

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE**  
**MONTHLY MEETING – 11-17-16 – Citizen’s First Bank Conference Room – Sparta**

**Present:**

Committee Board Members – Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson, Nodji Van Wychen

Citizen Members – Mary Jo Hill, Dennis Berg

Advisory Members – Tonya Townsell; Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Absent: Pete Reichardt, Jarrod Roll, Bernie Arena, Tin Hyma, Tina Thompson, Paul Harms

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:00am by Chair Sharon Folcey. Roll-call was taken.

Motion by D. Berg to approve the minutes of the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Second by N. Van Wychen.  
Motion carried.

**FINANCIALS:**

- There were was clarification on an outstanding invoice to Essex Capital LLC for \$709 for the County’s 1/3<sup>rd</sup> membership fee with the cities of Tomah & Sparta with the Community Venture Network. The invoice was approved in April, but had been encumbered and not paid. Folcey told the Committee that she met with the Treasurer’s Department, got clarification and it will be paid this week.
- There was much discussion on an invoice sent by Evans Media & Printing for printing envelopes, stationary and direct mail postage that was sent to over 1,300 addresses in soliciting ads for the 2017 Go Monroe County Activities Guide. The Committee felt that this cost should not be the responsibility of the Committee when there was a contract in place with Evans that entitled them to all the profits of the guide. Committee instructed Folcey & S. Peterson to have a meeting with Greg Evans to discuss the matter.
- **Invoices presented:** Bernie Arena – Hidden Valleys - \$140.00 & WACVB Fall Conference registration & hotel reimbursement - \$378.71. Motion by D. Peterson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Van Wychen to approve the bills.  
Motion carried.

S. Peterson recommended that the County have a booth at the upcoming La Crosse Regional Tourism Expo at the La Crosse Center on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Booth cost is \$50 and attendee fee is \$30. Motion made by N. Van Wychen, 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Berg to budget \$100 for that event. Motion carried. S. Peterson will register and set up the people to work the booth.

**BUDGET:**

- The budget was reviewed and the Committee discussed additional tourism projects that they wanted to invest in before the end of the year.
  - S. Peterson said that he had talked with some marketing companies at the WACVB Fall Conference and had some concepts that the Committee should look at. The Committee instructed Peterson to gather more information by the end of the month and send it to the members for consideration.
- Committee instructed S. Peterson to work on the web site upgrades & submit invoice in December per the budget.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR REPORT:**

- Spoke to the delegation from Kazakhstan at Justin Trails about my role and the County's in economic development growth.
- Was part of a group that met with Colonel Pinter to discuss our economic development focus and how Ft. McCoy fits into our future growth.
- Met with Shop Local Wisconsin – Emmie Rugotska – working with Sparta & Tomah Chambers on a Holiday promotion. Working on a year-long Shop Local campaign with Connect Communities.
- Was part of a webinar presentation on the impact of Ag-Tourism in communities and the opportunities for networking with downtowns – hosted by WEDC.
- Co-hosted the Mayo Health System breakfast at Jake's Northwoods – Mental health care in the workplace – over 50 people attended. Will be expanding this topic at the Conference.
- SET meeting in Camp Douglas – went over the surveys from Public Forum and laid out plan for the upcoming business leaders meeting on 11/30 at the Ground Round.
- Listening Session with Governor Walker in Sparta – good turnout and good feedback from the group. Governor gave good plug about the Conference.
- Tomah Long Range Planning Committee hosted Public Forum. Attendees were given a breakdown of the progress of the long range plan for the downtown, the City logo & branding campaign, etc.
- Wisconsin Downtown Action Council Conference – La Crosse – very informative with good sessions and networking. Introduced as the WDAC Board member in 2017.
- JEM Grant application for the BIKE ME FUN RIDE was submitted. Very good feedback on the application and feel confident we will secure the \$10,000 grant.
- Hosted a tour with Coleman Peiffer, Business & Investment Attraction Director – WEDC around the County showcasing available sites and businesses areas in Sparta, Cashton & Tomah.
- Met with the Wyeville Village Board to present the Connect Community program.
- Attended the WACB Fall Tourism Conference in Eau Claire. Very good sessions and networking.
- Conference call with CJI Films about video work in promoting the County. They are endorsed by the Wisconsin Counties Association and our County was on their list for 2017.
- Attended the Forward Tomah meeting – updated them on our E.D. work in the County.
- Attended the NAFB National Convention in Kansas City. Received a President's Award for my work with Ag-Tourism and supporting the agricultural industry.
- Panelist at the Transportation Development Association's Annual meeting in Madison, representing County E.D. efforts and talked about the importance of road improvements and the impact it has on County.
- **AROUND THE COUNTY....**
  - Hotel/Convention Center Survey representative doing a study on Tomah & Sparta on future hotels & meeting rooms. Study should be done by the end of November and expect the results in early December.
  - Working on an Incubator Business Center concept with various agencies & investors in Monroe County.
  - Seen a big increase in businesses, agencies in wanting to partner with us on education projects, marketing efforts, sponsorships, etc. I hope to dig deeper into that in 2017 and see what opportunities we may have out there.
  - Progress continues to getting Sparta's new 180 acre business park off the ground in very early 2017. Working on marketing the still available land in the East Side Park.

- Millhaven Foods hopes to start construction in the next couple weeks in Tomah.
- Meeting with the Gerke's next week to discuss their plans of the new complex on the Tee Pee Supper Club location.
- The new roundabout is open and final touches are being done in Cashton.
- The Marathon seemed to go off without a hitch with the bat situation.
- The school in Kendall is being renovated by the current owner. It will be a multi-use facility with businesses, food, etc.
- Oakdale continues their long range plan with an engineering firm in place and looking at potential business growth with the blighted areas & tapping the strong Interstate traffic.

**MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE:**

There was extensive discussion of the direction and management of the upcoming Conference and in the future. Reasons for clarity were numerous with invoice processing, budget line items, revenue flow, sponsorships, volunteers, structure, being the main issues. S. Peterson suggested that the County invest the \$2,000 each year as the Conference Naming Sponsor and the Conference be run by his company, Top Dog Marketing, since the Conference is part of his County E.D. Coordinator contract. With a new County Administrator not in position yet, along with all the added duties in the departments, the feeling was the Conference would take up more department time than they'd be willing to commit. It was decided that Folcey & S. Peterson meet with outgoing County Administrator Cathy Schmit and find a solution. Motion by D. Peterson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M. J. Hill to have the County sponsor the Conference and let S. Peterson's Top Dog Marketing business run the Conference. Motion carried.

S. Peterson handed out the latest potential schedule for the Conference. He told the Committee that topics would be finalized once he had the speakers in place. Plan is to have web site live and first mailings out in early to mid-December.

***WED., 2/22 – registration – 11am – 12pm; Luncheon – 12pm***

- Luncheon speaker – Discover Wisconsin – 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- Connect Community
- Shop Local
- Customer Service
- Target Marketing
- Retail business succession
- MARKETPLACE & DINE AROUND – 4:30pm – 7:30pm

***THURS., 2/23 – registration – 7am – 8am, Program – 8am***

- Go Monroe County Guide unveiling
- State of the County – recap record setting 2016
- Keynote speaker – John McHugh (tentative)
- Governor Walker (invited)
- SET Plan presentation
- Business Spotlights
- Workforce – Recruitment/Retention
- Transportation

- Target Marketing & small business branding
- Col. Pinter – Ft. McCoy report

#### REPORTS:

##### Ft. McCoy – T. Townsell

- Fort McCoy is hiring for entry-level police and fire.
- Fort McCoy is entering cold-weather training season. Fort McCoy is expanding on cold-weather training to increase opportunities for organizations. While summer training slots might be tighter on availability, there is room to expand on cold-weather slots.
- Nearly 140K trained at Fort McCoy last year.
- Gun deer season opens this weekend. Be sure to check the iSportsman website if you're hunting on Fort McCoy land. (mccoy.isportsman.net)
- While there are planned budget cuts this year and next in the Army, doesn't translate to less training on Fort McCoy. Fort McCoy is still able to continue setting training records and to continue to be one of the largest economic impactors in the region. What has impacted is the end of the mobilization mission; completion of military construction, and the impact of sequestration.

##### Justice Center update

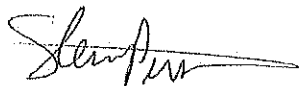
- Folcey updated the committee on the progress of the Justice Center project. Very visible changes occurring with the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase construction. N. Van Wychen suggested that the Committee coordinate having a tour of the facility when allowed.

CJI Communications Inc. contacted S. Peterson about doing marketing videos promoting the E.D. & tourism incentives around the County. This program is endorsed by the Wisconsin Counties Association and costs the County no dollars. Their revenue comes from upselling area companies in the County for their individual video needs. Motion by D. Peterson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by M.J. Hill to approve the agreement. Motion carried. M.J. Hill also commented that she has used this company for years for her own business and they do very good work.

Next Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am at the Rolling Hills meeting room, unless the room is not available. Citizen's First Bank in Sparta offered to be the backup location if there is a conflict.

Motion by M.J. Hill to adjourn. 2<sup>nd</sup> by D. Peterson. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 11:30am.

Submitted by:



Steve Peterson