

**Monroe County Economic Development, Commerce & Tourism Committee**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting, January 12, 2017**  
**Tomah City Hall/Steve Peterson's Office**

Present: Committee members: Sharon Folcey, Nodji Van Wychen, Dean Peterson; Citizen members: Mary Jo Hill, Dennis Berg; Advisory members: Bernie Arena, Tim Hyma, Jarrod Roll, Tonya Townsell, Tina Thompson; Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson; Guests: Roger Gorius—City Administrator for Tomah, WI and Alex O'Brien—Account Executive for cgi Communications from Rochester, New York

Notices for the meeting were posted in compliance with the opening meeting laws.

Chair Folcey called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Roll call was taken.

S. Peterson introduced O'Brien to the committee. O'Brien gave an overview of what cgi Communications does. They work with communities and other organizations to do mobile websites. O'Brien shared some of their work via his computer, noting that they complement Google services. They used photos (some aerial) to do the mobile friendly sites. He will be doing a video tour of the county, and some video highlighting health care, economic development, quality of life, and education in 2017. They will have a booth at the Monroe County Economic Development Conference slated for February 22 & 23, 2017.

Motion by Berg to approve the minutes of the December 8, 2016 meeting. Second by Van Wychen.

Motion carried.

Committee members reviewed the invoices and the 2016 and 2017 budgets. Folcey noted that currently there is no county person to assist this committee. Motion by D. Peterson to approve the invoices presented, and add \$100 on the Evans Printing bill in order to secure the back page of the "Go Monroe County Guide". Second by Berg. Motion carried.

Line item transfer: Motion by D. Peterson to transfer \$390.00 from the Tourism-Marketing & Promotion account to the Tourism-Conference/Seminars account. Second by Van Wychen. Motion carried.

EDCT Coordinator's Report:

- Attended the Community Venture Network session on 12/9/16. Met with 9 prospects.
- Toured the chiropractic building near Kendall. Is working on some options.
- Working with cgi Communications on 2017 video project.
- Attended Jackson County Finance Committee meeting 1/11/17 to promote SW-ITBEC, SET and the ED Conference.
- Working with Evans Printing on Go Monroe County Guide.
- Will meet with Challenge Academy officials on possible expansion project.
- Working with 4 prospects on projects in the county.
- Coordinating first Connect Community Task Force meeting later this month.
- SET Forum meeting 2-1-17 at Burnstad's. Will be working with agribusiness, food processing and technology; fabricated metal product manufacturing, primary metal manufacturing and machinery manufacturing; and arts, entertainment, recreation and visitor industries.
- I&E meeting in Camp Douglas on 1-26-17. Drew Nussbaum of the Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism will be speaking.

S. Peterson updated the committee on the 2017 ED conference which will be held at 3 Bears Lodge in Warrens, WI on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. 126 people are registered. 100 are for both days. 26 booths are paid for, and there are seven new sponsors. The Wisconsin Counties Association is actively supporting the conference. The Raht Mobile may be on display. It is an electric assisted enclosed bike that can go up to 70 miles per hour. Committee members should register as "pay by check" not credit card.

#### 5 Minute Reports:

- Roll stated that the Christmas display brought in 1300 people in December. The Local History Room had attendance of 8878 people, up 1000 from 2015.
- Arena handed out one copy of the new 2017 Hidden Valleys guide to each committee person. She mentioned that Monroe County will host the May 17, 2017 annual meeting and 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to be held in Richland Center. Roll questioned if the county can get more points of interest on the center map. Arena will add the Wegner Grotto to the points of interest .
- Townsell noted that this cold weather is "good training weather" for the troops. The new housing is still a work in progress. The post is working to get Wi-Fi access for the troops. There will be an exercise at the post in March.
- S. Peterson stated Lisa Herr (7 Rivers Alliance) will be at the conference but not have a booth.
- Van Wychen said the WATA group will not have their own conference this year. They are having their annual meeting during the Fruit & Vegetable Growers gathering at Kalahari on January 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Folcey noted ITBEC will be a sponsor of the ED conference. She invited others to come to the ITBEC meetings which are at 10 a.m. on the first Friday of each month at the Sparta American Legion.
- Hyma said he conducted a CEO session for 8<sup>th</sup> graders which was well received. The Sparta holiday events were very successful. Their annual meeting will be held tonight (1/12) at Jake's Northwoods. He is involved with finding host families for graduates of the Challenge Academy, and working with local businesses who will offer them jobs in the area. This is part of a transitioning for the graduates. There will be a career fair held in March. He will be doing 5 trade shows this year to promote the area.
- Thompson stated that their new Chamber/CVB building is coming along fast. They will be doing a soft move, working with the history museum in Tomah, hoping for a June open house. The Tomah Chamber banquet will be held at the Cranberry Country Lodge February 27<sup>th</sup> with a theme based around the old/new buildings. They will be hiring a special events coordinator to help get more events at Rec Park and generate more overnight stays in Tomah.
- Gorius said the TeePee building will be coming down on January 15<sup>th</sup>. The new building will be a multi-use building. Tomah has annexed 67 acres of land to have water and sewer for Millhaven Foods. Tomah Hospital is on a 2-3 year track for the new hospital. Some re-routing of roads will be done to Gopher and Goose Ave. in regards to the new hospital.

- Van Wychen noted that Wisconsin had the largest cranberry crop ever. CranGrow is going strong and will be expanding. They have labor challenges. For the first time her company had labor shortages. She had people who stayed and slept at her home that helped with the harvest.
- D. Peterson said Martin trucking is adding on a bay for maintenance.
- S. Peterson noted he has had no contact with the sand company trying to get a facility near Tomah.

Motion to adjourn by D. Peterson. Second by Thompson. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be February 9, 2017 at a location to be announced.

*Bernie Arena, Recorder*