

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 3-9-17 – Rolling Hills Activities Room – Sparta**

Present:

Committee Board Members – Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson

Citizen Members – Mary Jo Hill, Dennis Berg, Bernie Arena, Paul Harms

Advisory Members – Theresa Fitzgerald – Ft. McCoy (*subbing for Tonya Townsell*), Tim Hyma – Sparta Chamber of Commerce, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center

Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: Pete Reichardt, Jarrod Roll, Nodji Van Wychen, Tonya Townsell

Special Guests: Jim Bialecki, Leah Burns

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:06am by Chair Sharon Folcey. Roll-call was taken.

Motion by T. Tyma to approve the minutes of the Feb, 9th meeting. Second by M.J. Hill. Motion carried.

Acting Monroe County Administrator Jim Bialecki was introduced and everyone introduced themselves who were attending the meeting. J. Bialecki told the Committee that he was going to get up to speed on all the great things we are doing. He also said he was scheduling a meeting with S. Peterson in the upcoming weeks to get updated on the County's economic development projects.

FINANCIALS:

- S. Folcey handed out a budget summary that was used to make the current budget and expenses easier to understand.
- **Invoices presented:** there were no invoices presented for approval.

B. Arena announced that she was retiring after her term as President of Hidden Valleys of Southwest Wisconsin is up in May. She said they were looking for a replacement for her on the Board. They are also searching for a replacement for her representing Monroe County too.

S. Peterson updated the Committee on the upcoming BIKE ME Fun Ride that will be taking place on the Elroy-Sparta Bike Trail on June 2-3. The Committee has funded the ride for \$500 that the BIKE ME Fun Ride Committee could use as matching funds with their \$10,000 JEM Grant application which was approved earlier in 2017. Peterson asked the Committee for another \$500 this year so the Committee could be considered a \$1,000 sponsor of the ride. Motion by T. Thompson to give an additional \$500 to the ride this year. 2nd by T. Hyma. Motion Carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR REPORT:

- WISE (Workforce Innovation for a Strong Economy) Program meeting at Organic Valley on Wed., 2/15. Attending were CranGrow, Organic Valley, Cashton Farm Supply, United Cooperative, Jenny Kuderer – WEDC.
- Connect Community Task Force meeting – 2/16 – Ground Round. Attending: Kendall, Wilton, Warrens, Jenny Kuderer – WEDC.

- Conference work – 2/20 – 2/24
- Spoke at the Sparta Kiwanis Club meeting on 2/28 about the State of the County 2016.
- City of Tomah Long Range Planning Committee meeting on 2/28 finalizing the City Plan for future rehabs and redevelopment projects in the TIF District.
- SET Program Forum – Cranberry Country Lodge – last forum before putting together the strategic plan by April 1st.
- Had 4 conference calls with prospects looking strongly at Monroe County.

Coming up:

- Doing 2nd interviews with the 3 finalists for the Trempealeau County E.D. Director’s position.
- Tourism Conference – Milwaukee – Sunday – Wednesday
- Land tour in the Oakdale area for a major prospect
- Walk through with prospect at the Kendall School
- Working on the new Monroe County Tourism web site with the new look from this year’s book.
- Connect Community meetings in April – Norwalk, Kendall, Wilton coordinating a joint effort with the BIKE ME Fun Ride.
- Both the Sparta & Tomah hotel/convention center studies are done and am now setting up site visits and investor meetings.
- Working with Cashton on the future projects that could occur on the old feed mill property.
- Working on a potential day care center for Cashton

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE:

We received 78 surveys from attendees and the results are below. The bullet points under categories are the comments that attendees made about that segment of questions.

What best describes your field of work?

Public Sector - 32.7% Private Sector - 41.3% Non-Profit Sector - 17.2% Other - 6.8% No Responses - 1.7%

What drew you to attend the Conference?

Interest in economic development in the region - 43.1%

Networking opportunities - 34.4%

A specific topic or speaker on the program - 3.4%

Recommended by a person who had attended a past conference - 6.8%

Other - 12.0%

Rate the amount of new information you received from each program that took place on WEDNESDAY, FEB. 22nd. (Scale of 1 to 5)

Keynote Speakers - Discover Wisconsin – 3.9

Connect Community: Downtown Development Strategies & Resources – 3.8

Meeting the Digital Expectations of Your Prospective Customers, Partners and Employees – 4.0

Bringing Life to Downtown after 5 – 4.0

Shop Local – 3.9

Avenues to Growing Your Downtown – 4.0

Spelling R-E-L-I-E-F from Government Rules & Regulations – 3.8

Rate Marketplace & Dine Around held on Wed., Feb. 22nd. (Scale of 1 to 5)

Marketplace – 4.1

Dine Around – 4.2

Networking with Exhibitors – 4.1

Rate the amount of new information you received from each program that took place on THURSDAY, FEB. 23rd. (Scale of 1 to 5)

State of Monroe County – 4.2

Stronger Economies Together (SET) – 4.1

Spotlight on Businesses Making a Difference – 4.5

KEYNOTE SPEAKER - John McHugh - Director of Communications - KWIK TRIP – 4.6

Human Capital, Employee Engagement & Everything You Wanted to Know About Millennials, but were Afraid to Ask – 3.6

Creating a Successful Future for Your Town & Business – 4.1

Transportation Issues – Which Road to Funding is the Best? – 4.1

Where's my Workforce Coming from in the Future? - 3.9

Conference Wrap-Up Prize Giveaways – 3.8

Rate the following: Venue, Lodging, Food. (Scale of 1 to 5)

Venue for the Conference – 4.5

Lodging – 4.5

Food – Continental Breakfast, Lunch, Breaks – 4.3

How many years have you attended the Monroe County Economic Development Conference?

1 - 51.8% 2 - 14.8% 3 - 14.8% 4 - 7.4% 5 - 11.1% 6 - 0.0%

Did you like the expanded 2-day Conference format?

Yes - 74.0% No - 0.0% No feeling either way - 25.9%

Would you attend the Conference next year?

Yes – 100% No – 0.0%

How likely are you to recommend this event to a friend or colleague?

Very likely - 70.3% Somewhat likely - 25.9% Neutral - 0.0% Somewhat unlikely - 3.7% Very unlikely - 0.0%

Suggestions for future topics or speakers you would like to see at our next Conference?

TOPICS:

- Transportation is always a hot topic.
- Overview of Volk Field and impact on economy
- Tourism in Monroe County
- Impact of the bike trail

- More focus on problem solving
- Revenue options for funding ED efforts.
- More on demographics.
- I would like to hear information about safety and security. Maybe recognize the police departments, fire departments, emts, etc and let them talk about the program and what they are doing to help keep our communities safe to live in. A lot of those efforts go unrecognized by the public, but I think it is an important aspect of living here.
- It may be beneficial to talk about key community developments as they are happening or are about to happen. An example would be the new hospital coming to Tomah and the general impact that will have on the community.
- Combining tourism in tri-county area
- More on Implementation of ideas in communities...road blocks that typically occur to organizing an event and ways to navigate around them.
- Employee engagement, recruitment strategies
- Procurement - Angel investing – financing
- Site selector decision making process. How to attract attention for them
- More topics on keeping the work force abundant. The more economic growth the more need to have workers for the future.
- Workforce - Millennials again - Prevalence of drug addiction - Housing - Also "place-making" to attract/retain Millennials
- Affordable housing

SPEAKERS

- Deb Brown, very impressed by her energy, the information she had to share. I really enjoyed everything about her.
- Highlight other Monroe County employers, such as Toro, Band Box Cleaners, Multistack, Mathews, etc.
- Bring in a panel of Millennials to share their perspectives on what they desire when making a decision in where they will work and live.
- Deb Brown
- As our economy continues to grow, the demand / availability of affordable housing is also increasing. A WHEDA sponsored presentation and panel - in two parts 1) growth, demographics, housing trends 2). Examples of developments and the developers behind the projects and a summary of the methods of finance.

OTHER

- Would like to see the next generation attend inviting schools in the area. If they could even attend an hour or two where they could learn about businesses in the area during the marketplace. Reaching out to different clubs, or business classes I think would be very beneficial for the future of Monroe County.
- While it was expanded to include our county (Jackson) it was still mainly on Monroe County, I felt you would have a broader audience if you expanded and didn't focus on one county.

Do you have any further comments?

- Good job Steve!
- Outstanding organization and implementation.
- Well done Steve!
- Great conference, thank you for your hard work in putting it together
- I think all involved should pat their selves on the back, a great job done by all
- Exceptional conference. Keep up the good work!
- Great job to all involved!
- Nice conference
- The conference was well organized and well executed. The facility was hospitable, comfortable.
- The topics were informative with a blend of a broad number of economic development topics presented in a short, concise and useful manner
- The individual highlights of Monroe County businesses and the "Dine Around" were fantastic.

- Steve Peterson was very welcoming and a great host. I liked he kept things moving and on time! Good Job! Monroe County is very lucky to have him!
- Enjoyed the Pledge of Allegiance, John's prayer was great. It's important that we continue to pray our leaders, our towns, counties, and country.
- Overall it was good, the topics of conversation were similar to things I have heard in the past.
- Talking about millennials and downtown is a little over done.
- The game was fun, maybe next time have a topic that is a bit more diverse more people can have a shot.
- Overall I think it was successful, the dine around was great, good networking.
- "GOOD JOB - WELL DONE!" A great big THANKS to all concerned.
- Great conference! Thank you! Well put together event!
- Excellent conference, again. Keep up the great work!
- I thought the conference provided some great information. Great job!
- Great job as always Steve! It's great to have this in the region.
- Thank you. Well done!

S. Peterson reported that with a 2-day Conference, additional expenses were expected but some were not anticipated. He also stated that even though conference sponsorships went well, there were a few last-minute drops of some businesses who were going to be sponsors. With those issues and that the County kept the same \$2,000 sponsorship level this year even though the Conference had expanded to 2 days, S. Peterson said that he was at a financial loss with the Conference. The Committee felt that they could offer additional financial support by paying for the portfolios that were given to all attendees and the extras used in the future for business recruitment presentations. Motion made by D. Berg that the committee pay up to \$3,000 for the portfolios. 2nd by T. Thompson. The Committee asked S. Peterson to supply a balance sheet outlining the shortfall and the cost of the portfolios before a payment would be given. S. Peterson agreed that he would do that and suggested to the Committee that adding additional money to next year's Conference should be looked at when the new budget is being put together. Motion carried.

REPORTS:

Hidden Valleys – B. Arena

- Reminded the Committee that the Hidden Valleys Annual Meeting is on May 17th at the White House Restaurant in Richland Center. They are recognizing Monroe County as the spotlighted County in this year's magazine. The Committee is going to try to have members attend and display our banners at the event.
- So far this Trade Show season has been a big success. A lot of magazines have already been handed out at the shows and there is a lot of interest in the Southwest Wisconsin region wherever they go.
- The process of looking for a replacement for Bernie's position with Hidden Valleys has started and they hope to have someone on board by the Annual Meeting.

Ft. McCoy – T. Fitzgerald

- Fort McCoy continues to hire people. Having struggles in some areas to get qualified people.
- Gearing up for more troops coming in this year for training.
- Preparations are on-going for the Fort McCoy Armed Forces Day Open House on May 30th from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Fort McCoy's Commemorative Area. Activities of interest to all age groups.

SW-ITBEC

- S. Folcey reported that they are continuing their recruitment efforts to get more Counties to join. Trempealeau & Jackson Counties seem ready to join. Juneau County did not renew and they are working with that County to get them back as members next year.

7 RIVERS ALLIANCE

- S. Peterson updated the Committee on the ongoing Stronger Economies Together (SET) Program. The last public forum is wrapping up and creating the strategic plan to be presented to the USDA Rural Development Department will be completed by April 1st.
- S. Peterson updated the Committee about the W.I.S.E. Plan that is studying workforce issues affecting the area today and in the future. Question sessions with area businesses have started and will continue over the next month.

WATA

- S. Folcey told the committee that they should consider not rejoining the organization this year. They have raised their membership rates and it seems like WATA is not doing well as an organization and probably isn't a good investment now.

TOMAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS CENTER

- T. Thompson Introduced Leah Burns as the new Event Coordinator for the Chamber. She will be working on attracting events to the City and Recreation Park.
- New Chamber Office Building project continues to move forward. 4-6 weeks away from completion.
- Annual Banquet held at Cranberry County Lodge. Sell-out crowd & many deserving award winners.

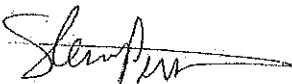
SPARTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- T. Hyma said that it's trade show season. Had successful shows at 2 shows in Iowa. Heading to work the Bike Show in Madison before heading to the Tourism Conference in Milwaukee.
- Working on the new Spartan Race – a mudder type race being coordinated by organizers, the Chamber and Ft. McCoy.
- Hired 2 new employees – Holly Carlson & Wendy Markeren.
- T. Hyma announced that he is retiring as the CEO of the Chamber, effective in early June. He wants to spend more time with his family. The Chamber Board will start the process of replacing him over the next upcoming weeks.

Next Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 13th at 9:00am at a location to be determined in the Tomah area.

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2nd by T. Thompson. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned - 11:05am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson