

Members Present: Linda Thorpe, Emil Bakka, James Behling, Ron DeBruyne, Leon Kukanich

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

Others Present: Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet
Austin Hetrick, Pilch & Barnet
Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages

Thorpe called the regular meeting to order at 9:01am in Conference Room #2 of the Vilas County Courthouse. The meeting was properly posted and notices sent to all media provided on February 22, 2011, with amended agenda posted and distributed to same on February 23, 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 Bakka, seconded by Kukanich to approve the minutes of February 1, 2011 as distributed; motion carried.

Introductions – All present introduced themselves.

Musky Marathon – Christianson reported the formal invitations to the winners, sponsors and registration stations had been sent out and responses had been coming in.

The Committee was informed the sponsor for the plaques for the Men's and Women's Kept Divisions, noting a decrease in the number of fish being registered in those categories and for other reasons, had indicated they would like to provide "incentive" prizes (those prizes sent to the 10th, 20th, etc. registrants) instead of plaques. This means looking for new sponsors for the plaques for those divisions. Having previously noted the decline in the number of registrations in the kept divisions, the Committee discussed the Marathon division structure. After considerable discussion involving several points including, but not limited to removing a division with declining registrations, providing more prize opportunities for remaining registrants, possible addition of prize category, increased Guide involvement in the Marathon, and removal of the kept divisions does not prevent anglers from keeping those fish they wish to keep, **motion by Bakka, seconded by Behling to eliminate the Kept Divisions for a one year trial period; motion carried.** Some additional sponsorship opportunities were then briefly noted (additional prize category, expanding the plaques for the remaining divisions, etc.) for Christianson to communicate to the sponsors and in seeking new sponsors for the Marathon.

Christianson noted that after several years, it was time to order more Marathon envelopes, and provided the Committee with two printing proposals. After review and discussion of the information received, **motion by Behling, seconded by Kukanich to accept the lower bid of \$1,006.75 from Clermont for 5000 peel & seal envelopes; motion carried.**

After inventorying the 'incentive prizes' (pens, frames & tape measures), Christianson indicated a need to reorder items and had updated prices for the Committee. During discussion it was noted some of these prizes had been used the last two years so several other items were suggested and Christianson will look into the cost(s) for those items.

Vilas County Chamber – Burzinski noted the Chamber and Pilch are proceeding with the development of the rules and procedures for the Spring Fling Giveaway which would run in May 1 – June 30, 2011. As a contact button would be added to the Tourism website (www.vilas.org), copies of the contest materials were being prepared to submit to Corporation Counsel for review.

Burzinski noted the next meeting was scheduled for March 10 with officer nominations one of the major agenda items.

Thorpe indicated she thought the Chamber Dinner on February 24th went well, the food was good and the speaker prompted considerable discussion.

Pilch & Barnet – A copy of the Midwest Living ad was distributed for Committee review and Pilch explained the cost savings and advertising advantages between a traditional ad and the card/insert.

The direct mail card (dreaming) for February was dropped in late January and responses will be forwarded for fulfillment as they are received.

The TV commercials are running as scheduled.

Pilch noted her agency is keeping a close eye on the increasing gas prices as they may affect spring/summer travel; however, as airline prices are also increasing, travelers generally take a closer look at drive-to destinations closer to home. When asked about the effect the state's budget turmoil may have on tourism, Pilch indicated they are also watching the effects of program budget cuts in all areas (such as water testing, licensing, grant dollars, etc.) as they may affect travelers' perception of the area as well as Vilas County's distance from the tension both physically and emotionally.

Pilch reported that the 5-County branding promotion is continuing slowly. A survey of Pond Hockey participants was conducted and yielded valuable information on the perception and view of the area by first time visitors. With few winter events remaining, the group will coordinate information with the Klondike Days committee as they do some surveying of participants.

While no additional grant funding was received for Artists Interactive, Pilch noted the involved counties were continuing the website and contacting artists for information and event updates.

The logo/template project was completed and all information forwarded to Tourism & Publicity for distribution to the departments.

Pilch also informed the Committee of some outstanding invoices for the 2011 Visitor Guide and that reminder notices had been sent to the businesses.

Budget/Approval of Bills – Burzinski distributed the monthly budget report. **Motion by Behling, seconded by Bakka to pay the bills as presented: Clarion Suites - \$88.00; Florida Micro – \$143.43; Wisconsin Counties Association - \$20.00; Lambeau, LLC - \$31.86; Clermont Printing & Office Supply - \$123.42; Cindy L. Burzinski - \$338.82; Janet Christianson - \$41.82; Pilch & Barnet - \$25,300.00; Sheraton-Madison - \$70.00; motion carried.**

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

Out of County Travel – None not previously approved. (Kukanich left)

Department Reports – Copies of the January Pilch & Barnet report were distributed. Both Burzinski and Pilch noted the reports had been revised to include more website statistical data on visitor use of the site. With this expansion of website statistics, and to avoid duplication of information, the report prepared by the Department will remove the website information and continue providing information on where requestors learned of Vilas County.

Correspondence/Communication – Behling noted that VASSA was discussing alternatives as they were unable to coordinate with the Bayfield group on an economic survey/study as originally intended. Pilch indicated she has been contacted by Currie and arranged a meeting with him to discuss promotional/grant options.

DeBruyne informed the Committee of an initiative in Phelps–Conover–Land O’Lakes area to establish ATV/UTV routes on town and county roads and explained the difference between trails and routes. He also reiterated his goal as a member of the Committee to promote the area and support area businesses.

Behling forwarded his wife’s appreciation of the thank you for the holiday ornaments provided to the Department/Committee.

Next meeting – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for April 5, 2011, at 9am in Conference Room #2.

There being no further items on the agenda for discussion, **Thorpe as Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:05am.**

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

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson