



Vilas County Tourism &  
Publicity Committee Meeting  
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June 5, 2012

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

Member(s) Absent: Ron DeBruyne

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

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

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 May 29, 2012.

**Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Bakka 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 May 1, 2012 as distributed; motion carried.**

**Introductions** – none.

**Musky Marathon** – Christianson noted there is one registration in process. The Committee agreed to her recommendation to revise the format of the weekly updates and website information to show the date, angler's name, city and state, size of fish and the lure used.

Thank you cards for mailing to the Marathon sponsors were signed by those present.

**Vilas County Chamber.** Burzinski noted the chambers were in full swing with their busy season. The next Chamber meeting is June 14 in St. Germain at 1pm. Thorpe noted she will be unable to attend. Bakka indicated an interest in attending. **Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Kukanich to authorize Bakka's attendance at the Vilas County Chamber meeting on June 14; motion carried.**

**Pilch & Barnet** – Pilch presented information on adding a blog to the Tourism website ([www.vilas.org](http://www.vilas.org)) She noted that a blog adds a conversational aspect to a website while providing relevant links and continuing updates needed for web searches. Blogs also provide added flexibility to a website. Some recommended information for the blog might include fishing reports, updated weather information, as well as fall color and winter trail condition reports. **Motion by Bakka, seconded by Sitzberger to have Pilch & Barnet proceed with adding a blog to the tourism website; motion carried.**

Pilch noted they are working closely with Department personnel on additional projects including: developing a Farmer's Market page for the website, an "Escape to Vilas County" promotion and the summer Enewsletter.



The Farmer's Market page will provide information about the various farmer's markets in the county along with a photo gallery of the various markets.

Information about the "Escape to Vilas County" promotion (overview, rules and webpage format) was distributed for review. Local businesses were very generous with prizes for the "Shift Your Gear's" contest (run earlier this year) and this promotion was developed to take advantage of several remaining prizes. The rules and format were designed similar to the 2010 iPad giveaway. It was noted the closing date would be changed to October 15<sup>th</sup> to correspond with the distribution of prizes and to cover any expiration dates. Corporation Counsel is currently reviewing the promotion rules. **Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Kukanich to approve the promotion as presented, pending approval by Corporation Counsel, and to have Burzinski institute the promotion once approved by Corporation Counsel; motion carried.** A copy of the final approved promotion rules will be provided to Chairperson Thorpe.

The summer Enewsletter is being reviewed and the Department is excited about the 'mathematical' theme. New photos are also being included.

Burzinski passed around a sample of the banner ad and landing page for the Chicago Tribune ad placement.

**Five County Branding Grant** – Pilch indicated the Five County Branding project had received 2<sup>nd</sup> year grant funding which would be utilized to further develop the website and provide additional marketing opportunities for the Twin Cities market. The group is also considering other options/ways to 'own' the Northwoods of Wisconsin. When questioned about a trademark, Pilch noted there is continued conversation and exchange of ideas and options as there are five counties involved.

Burzinski noted the counties have created itineraries to use with the personality avatars created earlier. As these county itineraries are general in nature, the various communities will be asked to create 1-2 local itineraries (designed to match the avatars already created) that can be included. The group is also considering incorporating a list of 'must see items' when traveling in the area.

**2012 Vilas County Travel Guide** – No update available on outstanding invoices.

**2013 Vilas County Travel Guide** – Burzinski indicated that a contract had been received from Pilch & Barnett which is currently being reviewed by Corporation Counsel. The contract is the same as last year with changes only in dates and publishing costs (which cannot be finalized until the # of pages and format are known). There is still no charge to the County for the production of the travel guide. **Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Bakka to approve the 2013 Visitor Guide Contract with Pilch & Barnett, pending approval by Corporation Counsel, and authorize Committee Chair Thorpe to sign for the Committee; motion carried.**

**Tourism Shows and Expos** – Burzinski noted the Department would be receiving an invoice for the County's portion of the Green Bay show (which Burzinski was unable to attend).

The Committee congratulated Burzinski on her appointment to the Governor's Tourism Council. She indicated she was waiting to hear about her committee appointments but looked forward to



representing northern Wisconsin on the Council. Pilch noted that with the departure/retirement of both Holperin and (Ruth) Goetz, Burzinski is currently the only representative from northern Wisconsin on the Tourism Council.

**Out of County Travel** – Referencing her appointment to the Governor’s Tourism Council, Burzinski noted that only mileage for Council meetings would be covered by the state; however, lodging and meals associated with Council meetings as well as expenses for attending committee meetings are not. She requested permission to use funds from Tourism Shows and Expos if needed. As she was uncertain as to which committees she would be assigned, she could not provide dates to the Committee; however, attendance at some may be by telephone conference. **Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Kukanich to approve Burzinski’s travel for Governor’s Tourism Council business and committees as needed for the term of her appointment with expenses from the Department’s Out of County Travel and Tourism Shows and Expos budgeted line items as needed; motion carried.** Burzinski noted she will watch the line items carefully and not exceed the budgeted amounts.

**Department Reports** – At the Governor’s Northwoods Summit earlier this year, it was noted there was a population of just over 300,000 (above the Highway 29 corridor) and four (4) subcommittees were created to look at specific needs for the area: Infrastructure (highways, internet, etc.); Taxes (lodging, shared revenue, etc.); Education (importance of tourism to counties, towns, local businesses, etc.) and Marketing (how the area is promoted). Burzinski had volunteered to sit on the Marketing subcommittee. Burzinski reported the group met on May 22<sup>nd</sup> in Phillips and began an inventory of marketing groups and strategies used in the Northwoods (such as NC ITBEC, 5 County Branding, individual counties and communities, etc.). Additional meetings are being scheduled.

The May monthly report was distributed and while inquiries year to date are down from the same time period in 2011, the website visits year to date are higher than the same time period in 2011. This is further evidence of a need to have current, accurate information on the website.

**Budget/Approval of Bills** – Burzinski distributed the monthly budget report noting line items remain on track.

**Motion by Kukanich, seconded by Sitzberger, to approve the budget and bills as presented: Clarion Suites Central - \$70.00; NorthGoods.com \$29.95; Vilas County Chamber - \$400.00; Southern Computer Warehouse - \$107.55; Pilch & Barnet - \$13,750.00 ; Cindy Burzinski - \$223.70; Lambeau Telecom - \$28.97; US Postmaster - \$250.00; motion carried.**

**Correspondence/Communication** – Christianson indicated that Russ Smith, of Smitty Baits, a Marathon sponsor, had been inducted into the Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame in early June.

Sitzberger noted the Land & Water Department was involved in a pilot program called “Ice Your Fish” - an effort to combat transportation of aquatic invasive species via livewell water.

Bakka questioned the formatting of the Vilas County Campground Directory with Minocqua campgrounds listed on the first page. The Directory was developed from information from Vilas County Chambers, which includes Minocqua Area Chamber (formerly Minocqua/Arbor



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Vitae/Woodruff), on their member businesses. Originally designed and formatted in alphabetical order, Department personnel will review the Directory for other options.

**Next meeting** – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for July 3, 2012 at 9am in Conference Room #2.

**With no further items on the agenda, Chairperson Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 10:27am.**

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

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