

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 12-13-18 – Monroe County Local History Room – Sparta**

Present:

Committee Board Members: Dean Peterson, Nodji Van Wychen, Mark Halverson

Citizen Members (CM): Dennis Berg, Kevin Kravenscroft

Advisory Members (AM): John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce, Jarrod Roll, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce,

Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: Mary Jo Hill (CM), Jim Bialecki, (AM), Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy (AM)

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:05am by Chair Nodji Van Wychen. Roll-call was taken.

Minutes – Motion by M. Halverson to approve the minutes. Second by D. Berg. Motion carried.

Financial/Invoices – S. Peterson reported that there were no new invoices to approve.

- There was discussion about the mix-up with the Hidden Valleys account. The 2019 Membership dues of \$2,680.36 was paid but the \$2,805 for the inside back cover ad in the 2019 Hidden Valleys Magazine was not. N. Van Wychen signed the ad contract for the 2019 magazine. She was going to talk to the finance department about the ad line item as it looks like the ad payment was taken out of the budget but the check was never processed. Hidden Valleys is willing to make the necessary adjustments once the mix-up is cleared up. Motion by T. Thompson to purchase the full page inside back cover ad for the County. 2nd by D. Peterson. Motion carried.
- There was discussion about any funding still available in the Tourism Budget and any projects or ad purchases that still should be funded.
 - Motion by D. Peterson to buy a \$500 ad in the 2019 Tomah Chamber of Commerce Guide. 2nd by K. Ravenscroft. Motion carried. T. Thompson abstained.
 - Motion by T. Thompson to set aside \$500 for the creation of a new County Parks Brochure. This would feature the County parks and the Wegner Grotto. 2nd by D. Peterson. Motion carried. J. Roll was appointed the chair of the brochure project and would coordinate the effort with the County Forestry Department.

Monroe County E.D. Coordinator contract – S. Peterson said with the contract funding back in the budget for 2019, he has had discussions with County Administrator Jim Bialecki about the new contract wordage and if there would be any changes? S. Peterson said that for the most part the current contract would be the same in 2019, with the mandate of creating a Monroe County Economic Development Corporation during that calendar year. Many Committee members were concerned that they have not had access to past contracts to read over and questioned it since they are the Economic Development Committee. S. Peterson told the Committee that he'd work on getting them a copy of the contract after he had talked with J. Bialecki.

S. Peterson said that one change in 2019 is that he has to appear in front of the Administrative, Personnel & Finance Committees each month and give an oral report of his work. Many on the EDCT

Committee questioned why he had to give reports to some committees that aren't even involved with economic development. They suggested that maybe members of those other committees should attend the EDCT Committee meeting to get up to date on the economic development work that is being done.

Formation of Monroe County Economic Development Corporation – S. Peterson said he has had preliminary discussions with J. Bialecki about starting the process of the corporation. He said he has received bylaws and the workings of the Juneau County EDC and is getting the same information from the Barron County EDC. J. Bialecki had received the same information from the Polk County EDC. All Committee members will be receiving all the other EDC's information as we move forward.

S. Peterson voiced his concerns about that it's already being interpreted by the Cities of Sparta & Tomah that this corporation is being created solely by the County. Peterson said he has already been told by the two City Administrators that their Councils would never approve funding this Corporation now and in the future if the County is doing it. Peterson said that he had made J. Bialecki aware of this perception based on an e-mail that was sent to the Administrators, inviting them to attend a January 8th Admin & Personnel Committee meeting when the Executive Director of the Polk County EDC would be giving a presentation. Peterson that was the start of the perceptions by both cities.

The County Board Supervisors on the Committee all voiced their feelings that the County does not want anything to do with forming the corporation. N. Van Wychen was going to contact County Board Chair Pete Peterson to get his thoughts on all of this.

Peterson strongly suggested that a task force should be formed with representation from the County, the cities, village and citizens at large on it and that group should create the corporation. Committee members also voiced that they would like to be on that task force as well. The Committee felt they should take the lead on this corporation project, not another County committee.

It was recommended by the entire Committee that N. Van Wychen contact J. Bialecki about moving the Polk County EDC Director's presentation to the regularly scheduled EDCT Committee on January 10th. Other guests involved with this potential task force would also be invited.

Peterson stressed that the County needs to step back and take the political side out of it or this corporation will never get off the ground and survive. The Board members on the Committee all agreed and said they will work on keeping the County at a low level during the process.

Advisory Members Replacement or Recruitment for the Corporation – It was determined by the Committee that there was no need to replace or add any members at this time because of the upcoming formation of the Monroe County Economic Development Corporation. Motion by T. Thompson to not move forward with any changes to the Committee at this time. 2nd by M. Halverson. Motion carried.

