

Members Present: Linda L Thorpe, Emil Bakka, Charles Rayala

Members Excused: James Behling, Erv Teichmiller

Department Personnel Present: Cindy Burzinski, Vilas County Tourism  
Janet Christianson, Vilas County Tourism

Others Present: Cathy Logan-Weber, Vilas County Chamber  
Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet, Inc.  
Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn  
Al Hanley, Assured Associates

Media Present: Eric Johnson, 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 February 24, 2010.

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

**Motion by Rayala, seconded by Balla to approve the minutes of February 2, 2010 as distributed; motion carried.**

**Introductions/Announcements** – None.

**2010 Vilas County Visitor Guide** – Hanley distributed copies of the 2010 Vilas County Visitor Guide financial report noting the effect of decreased ad sales. He also submitted a contract proposal for the 2011 Vilas County Visitor Guide. Thorpe indicated the proposal would be placed on a future agenda.

Hanley also noted the final 3500 copies of the 2009 Vilas County Visitor Guide were being distributed.

**Musky Marathon** – The invitations for the March 23<sup>rd</sup> awards presentation have been distributed and responses are being received. Several sponsors have already extended sponsorship for 2010.

As suggested at the February meeting, the statement ‘The musky must be legal for the waterbody fished.’ was proposed to be included as part of #1 under the general rules. After discussion the statement was revised to read “Must be legal sized musky for the waterbody fished.”

Christianson noted the promotional pens had been received and looked great. They would be distributed to registrants during the Marathon, at local musky tournaments and at sport shows. Burzinski noted she had been able to take last year’s pens to the Madison Fishing Show and they had been a popular item.

**Vilas County Chamber** – Logan-Weber noted the Chamber will be working with a local map producer on the next Vilas/Oneida County map. While the County map has historically been produced every two years, the producer is offering to reduce ad prices slightly if the Chamber would consider producing a map every year. During discussion it was noted that considering economic conditions, perhaps keeping the map production at every two years is the best option at this time.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the Artists Interactive JEM Grant is in full swing as artists are updating their information and new artists are being added to the website.

The Annual Chamber Dinner had been well attended and there were many positive comments regarding the revised format which will be taken into consideration during the planning of next year's dinner.

The next Vilas County Chamber meeting will be March 11 at 10am at the Plum Lake Town Hall.

**Pilch & Barnet** – Pilch noted the website is nearing completion with some final 'tweaking' of linked pages still to be done. Anticipate a mid-March launch date. The County's Facebook page has been activated and has started to grow.

The Spring postcard mailing was recently distributed so responses should be noticed by the end of March. Pilch distributed the January monthly report. Bakka questioned the status of the fishing packages project. Both Pilch and Burzinski indicated a letter had been distributed to all Chambers describing the opportunity for guides and businesses to develop a package (discount offer, guiding/lodging combination, etc.) to be listed at no charge on their Chamber website, on [www.vilas.org](http://www.vilas.org) and on [www.northwoods-fishing.com](http://www.northwoods-fishing.com). To date, seven (7) guides had submitted packages and were listed on the websites which is very promising.

The Chambers had also distributed information regarding similarly styled biking packages (again discount offers, biking/lodging, biking/dining, etc.) which would be placed on their Chamber website, on [www.vilas.org](http://www.vilas.org) and on [www.northwoods-biking.com](http://www.northwoods-biking.com). To date, six (6) packages have been listed on the websites which is also very promising.

Pilch noted discussions continue regarding a regional branding effort for Oneida, Vilas, Forest, Lincoln and Langlade Counties and will keep the Committee updated.

**Original Gangster's Paradise JEM Grant** – Pilch indicated the evaluation process had been completed and the final report was being prepared to submit to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism. After reviewing the positive responses, she thought the County should try for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year JEM Grant and would begin working on the application in the next few days as JEM Grant applications are due April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Appointee to the Snowmobile Safety Committee** – Thorpe noted a suggestion had been made to include a tourism representative on the Snowmobile Safety Committee, a subcommittee of the Forestry & Recreation Committee. Current Safety Committee members include representatives from the Sheriff's Department, Public Health, Forestry Committee, the Snowmobile Alliance and local snowmobile clubs and reports to the Forestry, Recreation and Land Committee. During discussion it was noted that while safety on the snowmobile trails is very important and while snowmobiling is a significant contributor to the tourism economy of the County, the Tourism Committee appreciated the suggestion, however, felt it was not necessary for a tourism representative to sit on such a subcommittee

**Out of County Travel** – Thorpe indicated the hotel invoice had been received for the Governor's Conference and noted the room charge exceeded the County's approved rate by \$15/night; however, there was a provision for exceeding the rate with Committee approval. **Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to authorize the expenditure of \$115/night room rate for the Governor's Tourism Conference for both Burzinski and Thorpe; motion carried.**

**Department Reports** – Due to the early meeting date, the February report was not available; however, the monthly report for January was distributed. Burzinski noted that the website visits were up as compared to the same period in 2009.

Burzinski reported that the Madison Fishing show appeared to be well attended (final numbers were not yet available). There had been a good distribution of Visitor Guides and County maps during the time she manned the booth. She indicated many people were familiar with the area and were appreciative of the opportunity to get updated information/brochures. She also noted that one of the vendor booths had been distributing a free ‘scrubie-type cloth’ for cleaning boats to help prevent the movement of invasive species and that she had brought back a sample to share with Ritter, Invasive Species Coordinator.

She noted that she getting ready for Canoecopia in Madison which is just before the Governor’s Conference.

**Budget/Approval of Bills** – Burzinski distributed the January budget report indicating everything was in line. As part of the website update and to provide concise information for the user, Burzinski noted the trail maps needed to be slightly ‘tweaked’ to include map legends and icons and Pilch and Barnet indicated the cost would be \$250 for all of the maps. **Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to approve allocating \$250 from County Promo for Pilch & Barnet to complete the map update project for the website; motion carried.**

**Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to approve the budget and bills as presented – Cindy L. Burzinski - \$344.66; Janet Christianson - \$15.50; Clarion Suites - \$93.00; Wisconsin Counties Association - \$20.00; Clermont Office Supply - \$89.91; Lambeau Telecom Co. - \$28.57; Wildwood Promotions - \$1331.27; Pilch & Barnet - \$8,000.00; motion carried**

**Correspondence** – Rayala noted he had an opportunity to visit Little Bohemia and was amazed at the number of visitors who were still coming to see the bullet holes.

**Next meeting** – Next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2010 at 9am in Conference Room #2. Thorpe indicated she would be absent (out of town). She further noted that as this is an election year, Committee membership may change after the April meeting but remaining members needed to be aware of possible Request for Proposal (RFP) projects in the coming months.

**Motion by Bakka, seconded by Rayala to adjourn at 9:45am; motion carried.**

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

Respectfully submitted, Janet Christianson