

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

Members Excused: Ron De Bruyne,

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

Others Present: Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages

Media: Laurel Carlson, Lakeland Times
Marcus Neseemann, 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 25, 2011.

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 Sitzberger, seconded by Kukanich, to approve the minutes of October 4, 2011 as distributed; motion carried.

Introductions - .

Musky Marathon – While slightly lower than previous years, registrations remain constant. Several photos submitted during the past week were passed around to the Committee.

Vilas County Chamber – Burzinski indicated the Fall/Winter Resort Tour held on October 13th in the Sayner/Star Lake and St. Germain areas had gone well. Approximately 32 participants toured the Whitetail Lodge, Idle Hours Resort, Errington's Resort and Hintz's North Star Lodge. The guest speaker was Charles Metelka, tourism sociologist and Chairman of the Department of Hospitality and Tourism in the School of Hospitality Leadership at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Vilas County Tourism Department staff are working with area chambers on updates for the 5th edition of TREK the Northwoods Trails.

The next Chamber meeting is scheduled for November 10th at 1pm in Eagle River and will be working on plans for the Chamber dinner.

Pilch & Barnet – Burzinski presented the search engine optimization (SEO) plan as drafted by Pilch & Barnet. The Committee reviewed the SEO Action Plan and the detailed page descriptions for the various sections and offered some suggestions:

- agreed with expanding the vacation package, biking, dining and lodging page descriptors;
- rename the paddling section – Canoeing, Kayaking and Paddling (provides for expansion such as paddleboarding, etc.) Laeser also noted more website hits on his business's website when he incorporated canoeing and kayaking along with paddling in the menu selection;

- developing a 'Crappie/Panfish' page – year-round fishing opportunities for families. Also agreed that this would be good place for development of blog (fishing reports by guides, stories by anglers, etc.) and process to upload photos from contributors. Also discussed including links to list of pan fishing piers (currently part of Disabled Access directory) and to list of public access waters (currently included in Visitor Guide); and
- agreed with links to various activities from community descriptions. Recommended broader description for the Minocqua Area to include Arbor Vitae and Woodruff in the descriptions.

These Committee suggestions along with minor changes noted by Department personnel will be forwarded to Pilch & Barnet who anticipated incorporating changes in the website by early 2012.

Five County Branding Grant – Burzinski indicated 2nd year grant application had been denied and the grant committee was working on a convenient meeting date or conference call time to discuss options available.

2012 Vilas County Travel Guide – A copy of the first draft of the 2012 Visitor Guide was passed around for review. While the Committee felt the general layout was fine, the Committee felt the cover was just 'off' somehow. While the finished cover (in higher resolution and in glossy print) may help, they couldn't put their finger on it but it just didn't strike them as it had before. Some thoughts included

- Too busy/crowded at the top
- Perhaps move the 2012 date
- Less green (grass)
- Black border on sides (to frame the photo)
- Perhaps other color combinations for the lettering

These concerns will be forwarded to Pilch & Barnet. Burzinski indicated staff will complete proofing the first draft by the end of the week and forwarding changes/updates to Pilch & Barnet for the 2nd draft.

2012 Tourism & Publicity Budget – Burzinski indicated the proposed 2012 budget for Tourism & Publicity had been approved as presented to the Finance Committee and will go forward to the full County Board at the November 8th meeting.

Tourism Shows and Expos – Burzinski noted that North Central ITBEC had confirmed attending the Green Bay RV Expo (January) and Canoecopia (March) in 2012. Still under discussion is attending the Madison Fishing Expo and the Wisconsin State Fair (providing booth available in the Wisconsin Products Pavilion).

Out of County Travel – None anticipated.

Department Reports – With the meeting so early in the month, the October report is not available.

Burzinski reported that the Vilas Area Silent Sports Association (VASSA) had asked her to sit on the Board of Directors starting in 2012. The Committee felt this was an opportunity to share information and cooperate on a vital recreational resource. Sitzberger questioned the amount of travel and meetings Burzinski would need to attend. Burzinski noted that thus far most meetings have been in the evenings and held at Trees for Tomorrow. As there were some additional questions Burzinski had, this item will be placed on the December agenda.

Burzinski noted receiving a call from Jeff Currie of Great Headwaters Trails (GHT) regarding the use of the county logo for trail signage. With the development of the Conover/Phelps trail (Songhill Lane) and the testing of new trail cover material (Highway 70), the GHT is discussing placing signs with their logo, the County logo and the Pitlik & Wick logo. GHT will also be contacting the Highway and Forestry Committees. As the exact content of the signs is not known at this time, the Committee requested Currie be placed on the December agenda.

Budget/Approval of Bills – Burzinski distributed the monthly bills and budget report and indicated all items remain on target. . **Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Bakka, to approve the bills as presented: Cindy Burzinski - \$140.71; Janet Christianson - \$47.73; Lambeau Telecom - \$28.30; US Postmaster - \$190.00; motion carried.**

Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Bakka to approve the budget as presented; motion carried.

Correspondence/Communication – Bakka and Sitzberger asked the status of the letter regarding the lack of northern representation on the Governor’s Tourism Council. While the letter had not been sent, Burzinski noted receiving a call from Secretary Klett indicating that she was aware of the situation and that something was in the plan in the next round to fill the void. Noting the filling of such positions is political and not sure as to when the ‘next round’ actually is, the Committee remains concerned about the impact a lack of representation on the Council has on the northwoods area.

Next meeting – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for December 6, at 9am in Conference Room #2.

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

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

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