Monroe County Economic Development Conference – S. Peterson said sponsorships plans and booth registrations have been sent out. Topics at the Conference will be workforce, leadership, communication, apprenticeships, internships, veterans, Inspire, the WISE Plan, digital marketing,

broadband promotion & use, among others. Attendee registrations will start next week when the new Conference web site is launched. The EDCT Committee will invest in the naming of the Conference again in 2019. S. Peterson expects it to sell out again as the Governor's Conference on Economic Development is in early February in Milwaukee, so he anticipates many will look to this Conference as a closer one to attend.

County Administrator's Report – no report

Monroe County E.D. Coordinator Report - Time of year business recruitment and overall economic development work slows down because of the holidays. Also on vacation in late November.

PROSPECTS (updated from last month in bold) *not in numerical order as some prospects are not listed because nothing new has happened with my work with them since last month's meeting.

Continued activity with prospects. Some are in the next phases of looking at Monroe County as a viable location while others are gathering more information, scheduling site visits and looking for more incentives for their decision making process.

- **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. **Pursuing other parcels of land around Tomah & South Pointe in Sparta. The lodging study that the Monroe County E.D. and cities of Sparta & Tomah partnered in has shown a real potential for additional hotel and lodging opportunities.**
- **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. **Negotiations and incentive information continues to be gathered and analyzed. This is a very complicated recruitment because of the # of locations that continue to be moved around in their priority line-up each week and month. Not expecting any decisions by the company until late in the first quarter of 2019.**
- **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. **Lost the prospect to South Dakota because of a huge incentive package that was offered them that we could not come close to matching.**
- **Prospect 9** – manufacturing company looking seriously at Monroe County for over a year. **Lost the company to North Dakota as they received an incentive package that we could never meet.**
- **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. **More discussions but nothing more than continued fact finding at this point.**
- **Prospect 11** – working with a company already located in the County who is looking at expanding with a potential distribution center. **No further progress at this point. They are looking at all location options and only 1 will be chosen so it fits with their budget limits.**
- **Prospect 13** – Looking at options in Sparta, Tomah, Cashton and Norwalk. **Putting off serious looks at**

the County until the first quarter of 2019. They have multiple sites to choose from across the country. We would just be one of many and the timing will be determined by their budgets and geographic needs.

- **Prospect 14** – manufacturing company that has come back to look at the County again. Looking at creating a state-wide franchise buyer which will take some time. **Having dialogue but many things would have to happen before they choose the County. Not expecting movement on this company until summer of 2019.**
- **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. **Continuing productive talks and a County visit is being planned in early 2019. This company could go other directions with locating but trying to keep them focused at Monroe County.**
- **Prospect 18** – 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 staying in contact with them. We made the first cut, but a long ways to go yet. A long shot but talks continue.**
- **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. **Possible discussions to heat up again in 2019.**
- **Prospect 21** – met with a prospect with a company that creates grocery locker systems to be placed in grocery desert areas. Monroe County could potentially be one of their trial run locations. **Touring their plant in Pewaukee on Dec. 11th. Very interested in doing a prototype in one of our small villages in the County.**
- **Prospect 22 (new)** – working with a company that wants to create a frac sand company near Oakdale. Most of the early permitting work and meetings with the Town of Oakdale and the Village have taken place. **I plan to attend the Zoning Committee meeting on 12/17 to show support for the project that would bring a big financial impact to the County and create another 100 jobs.**

IN THE WORKS

Cashton Day Care – Project moving forward and look for a County RLF request coming very soon.

RLF/CDBG Transition – continuing work 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.

Tomah Healthcare campus – both the Hospital & Clinic projects are progressing nicely. Looking for interest to pick up in the areas around those facilities right after the 1st of the year.

Gen 3 Project - Construction is really moving along and interior construction is now started as they've enclosed the building. On schedule.

Connect Community – renewing the agreement for 2019. Villages in the County want to continue the Connect Community program and are working on short and long term strategies for their business districts. A big part of creating the Monroe County Economic Development Corporation.

Monroe County EDCT Marketing upgrades – looking at revamping the current digital marketing tools with a new web site in 2019 along with creating a comprehensive portal to available land, buildings, programs, etc that are available throughout the County. This will also include the villages becoming more active through the Connect Community program.

