



Vilas County Tourism &
Publicity Committee Meeting
Page 1 of 3

May 7, 2013

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

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

Others Present: Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet
Theresa Smith, Vilas County Chamber
Jason Hilger, Vilas County Finance
Bob Egan, Vilas County Economic Development Corporation

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 1, 2013.

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

Motion by Rogacki to approve the minutes of April 2, 2013 as distributed, seconded by Kukanich. Thorpe conveyed her congratulations on Burzinski's three-year appointment to the Governor's Council on Tourism. **Motion carried.**

Introductions – Smith and Rogacki were introduced.

Musky Marathon – Thorpe indicated the awards presentation in 2013 should be in March (as April County Board will be busy with changes due to spring elections). Christianson noted the registration form and posters were ready and would be talking with Pilch & Barnet on promotion ideas. Reviewed possible promotion items noting some of the criteria used to determine items (something not used before, minimum order requirements, item cost and mailability of item). The Committee left the decision to Christianson.

Alternative Funding Sources – Burzinski reviewed Bayfield County information and relayed information received from Washburn County regarding their structure (receive funds from County but housed outside county facility so most used for space rental with approximately ¼ available for marketing. Additional ideas presented under 2014/2015 budget discussion.

Vilas County Chamber – Smith noted work continues on the Fall Resort Tour scheduled in October for the Manitowish Waters area – suggestions for speakers/workshop topics welcome. Update on silent sports map - Vilas Area Silent Sports Association (VASSA) will conduct surveys around the County on two weekends (May and June) to provide data for grant application. Next meeting with VASSA scheduled in July to review survey data and gather map data. Next Vilas County Chamber meeting is May 9 at 1pm in Boulder Junction.

2014/2015 Budget – Hilger requested review of the preliminary 2014 budget with changes submitted to his office by the end of May; he also indicated the anticipated budget timeline (back to the Committees for review July/August, to Finance August/September, and to County Board by October). When asked about the budget directive, Hilger indicated he'd like to see no change in the bottom line department budget noting that a substantial portion of a department's budget may be out of the control of the department (wages, insurances, etc.) and that revenue should be closely considered.



As reported by the Longwood's Report for the Wisconsin Department of Tourism for 2012, approximately \$20.2 million was returned to Vilas County in the form of taxes as a result of tourism so one revenue option discussion involved designating a percentage of county sales tax revenues to fund the department. As county sales tax monies increase with more buyers, bringing people to the area who spend money increases the county sales taxes received by the County. Utilizing those dollars to market the area to increase tourism would decrease the dependence on property tax dollars.

Hilger inquired about possibility of instituting a county-wide room tax for revenue. The Committee indicated the concept had been discussed and while it had been successful for Door County (only one community had already instituted room tax), as a majority of communities in Vilas County have already instituted room tax (with several others currently discussing same), removing any dollars from a town and chamber budget would severely impact the local community in several ways.

2014 Vilas County Travel Guide – As the Committee had considered having department personnel do ad sales for the 2014 Visitor Guide, a copy of a draft contract with Pilch & Barnet was reviewed. Noting that the Guide is a self-sufficient publication, with ad sales covering the entire cost, Pilch reviewed the contract and presented the final income/expense figures for the 2013 Vilas County Visitor Guide. Based on these figures, the department would have generated approximately \$3,000 in revenue; which Hilger noted did not appear to be a significant amount for the time and involvement of personnel. Burzinski noted that while this would greatly increase the work load of the department for 4-5 months, she was trying to find ways to bring revenue to the Department. The Committee discussed the impact in time and dollars to the department and while the Committee noted the department personnel would do a great job of ad sales for the Guide, on a poll by Thorpe, the Committee (4-1) could not support the additional unreimbursed work load on department personnel (mostly nights and weekends for Burzinski) for the limited revenue expected (Rogacki dissented feeling any revenue was revenue). The Committee directed Pilch to prepare a contract similar to 2012 (with a sub-contractor conducting ad sales) for discussion at the June meeting.

Pilch & Barnet – Pilch noted the spring TV ads had started in the Chicago (WYCC & Public television), Milwaukee (CBS 58) and Fox Valley (cable access channels) areas. With the later spring, the ads started about a week late with duration adjusted accordingly. A copy of the Midwest Living May/June issue was passed around showing the editorial-style ad with response card prepared by Pilch & Barnet.

Vilas County is also included in Wisconsin Travel Best Bets (WTBB) Vacation Photo Fail contest running May15 – July 31 involving awkward family vacation photos. Links to the contest will be included in banner advertising and email newsletters. The agency will use the contest as a test of the Instagram (similar to Pinterest) social media option.

5-County Branding (The NorthwoodsofWisconsin.com) – No announcement yet if the 3rd year grant application for \$20,000 has been approved.

Out of County Travel – None not previously approved.

Department Reports – The April department report was distributed and reviewed.

Paid Bills Report – Hilger indicated that in place of the Paid Bills Report an Account Balance report (which showed the entire budget) could be reviewed by the Committee with no signed copy needed by the Clerk's office.



Correspondence/Communication – Burzinski indicated receiving a congratulatory letter from Representative Swearingen on her appointment to the Governor’s Council.

Egan provided an update on Economic Development Corporation activities such as Second incubator opening in Manitowish Waters; Resolution to County Board for the development of a revolving loan fund, Entrepreneurial course and assistance through Nicolet College; and Business expansion in Arbor Vitae utilizing Oneida County revolving loan fund.

Point of Interest – Karen Weber-Mendham of Land O’Lakes was the winner of Frito Lay’s “Do Us a Flavor” contest with her Cheesy Garlic Bread flavor potato chip.

Next meeting – The next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for June 4, 2013 at 9am in Conference Room #2 of the Vilas County Courthouse. DeBruyne indicated he would not be attending as he would be at a highway conference.

There being no further items on the agenda, Thorpe adjourned the meeting at 11:06am

Respectfully submitted, Janet R. Christianson

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