

Monroe County Economic Development, Commerce and Tourism Committee
Regular Monthly Meeting, September 8, 2016
Oakdale Village Hall, Oakdale, WI

Present: Committee Members: Sharon Folcey, Nodji Van Wychen, Dean Peterson

Citizen Member: Dennis Berg

Advisory Members: Tonya Townsell, Bernie Arena, Tina Thompson, Paul Harms, Tim Hyma

Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Guests: Cathy Schmit, Jonathon Horne (managing director of the "idea fund"), Paulette Bradley (Village of Oakdale clerk) and Kendra Weigen (Oakdale trustee)

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Chair Folcey. Roll call was taken.

Motion by Van Wychen to approve the minutes of the August 2016 meeting. Second by D. Peterson.

Motion carried.

Bradley gave an update on the happenings in the Village of Oakdale. She shared some of the challenges they are facing as a bedroom community.

Invoices were reviewed. Motion by Van Wychen to renew the membership with the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association for \$100. Second by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

Motion by D. Peterson to pay the bills. Second by Van Wychen. Motion carried.

The budgets were reviewed.

S. Peterson gave his EDCT report. It included:

- The 2017 conference: Options were presented for the 2 day ED conference to be held in February 2018. There was much discussion on the options and topics.
- Connect Communities Project: Working with Cashton for October meeting. Will follow-up with the county villages to create 3-person teams for the county Task Force. Hopes to have WEDC architects visit the communities' downtown areas this fall.
- Google Map Program: Will be working with communities on this.
- BIKE ME Fun Ride: Will be held June 2 & 3, 2017 (free state trail riding weekend) Website: bikemeride.com. Working on JEM grant. Corporate sponsorship efforts being made.
- SET civic forum will be held 9/27/17 (5 p.m.-8:30 p.m.) at the Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah. It includes Monroe, Juneau and Jackson counties under the umbrella of the 7 Rivers Alliance. They were chosen by USDA Rural Development as a certified region.
- Sparta and Tomah doing financing feasibility studies on the potential need for more hotels in the area.
- Norwalk's Rails to Trails Marathon will take place this year thanks to the help of the WI DNR and National Fish & Wildlife Department.
- Attended Community Venture Network Session in Twin Cities. Targeted 6 solid prospects. One prospect has visited the county. Three will be coming in the near future.
- He has been nominated to the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Downtown Action Council.
- Continuing efforts on finding potential partners on an Accelerated Business Incubator Center in the county.

- Gave updates on happenings in all the communities.
- Other things: SMART bus routes may expand into Monroe County; potential electric docking station in Tomah; has attended ED related meetings throughout the area.

S. Peterson requested the committee purchase 40 notebook portfolios to use when prospects are in the area. Motion by Hyma to purchase 40 notebook portfolios up to \$15 each including shipping. Second by Van Wychen. Motion carried.

Discussion about leadership funds account. Motion by Van Wychen to utilize the \$500 for the Tomah Chamber's leadership training program "Tomah Uncovered". Second by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

Five minute reports:

- Sparta: Hyma touched on several upcoming events including a September 20th "Walk with Walker" in Sparta. Kathy Murderer has been hired as a temporary person at the Sparta Chamber. Leigh Ann Trzinski has been hired full time.
- Tomah: Thompson stated Cranfest shuttles will be running as usual. The building renovation will begin with a wall breaking on September 15th with actual work starting September 19th for the new chamber offices.
- Fort McCoy: Townsell noted it was a very busy summer with record numbers of troops training. The History Center has been open some Fridays with a very good response. Colonel Pinter will have his first formal meeting on post on October 13th from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- 7 Rivers Region: No representative. S. Peterson mentioned the upcoming SET project.
- Hidden Valleys: Arena stated they would be meeting in Monroe County on September 21st (11 a.m.) at the Perkins Restaurant in Tomah. She is gathering 2017 events and photos for use in the upcoming magazine which features Monroe County on the cover. She invited committee members to read over the current text and let her know if there were any changes they wanted to make.
- ITBEC: S. Peterson noted that they are making an effort to get more counties involved. Jackson and Crawford were mentioned as good possibilities.

Weigen presented attendees with the Oakdale, Wisconsin commemorative book celebrating their first 150 years.

Jonathon Horne was introduced by S. Peterson. He works with the New Venture Capital Fund and is managing director of "idea fund". He is based in LaCrosse. Horne said his company is looking to find entrepreneurs that fill a need and help them get going. They have \$10 million in committed capital to help potential businesses. It is an application process and they will help create a business plan and strategy. They will accommodate year to a year and a half of funding. After the business gets going they simply have a person who sits on that board. Horne fielded several questions.

Folcey mentioned the September 29th highway department meetings coming up.

The next meeting is set for October 13, 2016 at the U.S. Silica Mine.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Bernie Arena