go anywhere for internal reasons. They are back looking at the County again and we are their only Wisconsin location they are considering. More discussions and visits are being planning in the upcoming weeks.

**Prospect 20** – health based company that is looking to expand and are intrigued about the new hospital/clinic/wellness campus being built in Tomah. Very early in discussions but they have targeted our area as a prime location for expanding their company/services.

## **IN THE WORKS**

**Flooding issues** – continuing working with WEDC and MRRPC on flood assistance programs. Have met with SBA about their future plans of opening up a temporary office in Monroe County to aid businesses with their rebuilding of their business.

**Cashton Day Care** – They are also looking at the County CDBG Grant and MRRPC is working with them on the paperwork. This is taking a bit of time with getting all the paperwork in line.

**RLF/CDBG Transition** – working with the Dept. of Administration on the process of transitioning all the RLF

& CDBG programs to the State over the next 2 years. Coordinating efforts with MRRPC as well.

**South Pointe Business Park – Sparta** – Ribbon cutting with Lt. Gov. Kleefisch was very well attended Sparta officials, businesses and dignitaries. There is a lot of interest in that park already.

**Tomah Healthcare campus** – continued fast paced construction on the project. Have had talks with Phil Stuart at Tomah Memorial Hospital about the progress and his assistance with some health based companies I’m working with.

**Round-about – Sparta.** Construction is getting close to completion. Businesses have had to cope with traffic issues but when done will be a good highway entrance into Sparta.

**New Bakery – Tomah.** Opened up and getting great reviews and traffic.

**Wine Bar – Tomah** – Just opened and still getting the renovation project finalized. Nice upgrade to an old building and will be a good accent to the new Gen 3 project.

**Connect Community** – villages in the County want to continue the Connect Community program and are working on short and long term strategies for their business districts. All of them have some real changes and challenges ahead.

**Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail** – the trail reopened after the flood damage from Norwalk to Sparta. The rest of the trail is still closed.

**Map-N-Tour interactive mapping upgrade** – added specific links for Sparta, Tomah and Cashton so they can add those links to their web sites to show mapping just for their communities initially. Very well received.

#### **MEETINGS**

- WEDA – CEDA Awards Banquet – The Edgewater Hotel – Century Foods International was a finalist for the Economic Driver Award but lost out to Generac.
- WDAC Board Meeting – Appleton
- WI Rural Partners Board strategic planning session - Tomah
- WEDA Board Meeting – Green Bay
- Apprenticeship/Internship Summit – 7 Rivers Alliance – Tomah
- Flood Assistance meeting – Viroqua
- Governor’s Freight Industry Summit – 10/9
- SW-ITBEC meeting – Warrens
- Foxconn Presentation – 10/15 – Cranberry Country Lodge
- Monroe County Job Initiative Meetings to coordinate the upcoming Workforce Summit on Nov. 1st

#### **REPORTS:**

##### **Ft. McCoy**

- Very high training #s this year. No exact totals yet but very happy with the volume of soldiers training this year.
- Have had some encroachment issues with property owners next the Ft. McCoy base, but things are being worked out.
- 2 more dates for the Commemorative Area to be open. Has been a very big hit this year with visitors.
- There will be 7 more homes constructed in the housing area along with some other buildings on base.
- Hiring more employees over the next month.

**Sparta Chamber of Commerce** – no report

**Tomah Chamber of Commerce** – no report

**7 Rivers Alliance** – S. Peterson informed the Committee about the success of the Workforce Summit on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup> at the Cranberry Country Lodge.

**Hidden Valleys** – S. Peterson has been attending the past few meetings as he’s designed their new web site that has just been launched. He said that Hidden Valleys was suffering through the flood issues because many tourism attractions and businesses were strongly affected by the flood, which has caused delays in getting the new 2019 magazine printed. Many businesses who were annual advertisers in the magazine were struggling because of flood losses. S. Peterson said the magazine may not be out until February because of these issues. N. Van Wychen urged the Committee again to consider individuals that could be the County’s representative to attend their monthly Board meetings.

**SW-ITBEC** – S. Peterson informed the committee that SW-ITBEC had a successful day at their booth at the Wisconsin Counties Association Convention in La Crosse. He also said that December will be their annual review meeting where all grant recipients will give presentations on their projects and the impact the grant had with their event or project.

**Local History room** – no report

**Monroe County Workforce Alliance – Solutions to Workforce Summit – November 1<sup>st</sup> at Best Western in Tomah.** S. Peterson informed the committee about the topics of the summit. He also asked committee members to consider attending as they receive their registration free with the Summit Sponsorship they approved at last month’s meeting.

**Agenda Items for next month:**

- State of the E.D. Coordinator’s position and the future of the Committee
- Solutions to Workforce Summit recap
- Monroe County E.D. Conference
- Possible tourism brochure investment – County Parks
- WACB Fall Tourism Conference recap

**Next Committee meeting** – originally scheduled for Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, but because of the conflict with the WACVB Fall Tourism Conference in Stevens Point, that some committee members will be attending, the monthly meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 15<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am at Citizen’s First Bank in Sparta.

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Berg. Meeting adjourned at 10:46am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson