Monroe County Economic Development, Commerce & Tourism Committee

Regular Monthly Meeting, September 10, 2015

Ginny’s Cupboard, Sparta, WI

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

Committee members present: Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson, Jim Schroeder, Bruce Humphrey

Citizen members: Carol Ostrem, Mary Jo Hill, Pete Reichardt

Advisory members: Linda Fournier, Bernie Arena, Tim Hyma, Jarrod Roll

Economic Development Coordinator: Steve Peterson

Chair Folcey called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Motion by Humphrey to approve the August 2015 minutes. Second by Schroeder. Motion carried.

The committee reviewed the current financial report.

Motion by Schroeder to pay the bills presented and two bills that S. Peterson had e-mailed to the county administrator for reimbursement. Second by Humphrey. Motion carried.

Folcey asked if anyone wanted to attend the WACVB tourism conference in Oshkosh. Arena stated she would like to attend. Folcey told her to go ahead and register for it as there remained funding in the conference budget.

S. Peterson stated that the Connect Community county pilot project would likely see no action till after 1/1/16. They are working on billing procedures and verbiage.

The website had 760 visitors last month. The site is doing well. The calendar is very popular. Roll said that the old bikes and berries website is being forwarded to the new site. Roll now has a Facebook page for the history room.

The Monroe County Economic Development conference will be on February 26, 2016. The site is to be determined. A tour of the academy at Fort McCoy will be done on 9/22/15. Anyone wanting to serve on the committee is welcome. Some topics on the agenda will be workforce and tax laws.

S. Peterson gave his ED report. It included:

* Greg Evans purchased Monroe County Publishers
* Brenengen’s renovation is going well.
* Gordy’s will shortly have their gas pumps in and the Caribou Coffee operating.
* Cashton High School expansion is ahead of schedule.
* A county business retention committee has been formed. S. Peterson is the leader. It is a 7 Rivers Regional project.
* He will attend the Wisconsin Economic Development Association meeting at Chula Vista.
* Denny’s Restaurant is going into the Hearty Platter Restaurant on Tomah’s north side.
* He attended the economic summit in Eau Claire, WI. 200 people were there. 17 secretaries of state departments attended.

Hyma mentioned the Will to Ben Bicycle Tour, October 3-9, and a marathon promoter that wants to make Sparta his Wisconsin stop on June 10, 2016. Trail usage was up slightly this year he said.

Arena stated that the Hidden Valleys magazine is coming together. She passed around the full page ad that ran in the September 7, 2015 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. It was an ad for Hidden Valleys and promoted all nine counties and the partners Hidden Valleys works with.

S. Peterson noted that WATA will be bringing a wedding barn bill to the state legislature in January 2016. Marshfield, Eau Claire and Fond du Lac are the 3 finalists for the WATA conference in 2016. They are getting good feedback from the Itineraries Magazine and will be doing their own magazine in 2016.

Roll understands that the front door to the history room will be closed for a month beginning next week. Over 200 people attended the plein air painting event and mosaic making on August 22nd at the Wegner Grotto in Cataract. That’s up from the 53 who came last year. 2/3 of the attendees were from our county. He will bring a quote on printing more Wegner Grotto brochures to the next meeting. Roll handed out information on genealogy classes slated for Saturdays in September at the history room. Hannah Scholze will be leading the sessions.

S. Peterson said the Downtown Revitalization Seminar has been moved to November 19, 2015 at the Cashton Community Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost to attend is $20. Register at [www.7riversalliance.org](http://www.7riversalliance.org).

There was discussion on the WCA conference. Arena will check to see if the basket items are being put together from the two chambers. Fournier has the stress grenades.

Fournier noted that the history center will be opening tomorrow for Patriot Day and the retiree day. It will be open from 9 a.m.to 3 p.m. and is handicap accessible. She said that Fort McCoy only had one motor coach visit this year which is noticeably down. Arena noted that we have stopped promoting motor coach travel to the area. Years ago we went to travel shows promoting the county.

Folcey noted that the revolving loan fund brochure needs updating. It will be on another month’s agenda.

D. Peterson updated the committee on property and purchasing in the county. Schroeder gave a highway update.

The committee thanked Fournier for all her years of serving on the committee. Fournier said she came on board in 1989 and will highly recommend that a Fort McCoy liaison continue to be part of the committee.

The next meeting will be October 15, 2015 at a Tomah location. S. Peterson will make arrangements.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bernie Arena*

Recorder