MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, COMMERCE & TOURISM COMMITTEE
MONTHLY MEETING – 1-11-18 – Mill Haven Foods - Tomah

The meeting was posted in accordance with the open meeting law. Meeting was called to order at 9:06am by Chair Sharon Folcey. Roll-call was taken.

Present:
Committee Board Members: Sharon Folcey, Dean Peterson, Nodji Van Wychen
Citizen Members: Mary Jo Hill, Paul Harms
Advisory Members: Tina Thompson – Tomah Chamber & Visitors Bureau
Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator: Steve Peterson
Absent: (AM) John Hendricks – Sparta Area Chamber of Commerce, Tonya Townsell – Ft. McCoy, Jarrod Roll – Monroe County Local History Room; Jim Bialecki – Monroe County Administrator **(CM)** Dennis Berg, Bernadine Arena, Pete Reichardt
Special Guest: Greg Evans – Evans Printing & Media Group, Larry Erbs – COO – Mill Haven Foods
Media: Tim Evans – Monroe County Herald

S. Folcey informed the Committee that member Dennis Berg had a serious health issue a few weeks ago and is recovering in the hospital. A get-well card was passed around for the Committee members to sign. Reports say that he is doing better and will be hopefully back at work in a month.

Welcome – L. Erbs welcomed the Committee to Mill Haven Foods. He updated everyone on the history of the company and the new manufacturing plant that just opened in Tomah. Mill Haven Foods specializes in blending whey and milk proteins in recipes used by some of the biggest food manufacturers in the world. The company continues to grow at a very rapid pace and expected to have up to 150 employees in the next year.

**Because of G. Evans' time constraints, the Go Monroe County Guide update and County Tear Off Maps agenda items were moved up.*

Go Monroe County Guide update – G. Evans presented graphic artwork for the 2018 guide. The Committee looked at the various layouts and color schemes. G. Evans said the goal was to have brighter colors and a completely different look than the past guides over the years. The Committee took graphic designs from the various covers and agreed on the look of the cover and page layouts for the new guide. N. Van Wychen asked about the process of soliciting ads for the guide and if everyone was contacted about the advertising opportunity? G. Evans assured that they did their diligence in soliciting the ads. The Guide will be printed in time for distribution at the Monroe County Economic Development Conference.

Monroe County Tear Off Maps – the Committee wanted to reprint the map, so Evans Printing was asked for bids on the project. After discussion on how many to order and how they would be distributed, D. Peterson made a motion to order 5,000 maps. 2nd by M.J. Hill. Motioned carried.

G. Evans told the Committee that Evans Printing & Media Group would be purchasing the 2 newspapers in Hillsboro and combining them, effective on Feb. 1st.

Minutes – Motion by N. Van Wychen to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2017 meeting. 2nd by D. Peterson. Motion carried.

Financial Report & Invoices – S. Folcey updated the Committee about the struggles with getting invoices paid on time and this Committee's needs not being a high priority within the County departments. N. Van Wychen suggested that the 3 County Board Supervisors on this Committee schedule a meeting with County Administrator Jim Bialecki and address the concerns. Committee members were concerned and frustrated with the roadblocks when it came to our budget decisions.

S. Folcey informed the Committee that the invoice for the full-page ad in the Go Monroe County Activities Guide was submitted and had been previously approved to be paid. S. Folcey presented the annual membership dues for 7 Rivers Alliance of $189. Motion by D. Peterson to pay the dues. 2nd by T. Thompson. Motion carried. S. Folcey clarified to the Committee that the $500 sponsorship money to Vino Fest was approved at the October 2017 meeting and the invoice will be processed.

S. Peterson presented 2 invoices for the Wisconsin Economic Development Association. 1/ membership renewal that was due in November. S. Peterson reminded the Committee that those dues were on the anniversary date of the payment, not the calendar year. D. Peterson made a motion to renew the membership at $325 a year, to be paid out of the 2017 budget. 2nd by M.J. Hill. Motion carried. 2/ Registration to the Governor's Conference on Economic Development on Jan. 31-Feb. 2 in Madison, attended by S. Peterson. The cost is $325 and S. Peterson would be paying for the lodging and other expenses. Motion by N. Van Wychen to pay the registration out of the 2018 budget. 2nd by D. Peterson. Motion carried. S. Folcey said she would take the invoices to the County offices to be paid.

Monroe County E.D. Coordinator Report – S. Peterson reports:

MEETINGS/EVENTS

- Monroe County Job Initiatives Committee meeting – 12/15
- WI Rural Partners meeting – 12/15
- AMS Micromedical Tour – WEDC – 12/18
- WI Rural Partners Conference call – 12/18
- True Jobs Conference call – 12/19
- Veterans Affairs meeting – 12/20
- Prospect Conference call – 12/21
- Prospect Conference call – 12/22
- Prospect visit – 12/28
- Prospect Investors Conference call – 12/29
- