

Members Present: Linda Thorpe, Ron De Bruyne, Leon Kukanich, Ralph Sitzberger  
Member(s) Excused: Emil Bakka

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

Others Present: Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages  
Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet  
Joe Van De Laarschot, 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 1, 2012.

**Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Sitzberger 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 January 3, 2011 as distributed; motion carried.**

**Introductions** – All parties were introduced.

**Musky Marathon** – Christianson indicated the final standings had been posted to the Tourism website and distributed to media, along with press releases to the finalists' hometown newspapers, and the plaques had been ordered. The request for the Marathon to be placed on the March agenda for plaque presentations has been forwarded to the County Clerk. The invitations (to plaque winners, sponsors and registration stations) should be distributed in the next couple of weeks.

Christianson indicated receiving telephone calls regarding a missing registration. A registration for a musky caught in early November had never been received by the Marathon office. The guide only recently checked the website and as the musky was not listed, contacted the registration station, the local Chamber office and the Tourism office for a solution. While an unfortunate circumstance, as the registration deadline was long past, the Committee determined the musky could not be registered. A letter will be prepared and sent to the guide. Christianson noted the local chamber was working with the registration station on the situation. During discussion Sitzberger suggested perhaps more reminders (a mailing, email, etc.) to the registration stations to forward along all registrations in a timely manner. Other suggestions will be discussed when the rules for the 2012 Marathon are reviewed at the March meeting.

Christianson also distributed a draft of the Marathon final report for 2011 which follows the format of previous years. Sitzberger requested extra copies to share with possible sponsors and additional suggestions were made as to distribution.

**Vilas County Chamber** – Burzinski indicated the Chamber is busy planning for the Annual Dinner at Smokey's Restaurant and Supper Club in Manitowish Waters on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Dave Fantle, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Tourism is the featured speaker.

The next Chamber meeting is February 9 at 1pm in Minocqua.

**Pilch & Barnet** – Burzinski distributed copies of the JS Online banner ads, the Vilas County Winter E-newsletter, the Wisconsin Travel Best Bets newsletter promo (romantic getaway) and the Midwest Living insert card. Pilch also noted the winter television ads were running on CBS network in Milwaukee and public television in Chicago. Pilch also noted that additional public television slots may be available depending on the scheduling of political ads.

Pilch noted that Wisconsin Travel Best Bets (WTBB) was developing a contest including 12 of their travel destination tourism clients called “Shift Your Gears” to encourage travel during 2012. Plans are for the contest to run March 1-31 (with semi-finalists selected by April 1 and finalists selected by May 1). One segment of the contest would target the leisure traveler while a second would target travel writers (traditional and bloggers) from the Twin Cities, Madison, Milwaukee and Chicago. Additional details would be forthcoming to the participating clients along with a letter to solicit donations (lodging, dining and recreational activities) to create the prize packages.

Pilch indicated they were working with Shelly Husky to develop a winter photo shoot for Vilas County. Sitzberger wondered if some snowmobile safety shots could be included. Burzinski indicated this shoot could accomplish several goals (current photos for Tourism, safety shots for the Snowmobile Safety Committee and banner photos for display and shows and expos) and that she is working closely with Dale Mayo who is coordinating the sleds, diverse users, etc. Funding for the photo shoot would be from the Shows and Expos line item.

**Five County Branding Grant** – Pilch indicated that The Northwoods of Wisconsin.com group (5 County Branding Committee) would be meeting later this day to review the copy and design concepts for the proposed app along with the grant application and budget (application deadline April 1<sup>st</sup>). The Committee has been gathering letters of support from local chambers and businesses. The target date for launch of the app is on schedule for early March.

**2012 Vilas County Travel Guide** – Pilch indicated the final financial report for the 2012 Visitor Guide would be distributed at the March meeting. She also noted some wrong calendar information had been included in one of the ads and that Pilch & Barnet had compensated the advertiser with additional website promotion and a partial reimbursement of the advertising fee.

The question was raised regarding the affect gasoline prices would have on the summer tourism. As noted in previous years, while the price of gasoline does go up, the cost of flying also increases so driving is still a less costly vacation item. Burzinski noted that as people tend to take shorter, quicker trips, packages and/or combination pricing (accommodation/dining, accommodation/recreation activity, etc.) to encourage multiple activities becomes an important item in area tourism promotion.

**Tourism Shows and Expos** – Burzinski noted receiving information from the Green Bay RV show that all of the Vilas County Visitor Guides and campground brochures were distributed as approximately 12,000 attended the show over the 4 days. The first night is usually the most well attended as admission is by donation for the local food pantry. The next scheduled show is the Madison Fishing Expo February 24-26 with Canoeconia in March after the Governor’s Conference.

**Out of County Travel** – None not already approved.

**Department Reports** – The January report was distributed and showed both inquiries and website visits up over the same time period last year.

**Budget/Approval of Bills** – Burzinski distributed the final budget report for 2011. Only 1% of the budget remained as two scheduled activities were not attended. The first budget report for 2012 was also distributed and reviewed.

**Motion by DeBruyne, seconded by Kukanich, to approve the bills as presented: Vilas County Chamber - \$40.00; Alliant Energy Center (Madison Show) - \$84.00; Alliant Energy Center (Canoecopia) - \$84.00; Clermont Printing, Inc. - \$107.20; Wisconsin Governor's Conference on Tourism - \$200.00; Janet Christianson \_ \$20.65; Pilch & Barnet - \$15,000.00; Cindy Burzinski - \$127.65; Lambeau Telecom - \$27.23; US Postmaster - \$3,000.00; motion carried.**

**Agenda Format & Department Oversight Activities** – Using a handout distributed to county board supervisors, Thorpe reviewed general duties of County Board Supervisors and Department Heads/staff along with their relationship in conducting county business. As part of the County Board's committee review, all oversight committees were being asked to review their agendas, determine which actions could be handled by Department heads/staff, etc. in an effort to streamline, combine where applicable, etc. to avoid micro-management of day-to-day county business. Thorpe asked Committee members review the Tourism agenda items for discussion at the March meeting.

**Correspondence/Communication** – Burzinski updated the Committee on departmental office moves presented at the last Public Property Committee meeting. Tourism & Publicity will be moving to space vacated by either Commission on Aging (possibly moving to ADRC) or Information Technology (moving to former Public Health offices). The date for the move has not yet been determined. The Land & Water Conservation Department is moving to space in the Zoning Department and the Family Living and Nutrition offices of Extension will be moving to the space vacated by Land & Water. The Human Resources Department will be moving to the Family Living & Nutrition offices across from the County Clerk. These office moves are expected to occur within the next couple weeks.

**Next meeting** – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2012 at 1pm in Conference Room #2.

**There being no further items on the agenda, Chairperson Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 10:20am.**

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

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