April 9, 2015 Minutes Pending Approval

Monroe County Economic Development, Commerce & Tourism Committee

F&M Bank 1001 Superior Ave., Tomah, WI

The meeting was called in accordance with the open meeting law requirements.

Committee members present: Sharon Folcey, Nodji Van Wychen, Dean Peterson, Bruce Humphrey

Citizen members: Pete Reichardt, Mary Jo Hill

Advisory members: Linda Fournier, Bernie Arena, Tina Thompson, Tim Hyma

Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Folcey called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Reichardt welcomed committee members to the F&M Bank. He gave a very informative synopsis of what the bank offered to the community, noting how much more business is done over the internet.

Motion by Humphrey to approve the minutes of the March meeting as presented. Second by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

The committee reviewed its financials. Motion by D. Peterson to pay the bills as presented. Second by Van Wychen. Motion carried.

S. Peterson handed out the 2015 EDCT conference summary report and sponsorship list. The committee reviewed the summary report prepared by Leslie Schreier. S. Peterson made note of some of the remarks on the surveys. The conference overall was very well received. There were 22 sponsorships.

S. Peterson announced that a news conference is slated for 10:30 a.m. on Friday, April 17, 2015 at the Colonial Banquet Center, 1415 W. Wisconsin St. in Sparta, WI announcing Gigabit Internet Service provided by Lemonweir Valley Telcom to businesses in the Sparta and Tomah areas. Industrial Parks in both communities will have a fiber multi-gigabit network. Businesses will be able to experience internet service driven at dramatically higher speeds. Some major businesses are already on the network and are experiencing huge efficiencies in their daily business. Many state, county and local dignitaries plan to attend as well as business leaders. The committee is invited to attend the event.

S. Peterson noted that he is filling out the application and starting to work on the Connect Communities task force for Norwalk, Wilton, Kendall and Warrens. This will give Monroe County access to all programs the WEDC offers, including grants.

S. Peterson noted that he is working on adding the Brookwood School District to the education video.

Committee members gave an update as to where the “Go Monroe County” visitor guide was delivered. Arena noted that it was distributed at trade shows with Hidden Valleys in Milwaukee, Eau Claire, the Governor’s Conference on Tourism and at the Wisconsin Ag Tourism Conference at the Dells. Hyma and Thompson noted where they distributed the guide. S. Peterson said Greg Evans had the addresses to get it to the welcome centers across the state. D. Peterson said Martin Trucking may help with delivery.

5 Minutes Reports:

* Arena stated Hidden Valleys would be meeting the following week. They had a good trade show season. The annual meeting will be Wednesday, May 20th in Lafayette County at the Yellowstone Golf Course.
* Thompson reported the Tomah Chamber had the keys to the DNR station to access the work needed to be done. Their Roger Brooks seminars are continuing. New tourism person Amanda Grossell is making much headway on the social media front.
* Hyma reported on various trade shows he has attended for Driftless Destinations. He is working on a “Will to Ben” bike tour and received a $10,000 grant from the Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism for this event.
* Fournier said many troops were training at Fort McCoy. She also announced that she and her husband Al would both be retiring on October 2, 2015.
* No “Bike and Berries” report but Jarrod Roll did send a report on the Governor’s Conference on Tourism. Folcey highlighted some of his comments.
* Van Wychen reported that SW-ITBEC did a strategic planning session. One of the main components that came out of the meeting was that they hire a part-time director to keep things flowing, and to help with recruiting more counties to the organization.
* S. Peterson gave a summary of the WATA conference held March 30 & 31. More than 150 people attended. The seminars all went very well. “Itineraries Midwest” is organizing motor coach tours related to ag tourism.
* S. Peterson stated that Monroe County has 35 business surveys to do for the 7 Rivers Alliance. Ways to conduct these were discussed including possibly sponsoring a breakfast. No action was taken.

The next meeting will be held at Theisen’s in Sparta at 9 a.m. on Thursday, May 14th.

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

Bernie Arena, Recorder