



Vilas County Tourism &  
Publicity Committee Meeting  
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April 2, 2013

Members Present: Emil Bakka, Ron DeBruyne, Leon Kukanich, Mark Rogacki

Members Excused: Linda Thorpe

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

Others Present: Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet  
Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages  
Jason Hilger, Vilas County Finance  
Bob Egan, Vilas County Economic Development Corporation

Bakka 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 March 26, 2013.

**Motion by Kukanich to accept the agenda to be taken in any order at the discretion of the chair, seconded by DeBruyne; motion carried.**

**Motion by DeBruyne to approve the minutes of March 5, 2013 as distributed, seconded by Kukanich; motion carried.**

**Introductions** – None.

**Alternative Funding Sources** – Burzinski noted talking with Price and Bayfield Counties (who expressed interest in using Vilas County as a model) along with other Counties regarding departmental budgets/ revenue funding. She will continue research with other Counties. She also indicated that room tax reform had been discussed at the Governor's Tourism Conference which generated considerable interest as both local chambers and local governmental units depend on room tax dollars – the chambers to support their activities/events that bring tourists to the area and the government units to provide maintenance dollars for the community's infrastructure. Discussion on the effect increased room tax would have on local businesses. Burzinski noted some tourism entities included paid ads on their website to increase revenue. Also noted - the Department of Tourism's revised accounting to non-lapsing accounts (grants, etc.).

**Musky Marathon** – 2012 awards presentation planning for the April meeting continues and sent information to attendees regarding change in County Board meeting date in April. Christianson noted receiving confirmations from several sponsors regarding sponsorship for the 2013 Marathon.

**Vilas County Chamber** – The Chamber continues working with Vilas Area Silent Sports Association (VASSA) on a possible grant application for the development of a silent sports map. The Chamber has also begun work on the Fall Resort Tour (tentatively planned for October). Next Chamber meeting is April 11 at 1pm in Manitowish Waters.

**Pilch & Barnet** – Pilch distributed and reviewed the January and February reports along with the second quarter editorial calendar. She discussed the upcoming Vilas County contest (a simple sweepstakes running May and June with prize redemption June thru December) with sign up either via Facebook or the email newsletter. As the contest is geared to a young adult demographic, P&B is working with chambers to design packages including kayaking, standup-paddleboarding, etc. DeBruyne expressed concern with a media campaign strongly directed to silent sport activities; however Laeser noted that in his experience, while allocating their discretionary funds differently, both motor sport and silent sport tourists did spend money while traveling.



P&B is also including Vilas County in a Wisconsin Travel Best Bets (WTBB) contest running May 15 – July 31 involving awkward family vacation photos. The contest involves viewer voting, trip and cash prizes. P&B will also use the contest as a test of the Instagram (similar to Pinterest) social media option.

**5-County Branding (TheNorthwoodsofWisconsin.com)** – A 3rd year grant application for \$20,000 has been submitted with determination by early May expected. Pilch also noted that all Counties have contributed dollars to the third year which will include completing the copywriting and trademarking of TheNorthwoodsofWisconsin by Vilas County along with developing the necessary policies, procedures and agreements on the usage of same by the member entities. Pilch announced that P&B had recently won the Milwaukee/Madison Regional Addy Award for the best social media campaign for their work with TheNorthwoodsofWisconsin.com.

**Out of County Travel** – No additions to those already approved.

**Department Reports** – Due to the early meeting, there was no March department report. Burzinski showed the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's summer commercial (shot on Plum Lake in Sayner) unveiled at the Governor's Tourism Conference.

Burzinski reported that all three sport shows (WBAY Camping & RV, Madison Fishing Expo and Canoecopia) were well attended with double the amount (as compared to 2012) of materials distributed. Burzinski also noted the materials are not pre-bagged so attendees choose their destination information and there is then less chance of the materials being recycled before leaving the show.

**Paid Bills Report** – Burzinski distributed the Paid Bills and Expense Guideline with Detail reports.  
**Motion by Rogacki to approve the Paid Bills Report, seconded by Kukanich; motion carried.**

**Correspondence/Communication** – Burzinski received notification from the Governor's office of her reappointment to the Governor's Tourism Council for an additional three (3) years (to 2016).

Egan, newly appointed Interim Director of the Vilas County Economic Development Corporation, provided information on current Corporation activities such as the Eagle River Incubator, possible incubator in Manitowish Waters, efforts to expand and promote existing business, coordination of programs with Nicolet Technical College, cooperative research on broadband with the Lac du Flambeau tribe, and the formation of an angel network of investors within Vilas County.

Some discussion on the effects on tourism in general of recently released bag limits in the ceded territory.

**Next meeting** – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for May 7, 2013 at 9am in Conference Room #2 of the Vilas County Courthouse.

There being no further items on the agenda, Bakka adjourned the meeting at 10:55am

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

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