



Vilas County Tourism &
Publicity Committee Meeting
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November 5, 2013

Members Present: Linda Thorpe, Emil Bakka, Leon Kukanich, Mark Rogacki

Member(s) Excused: Ron DeBruyne

Others Present: Cindy Burzinski, Vilas County Tourism
Janet Christianson, Vilas County Tourism
Bob Egan, Vilas County Economic Development Corporation
Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages
Jason Hilger, Vilas Count Finance Director
Joe VanDeLaarschot, Lakeland Times

Thorpe called the regular meeting to order at 9:00am in Conference Room #2 of the Vilas County Courthouse. The meeting was properly posted and notices sent to all media provided on October 29, 2013.

Motion by Bakka to accept the agenda to be taken in any order at the discretion of the chair, seconded by Kukanich; motion carried.

Motion by Kukanich, to approve the minutes of September 3, 2013 as distributed, seconded by Bakka; motion carried.

Introductions –

Economic Development Corporation Report – Egan noted the opening of the manufacturing incubator in Eagle River (to be known as Highway 70 Business Park) with two (2) businesses ready to move in and another 4-5 interested; Manitowish Waters incubator has 4 businesses and 1 potential. He also provided updates on the E-seed classes and discussed the recent vote on the Phelps communication tower.

Consolidation of Education, Tourism and Economic Development – With the recently approved committee consolidation completed, committees were requested to review their existing standing rules. After raising several questions regarding consolidation format, Rogacki was referred to the Legislative & Judicial Committee (meeting the following day). As discussion continued more questions evolved regarding committee structure, combined meeting format (possibly more written reports vs. presentations), etc. with Thorpe feeling additional information would be forthcoming and requested Committee members review the standing rules for discussion at December's meeting.

2014 and 2015 Budget Update – The 2014 Budget was approved at the October County Board meeting with no changes affecting the Tourism Department budget. Burzinski expressed appreciate to Hilger for his efforts and for his availability for explanation and continual updates throughout the process.

Musky Marathon – Current registrations are higher than at the same time last year while total registrations remain below previous year numbers. After considerable review it was recommended that the Marathon be suspended after the 2013 season and research made of/for a possible alternate activity/event. **Motion by Rogacki to support the recommendation to forego the Vilas County Musky Marathon for 2014 and for the Department to research a possible alternate activity/event, seconded by Bakka, motion carried.** The Marathon page in the Visitor Guide page will be formatted as a 'thank you for the memories' page. The Musky Marathon line item in the 2014 budget will be reallocated to the replacement activity or, if one is not developed, for county-wide promotional purposes.



Vilas County Chamber – Smith provided a recap of the Fall Resort Tour noting it was well attended with positive feedback regarding the featured speaker, Michelle Madl-Soehren from Nicolet College.

There was no October meeting held because of the Resort Tour so there is no updated information on the chamber director vacancies in Phelps and St. Germain.

The Chamber is starting plans for the annual dinner tentatively scheduled for February in Arbor Vitae.

The next Chamber meeting will be in Eagle River on November 14th.

2014 Vilas County Travel Guide – As updates and review of the Guide continue, a copy of the proposed cover was shown to the Committee with Pilch noting that ad sales had increased slightly. When Rogacki questioned the unpaid ad sales, Pilch reiterated that as no county dollars are involved in the Guide, unpaid ad sales remained P&B's responsibility

Pilch & Barnet – The Committee discussed Pilch & Barnet's Renewal of Contract for 2014. Noting there were no changes from the previous year and that the original contract and renewal had been reviewed by Corporation Counsel, **motion by Bakka to renew the contract with Pilch & Barnet for 2014, seconded by Kukanich.** During discussion, Rogacki questioned lack of a mediation/arbitration clause. Pilch and Burzinski believed the mediation/arbitration clause was not in the contract due to the inclusion of the 'out clause'. Rogacki requested Corporation Counsel's opinion regarding including a mediation/arbitration clause. When asked why the Department and agency had a one-year contract and not a multiple year or 'rolling horizon' contract, Pilch noted that past Committees had felt the one-year contract a better fit as the County's (therefore, the Department's) budget needed to be approved each November. The Committee felt that with the move toward multi-year budgeting, a longer contract renewal may be considered. Pilch was directed to provide a price comparison to the Committee regarding one- and three-year contracts. **Motion carried.**

5-County Branding (The NorthwoodsofWisconsin.com) – Pilch noted that the marketing partnership had completed the 3rd and final year of JEM grant funding on October 31st. At a meeting the day prior to this meeting, the group had reaffirmed their support of the marketing partnership by allocating continued funding.

Corporation Counsel had informed Burzinski that her office would not provide review of the trademark statement as it is outside their area of expertise. The marketing partnership, in order to move the trademark process along, recommended that Pilch & Barnet become applicant for the trademark and hold it for the partnership (Vilas, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, and Oneida Counties). A trademark policy agreement was being developed with some highlights being:

- a) only members of the marketing group in good standing (paid up in dues) could use;
- b) P&B could use only for those in the partnership and upon approval of the partnership; and
- c) procedure for others in specified geographical area (East of Hwy 13; South of Hwy 2; North of Hwy 64; and West of Hwy 141) to join the partnership (paid up dues plus an additional fee of \$5,000 to defray initial costs and necessary ad redesigns)

While application approval is not guaranteed, one positive aspect was the 'inclusive' not 'exclusive' nature of the trademark usage. While the partnership recommended P&B become the applicant, they also ask the support of each of the county oversight committees. Lacking a motion to do so, Thorpe turned over the chair of the meeting to Bakka. **Motion by Thorpe to support Pilch & Barnet as applicant for the trademark 'the Northwoods of Wisconsin' and to hold such trademark for use by and the protection of the Northwoods of Wisconsin – Five County Branding Marketing Partnership; seconded by Rogacki; motion carried.** Bakka returned chair of the meeting to Thorpe.



As deadlines approach for January/February ad placements, Pilch questioned if the Committee had any changes to the proposed 2014 media schedule (distributed in September and pending budget approval). Hilger noted that as the budget has already passed and if the media schedule was part of the County Promo portion of the Tourism budget, he did not see that the Committee needed to take any further action. As long as the total Promo line item was not affected, it was up to Burzinski to stay within the budget as approved. Burzinski noted she will share the 2014 media schedule with the Chambers so it can be integrated into their marketing plans.

Vilas County Non-Motorized Trail Map/App Project – Burzinski announced the Department had received a Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant in the amount of \$39,550 for the development of a comprehensive non-motorized trail map and app. To date individuals from the Wisconsin Dept of Natural Resources, the Northern Highland American Legion State Forest, the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Wisconsin Valley Improvement, area biking groups, chambers of commerce and county departments are providing information and assistance to the Tourism Department on this project. With a limited timeframe on this project, the map is planned for completion in early January with an iPhone app to follow by mid-May.

Department Report – Burzinski distributed the October monthly report noting that inquiries for 2013 have already exceeded the number in 2012 and that Internet visits appear very close to the same.

Correspondence/Communication – Burzinski reminded members that as a member of the Governor's Tourism Council she had been invited to participate in a U.S. Travel Association facilitated Tourism Roundtable with U.S. Senator Ron Johnson in Green Bay in November.

Next meeting – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2013 at 9am in Conference Room #2 of the Vilas County Courthouse.

There being no further items on the agenda, Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 11:04am

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

Minutes reflect the notations of the recorder and are subject to change by the Committee.