MEETINGS

- **Monroe County Board Final Budget Hearing** – spoke to the Board about putting the E.D. Contract back into the 2019 budget, which was successfully done.
- **Jim Bialecki** – work on revising the E.D. Contract for 2019 along with getting the preliminary work started on creating a Monroe County Economic Development Corporation by the end of 2019.
- **Vision One Performance** – Conference call with one of the presenters at the E.D. Conference.
- **Predictive Search** – Conference call with featured speaker at the Monroe County E.D. Conference.
- **7 Rivers Alliance “State of the Region” Luncheon** – an update on the WISE Plan, Rising Stars and workforce approaches in 2019 and beyond.
- **Town of Portland Board** – discuss having a digital presence with a new web site & networking with the E.D. efforts in the County.
- **WI Rural Partners Board Meeting** – preparations in place for the Summit in April 2019 in Rice Lake.
- **WDAC Board Meeting** – Continue working on the Downtown Day at the Capital in Madison on 3/12 talking with legislators and with concerns pertaining to BIDs and other programs.
- **SW-ITBEC meeting** – plans for 2019 and recapping successes of 2018 at our December meeting.
- **SBA Disaster office** – continued contact with them on getting all the information out on flood recovery assistance to our areas businesses and residents.
- **Community Venture Network** – met with 14 business prospects in the Twin Cities about expanding or relocating in Monroe County. The 2 days of meetings were very successful as I have already done follow up discussions with 8 of the companies.

REPORTS:

SW-ITBEC – N. Van Wychen & S. Peterson reported that all grant recipients in 2018 gave presentations on their projects and the impact the grant had with their event or project.

Ft. McCoy – no report

Local History Room – J. Roll welcomed everyone to the Local History Room, as host of the monthly Committee meeting. He said that this year was a record year for attendance drawing over 10,000 people at their events and special programs & displays. Roll said that the new railroad display, in just 3 weeks, has drawn over 1,000 visitors with 46% of them not being from Monroe County. The LHR has done much more with cross promoting with the annual Kriskindlmarkt in downtown Sparta. Roll said that the LHR is working closely with the Deke Slayton Space & Bicycle Museum upstairs in the building on growing the motorcoach bus tours to the facility. He displayed State Institutional Excellence Award the LHR won for the newly created A-Z Display. We watched a TV feature on WXOW Daybreak highlighting the new miniature railroad display showcasing the history of the County.

Sparta Chamber of Commerce – J. Hendricks said the Chamber has been busy with the holiday events in the community, especially the Kriskindlmarkt downtown. The Chamber’s Annual Meeting is in January and the speaker will be Michael Perry, a New York Times best-selling author. Cabin Fever will be taking place again in February, 2019. A premiere party is on January 23rd to showcase the airing of the Around the Corner with John McGivern show.

Tomah Chamber of Commerce – T. Thompson announced that the Chamber will be unveiling soon a new marketing campaign. Efforts are being put forth in making Tomah a snowmobile friendly community. At the Chamber’s Annual Banquet a new branding campaign involving the City and Forward Tomah will be showcased. Thompson pointed out the Chamber, along with the County, Sparta Chamber and others,

hosted a Workforce Summit in November that drew almost 100 people. She introduced her new Chamber Staff member – Shay Jilek. S. Jilek told the group that she has a strong marketing and graphic design background. T. Thompson also announced another new staff member – Kari Mlsna, who has marketing and business background with her previous jobs in the Tomah area. Thompson said the Chamber is working hard on adding more activities taking place downtown in the future and have been working with the City on the future downtown light pole replacements that will include banners, etc. She also reminded the Committee that there's still ad space available in their 2019 Tomah Activities Guide.

7 Rivers Alliance – S. Peterson reported that an update and review on the progress of the WISE Plan is being done and will be presented in 2019.

Hidden Valleys – S. Peterson told the committee that the County will have a new ad in the 2019 Hidden Valleys magazine. He stated it was a very "outside the box" ad but already had gotten some great comments for the concept from the State. Dept. of Tourism.

Upcoming Events/Activities around the County – D. Peterson reminded the Committee that the One Acchord Christmas Show will be on December 17th at the Tomah High School Auditorium.

Agenda Items for next month:

- Suggested that we have a tour of the renovated Courthouse, the home of the County Health Department.
- The length of the agenda will be based on whether the Polk County EDC presentation can be moved to Jan. 10th at the Committee meeting
- Monroe County Economic Development Corporation update
- Monroe County E.D. Conference
- Possible tourism brochure investment – County Parks

Special Recognition – the Committee congratulated Dennis Berg on his retirement from Citizens First Bank in Sparta at the end of the year. He has not decided if he will stay on the Committee or not?

Next Committee meeting – January 10th – 9:00am at the Monroe County Board Room. If that room is not available the Local History Room will host the meeting. A tour of the renovated Courthouse will follow the end of the Committee meeting.

Motion by T. Thompson to adjourn. 2nd by D. Peterson. Meeting adjourned at 10:52am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson