

Members Present: Linda Thorpe, Emil Bakka, Ron De Bruyne, 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

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 27, 2011.

**Motion by Bakka, 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 Bakka, to approve the minutes of July 5, 2011 as distributed; motion carried.**

**Introductions** – None.

**Musky Marathon** – Registration numbers are slightly down from the previous two years but higher than the preceding years which may be due in part to the extremely warm weather during July. A submitted registration was reviewed and will be registered at 46”.

**Vilas County Chamber** – Burzinski noted the chambers are very busy with events and there was no Chamber meeting for July. The next Chamber meeting is scheduled for August 18 at 9am.

Burzinski also noted the resignation of two chamber directors – Jodi McMahon, Manitowish Waters; and Mary Ann Bickler, Phelps – and noted those boards were seeking replacements. She indicated that both individuals were great to work with, worked hard to represent their chamber and chamber members and wished the boards well in their search for replacements.

**Five County Branding Grant** – Pilch briefly summarized the survey activities of the grant’s first year and indicated she and the branding committee would be reviewing the results at a meeting later this same day. As the 1<sup>st</sup> year involved the survey and research, the committee now needs to decide about applying for a 2<sup>nd</sup> year grant (application deadline September 2<sup>nd</sup>) to use the research to develop a branding and media campaign for the area.

The most common response used to describe the area was ‘Northwoods’ which seems to have already branded the area. She noted that while there have been anecdotal comments about area travelers, the survey results qualify three notable traveling aspects: a) the repeat traveler - that people either tend to travel to the area many times or not at all; b) shorter stays – 4 or less days (long weekends and/or 2-day trips); and c) shorter planning time – 2 weeks to a month and a half. The items along with other survey responses have already provided valuable information which will be used to design Vilas County’s media campaign for 2012 as well as enhancements for the tourism website.

**Pilch & Barnet** – Pilch noted the fall television ads were scheduled to begin the end of August; however, they will watch the weather and if summer seems to be continuing, will run the summer ads as long as possible.

Utilizing the results of the branding survey, Pilch noted she will have a media proposal/budget for the Committee at the September meeting. Attracting that new traveler is harder but once they travel to the area, they tend to become a repeat traveler so looking to develop a campaign toward a younger demographic from the market area (southern & eastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois). Pilch felt there would probably be a heavy emphasis on Internet based advertising as both print and television costs are expected to rise (general increases and election years generally cause advertising rates to increase) and there is no planned increase in the Tourism budget for 2012. Other campaign ideas such as more information about area activities, business/resort packages and updating and diversifying the County's photo library were mentioned.

**2012 Vilas County Travel Guide** – Pilch noted that ad sales have started and sought some guidelines from the Committee as to cover design. After some discussion, Pilch will be contacting the photographer Burzinski has worked with in the past and who provided the 2011 cover photo to let her know what the Committee is looking for. Pilch indicated proposed cover designs would be presented at the September meeting.

**Tourism Shows and Expos** – Burzinski updated the Committee that she would be working four (4) days at the North Central ITBEC Wisconsin State Fair booth. Additionally, to help distribute information about the area, booth workers would be gathering email addresses/contact information to build a database that can be used by NC ITBEC for future e-newsletter distribution.

Per previous discussion regarding embroidered shirts, Burzinski indicated that NC ITBEC had selected T-shirts for booth workers and that she had additionally ordered two polos (approved by the Committee at the July meeting) to be embroidered.

**Name Tags** – The nametag ordering is going well and DeBruyne has offered to pick up the tags when finished. Both Sitzberger and Bakka requested Burzinski to order magnetic backed nametags for them.

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

**Department Reports** – Burzinski distributed Pilch & Barnet's April report and reviewed some report highlights from the July Google Analytics report.

The July Department Report was also distributed noting the similarity with July, 2010 numbers.

**Budget/Approval of Bills** – Burzinski distributed the monthly bills and budget report and indicated all items remain on target. She noted two credits: the Clerk's office had issued a credit for telephone and an ITBEC credit (those entities not assisting in manning a show booth contribute \$100 per show and the funds are distributed among those entities who manned the booth to help defray costs).

**Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Kukanich to approve the budget and vouchers as presented: NorthGoods.com - \$164.45; ULINE - \$97.72; OCEDC - \$78.91; Pilch & Barnet - \$9,550.00; Lambeau Telecom - \$27.55; Clermont Printing, Inc. - \$63.80; motion carried.**

**Proposed 2012 Budget** – Burzinski distributed copies of the proposed 2012 budget as requested by Finance Committee. As no directive was received regarding a percentage budget cut and anticipating no budget increase, there were no changes proposed from the 2011 budget. De Bruyne questioned Pilch on the effect on media campaigns. Pilch indicated that as mentioned previously, no increase is actually is a budget cut as advertising costs continue to rise so the same dollars buy less advertising. She indicated that media efforts would be challenging given the limited dollars; however, her agency will continue to their best in finding media outlets for Vilas County's message. Several Committee members noted that as the Department does not have a revenue line, the Davidson Peterson data and tourism's economic importance to the area should be included in the memo to the Finance Committee

**Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by Kukanich, to approve the 2012 proposed budget as presented, along with supporting information from the Annual Report (Davidson Peterson data) and forward the budget and supporting information to Finance Committee; motion carried.**

**Correspondence/Communication** – Burzinski noted she had met with the CPA regarding the Tourism Department and had provided him with a budget, annual report and the Department's interaction with the Chambers, NC ITBEC and the Governor's Lac du Flambeau Area Promotion Committee. He had questioned the availability of room tax dollars for department use; however, Burzinski noted those were local tax dollars for the chambers and not available to the Tourism Department.

**Closed Session – Motion by De Bruyne, seconded by Bakka to convene into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. Section 19.85(1)(c) for the purpose of considering employment and performance evaluation data of a public employee over which the Tourism & Publicity Committee exercises responsibility; motion carried.**

**Adjourn Closed Session – Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by De Bruyne to adjourn closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat. Section 19.85(1)(c) and return to open session; motion carried.**

**Motion by Sitzberger, seconded by De Bruyne to forward the Committee's performance evaluation of the Tourism Director to Corporation Counsel; motion carried.**

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

There being no further items on the agenda for discussion, **Thorpe as Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:55am.**

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

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