

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
**MONTHLY MEETING – 11-9-17 – City of Sparta Activities Building**

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

**Present:**

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

**Citizen Members:** Dennis Berg, Mary Jo Hill

**Advisory Members:** Jim Bialecki – Monroe County Administrator, John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce, Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber & Visitors Center, Jarrod Roll – Monroe County Local History Room, Theresa Fitzgerald – Ft. McCoy (subbing for Tonya Townsell)

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

**Absent: (AM)** Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy, Bernadine Arena **(CM)** Pete Reichardt, Paul Harms

**Media:** Tim Evans – Monroe County Herald

**Minutes** – Motion by D. Berg to approve the minutes of the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. J. Hill. Motion carried.

**Budget Review** – J. Bialecki updated the Committee on the final budget approval and the tough decisions that had to be made. S. Peterson's contract was approved for another year but the Finance Committee cut out the recommended increase by the Committee. S. Folcey explained how the SW-ITBEC funding of \$2,500 was initially cut from the budget, but with the support of N. Van Wychen and S. Folcey, they were able to get it back into the budget. S. Folcey explained to the County Board that the County received \$6,700 in grants in 2017 for that \$2,500 membership in SW-ITBEC. S. Folcey explained the dilemma for the County Emergency Management Department with their budget being taken away and put towards the security screening at the Justice Center. S. Folcey suggested that maybe the Committee could help out MCEM with printing a brochure. Committee members recommended that we keep our funding for our own projects, based on that it could look like we don't need all of our funding if we are willing to fund other department projects.

**Financial Report & Invoices** – S. Peterson submitted invoices for the hosting of the County Tourism & Economic Development web sites. This is annual fee of \$300 per site. Motion by N. Van Wychen. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Berg. Motion carried. The committee also discussed at length about any immediate projects we may pursue with the remaining funding in the 2017 budget. N. Van Wychen, M. J. Hill and J. Roll brought up possibly doing an Itinerary concept brochure that tourists could use to find other things to do in the County when they visit. S. Peterson explained the potential of an app being created through MapNTour that he is pursuing for economic development recruitment. N. Van Wychen suggested contacting Bernie Arena about the itinerary brochure as she may have past ones that were done years ago. S. Peterson also said the County tourism web site needs an update and that could be done through the 2017 budget funds too. Ideas and proposals will be presented and discussed at the December meeting.

**Discover Wisconsin Episode** – discussion on potentially doing a TV episode that would air in 2019. The options were sharing the ½ hour show with another destination with a bike theme or doing a full ½ show on just Monroe County. ½ of a show would cost \$22,000 and a full show would be \$40,000. Payment over a 3-year period. Filming would take place in 2018. The Committee had concerns about the return on investment with this big of a cost. The Sparta & Tomah Chambers seemed willing to partner with the County on the investment, but the focus of the show was not clear during the discussion. D. Peterson made a motion to look at the 2020 season and game plan next year on what the show would include. 2<sup>nd</sup> by J. Roll. Motion carried. J. Hendricks said that the Sparta Chamber may be interested in the 2019 show since the County was going to pass based on their number of bicycling events and the bike trail focus in 2018.

## **MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR REPORT – NOVEMBER 2017**

### **• MEETINGS/EVENTS**

- **Forward Tomah** – 10/12 – discussed land price for prospect and future of FT
- **Conference meeting – Three Bears Resort** – 10/14
- **Monroe County E.D. Conference speaker conference call** – 10/16 – coordinate speaker line-up for the conference
- **Prospect Meeting** – 10/18 – site options and incentives
- **Monroe County Job Skills Initiative** – 10/19 – Tomah High School
- **Prospect Meeting** – 10/20 – possible investors & building options
- **Prospect Project meeting** – 10/23 – land acquisition & building options
- **Wisconsin Downtown Action Council Summit** – 10/25-26 – Sheboygan
- **Prospect meeting** – 10/30 – Cashton – possible child care facility
- **Prospect Visit** – 11/1 – Sparta – met with financial reps and potential clients
- **Monroe County Board Final Budget meeting** – 11/1
- **WACB Fall Tourism Conference** – 11/2-3 – Racine
- **Prospect Conference Call** – final proposal – 11/6/17

### **• UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

- **Mill Haven Ribbon Cutting** – 11/10 - Tomah
- **Prospect meeting** – 11/13 – site options and incentives
- **State of the Region – WISE Plan unveiling** – 11/15 – La Crosse
- **Monroe County Job Skills Initiative meeting** – 11/16
- **Monroe County E.D. Conference web site launch** – 11/24
- **AMS Micromedical** – tour with WEDC in late Nov.
- **McPherson Guitars** – tour in late Nov.
- **Prospect Tour** – Monroe County – in Nov.
- **Prospect Tour** – Monroe County – in late Nov./early Dec.

### **• NEWS/NOTES**

- **WI Economic Development Association** – I have been nominated to their Board of Directors starting in 2018.
- **Final CGI Videotaping** – will be wrapping up the final segment of our County E.D. videos at the end of the month – featuring our school districts

- **MapNTour** – finalizing the agreement for a virtual mapping tour of Monroe County, highlighting businesses and landmarks in the County.
- **AMS Micromedical** – purchased land in the East Side Business Park in Sparta for a future building/expansion.
- **Land Annexation** – owners of land along I-90 on the south side of Tomah have requested annexation. Following annexation, the City will begin creating a TIF District on that land.
- **Tomah Automotive** – new home as they purchased the VanderMeer Motor Company building and land.
- **South Pointe Business Park** – still finalizing things with the DNR and will be marketed in early 2018.

**VINO FEST** – S. Peterson said that an Organizational meeting will be taking place in December. The JEM Grant application was submitted and the WI Dept. of Tourism is considering rolling over the approved 2017 JEM Grant amount of \$28,650 to the 2018 event.

**BIKE ME FUN RIDE** – S. Peterson said that the start to get sponsors has begun. He’s also working with the WI Dept. of Tourism and the Missouri DNR on a possible cross promotion to draw riders from Missouri to take part in the ride. More details coming over the next few months.

## **REPORTS:**

**Hidden Valleys** – N. Van Wychen reported that now that her cranberry harvest season is over she will be attending the meetings on a regular basis and report back to the Committee.

**Local History Room** – J. Roll reports:

- he’s been working with Pica Grove in Sparta on a new display at the History Room. He showed the artist rendering of the display based on the A-Z things about Monroe County. The display will have the look of open books next to each other. Fundraising for the project is going well and a big funding source was an \$11,000 matching grant from the Monroe County Farm Education Grant.
- A new Christmas display will be unveiled on Monday, 11/10 with a 1950’s living room setting. They expect this to be a very popular stop for tourists and locals.
- S. Folcey mentioned the Local History Room ad in the LINKS magazine that is circulated in the area. J. Roll said that because they already had their story content full they offered a free ad to the LHR.

**Ft. McCoy** – T. Fitzgerald reports:

- Multi-training is still continuing with the start of the cold weather training
- Economic Impact from fiscal year 2016 is estimated at \$896.8 million. Will take a few months to get the Economic Impact from fiscal year 2017. Fort McCoy remains one of the largest economic influencers in the region.
- Tours were up at Ft. McCoy this year, especially with motor coach tours.
- Ft. McCoy has a speakers bureau that area organizations can use for topics/speakers at their events.

**Sparta Chamber of Commerce** - J. Hendricks reported:

- Holiday events are coming soon. The Kristkrindlmarkt celebration will take place later in November.
- Holiday Parade – 1<sup>st</sup> Friday in December

**Tomah Chamber of Commerce** – T. Thompson reported:

- Taste of Tomah taking place on 11/9 – new event

- Trick or Trunk Halloween event was a huge success with 700-800 people attending. Exceeded projections and looking for it to only grow next year.
- Merry Mixer coming in December
- Hometown Heroes – Business @ 5 was a huge success with over 300 attending. Recognized the area heroes – fire department, police, etc.
- Annual Banquet will be on the last Monday in February 2018. Preparations are already in the works on the event.
- Tomah Area Activities Guide is coming along with it being printed in January
- Looking at possibly downsizing the Chamber Board to a smaller, more efficient board. This also could include reviewing and possibly changing some of the bylaws as well.

**SW-ITBEC – N. Van Wychen reported:**

- Jackson County will be a new County member in 2018. County Board Chair Ray Ransom attended the meeting.
- Grant recap results will be given by recipients at the December meeting.
- Approved a Gold Sponsorship for the 2018 Monroe County Economic Development Conference.

**7 Rivers Alliance – S. Peterson reported:**

- Reminder to the Committee that the State of the Region meeting – Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> at the Celebration on the River in La Crosse. This event will be the unveiling of the WISE Plan that has been in the works for over a year.
- he had been nominated to the 7 Rivers Alliance Board of Directors by Organic Valley & Terry Whipple. Whipple will be getting off the board and Mark Pfeiffer from OV will be stepping down as his role at OV has been expanded and he can't dedicate the time to the board.

S. Folcey informed the Committee that the Wisconsin Counties Association is recommending to every County in the State to pass a resolution against the use of opioids. This may lead to a similar lawsuit the State filed against the tobacco industry years ago and they will be targeting the pharmaceuticals. S. Folcey said the Board has pass the resolution and it is being passed on to the State.

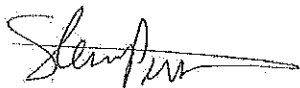
**Next meeting – December 14<sup>th</sup> – 9:00am – Local History Room – Sparta**

**Agenda Items for next month:**

- Projects before the end of 2017
- Itinerary brochure project
- Tourism web site update
- Monroe County Economic Development Conference

Motion by D. Peterson to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by T. Thompson. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:51am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson