



Vilas County Tourism &  
Publicity Committee Meeting  
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August 7, 2012

Members Present: Linda Thorpe, Emil Bakka, Ron DeBruyne, Leon Kukanich, Ralph Sitzberger

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

Others Present: Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet  
Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages  
Mary Beth Leopold, Director, Manitowish Waters Chamber of Commerce

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 July 31 2012.

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

**Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Sitzberger to approve the minutes of July 3, 2012 as distributed; motion carried.**

**Introductions –**

**Musky Marathon** – Update on the current number of registrations. Planning for promoting 50<sup>th</sup> annual will start soon and any ideas the Committee may have for promoting the event would be welcome.

**Vilas County Chamber.** Chambers remain busy with summer events and are currently reviewing a print ad for the winter edition of Fun in Wisconsin. Next meeting is August 16<sup>th</sup> in Lac du Flambeau.

Pilch indicated initial discussion with chamber officers regarding holding a strategic planning session for all chamber representatives in September. As budgets continue to tighten (while media costs continue to increase about 3%-7% per year) and while discussion and interaction between the chambers, Tourism and Pilch and Barnet has been very rewarding, all parties felt this may be a good time to develop a 3-5 year plan which would be helpful for planning/budgeting purposes and also provide continuity in instances of chamber staff and/or Committee turnover. Sitzberger wondered if there may be resources available from the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission which would be helpful.

**Pilch & Barnet** – Pilch indicated she will present a media schedule for review at the September meeting. The schedule will provide some flexibility depending on the final approved Tourism budget. The Committee had the opportunity to view some of the online and Facebook strategies currently in use while Pilch reviewed some of the marketing strategies (expanded web presence, expanded Facebook opportunities, direct marketing, YouTube opportunities, etc.) the P&B team were considering for 2013.

**Five County Branding Grant** – Pilch showed an overview of the website [TheNorthwoodsofWisconsin.com](http://TheNorthwoodsofWisconsin.com) including the personality survey, avatars and itineraries developed by the Counties as well as several individual communities.



Burzinski indicated she was gathering information requested by the Corporation Counsel for her review of trademarking/copyrighting as requested by the Committee. **Motion by Sitzberger, to have Burzinski convey to the 5-county branding committee this Committee's desire to secure 'the Northwoods' for the area by having Vilas County pursue the trademark/copyright for TheNorthwoodsofWisconsin with the intent to develop agreements among the 5-county membership for the use of said trademark/copyright and to have Burzinski pursue the trademark/copyright process for the Committee, seconded by DeBruyne.** During discussion, it was noted that while the original registration fee may be reasonable, the cost to maintain said registration and/or develop said agreements needed to be considered. **Motion carried.**

**2011 Annual Report** - The Committee was very impressed with the annual report and felt it was important that the Economic Development Corporation also receive copies. Burzinski noted that as this was the first year Longwoods International had conducted the tourism study for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, there were still some statistics to clarify before they could be included in the report and she hoped to have those done soon. **Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Bakka to approve the Vilas County Tourism & Publicity 2011 Annual Report and forward same to the County Board for approval.** During discussion the Committee wondered if the reports could be updated and distributed prior to the August County Board meeting so the report could be approved at that time. Burzinski noted every effort will be made to secure the necessary information and have copies ready for distribution. **Motion carried.**

Noting there are several new members on the Board, **motion by DeBruyne, seconded by Sitzberger that Chairwoman Thorpe request Chairman Favorite include a Tourism presentation (and if completed, approval of the Annual Report) on the August County Board agenda; motion carried.**

**2013 Vilas County Travel Guide** – Ad sales are proceeding and a sheet of recommendations/updates for the 2013 Guide was distributed for review

**Out of County Travel** – None.

**Department Reports** – Burzinski distributed the July monthly report and indicated the website visits and inquiries were both up over the same time period last year

**Budget/Approval of Bills** – Burzinski distributed the monthly budget report and indicated her concern over the telephone and postage line items. A recent change by the Clerk's office in the distribution of courthouse telephone expenses has caused the monthly departmental charges to more than double from that budgeted by the Department. Additionally, as the Department needs to mail and UPS printed tourism information as requested, postage costs increase. Burzinski noted she had spoken with Hilger, Finance Officer about the possibility of these two line items ending in the red and he felt the overall concern was that the total department budget didn't end in the red. This may mean that other line items would need to stay unspent to accomplish staying in the black.

Some confusion was expressed regarding the new recommended procedure regarding the approval/signing of vouchers and the Committee decided to continue the previous procedure for this month. **Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Kukanich, to approve the budget and bills as presented; motion carried.**



As the 2013 department budget must be completed by September, Burzinski asked the Committee for their thoughts and input regarding the department budget. Concern was expressed that by zero increase in marketing and promotion (which was noted earlier as increasing 3%-7% each year), the department is actually losing marketing power. The Committee felt that an increase in the marketing/promotion line item of at least 3% would at least keep the department even in marketing power while increases in telephone and postage are needed to accomplish the mission of the department in distributing and providing tourism information to visitors and instructed Burzinski to prepare the budget with these increases as discussed.

**Correspondence/Communication** – None.

**Next meeting** – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for September 4, 2012 at 9am in Conference Room #2.

**With no further items on the agenda, Chairperson Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 11:13am.**

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

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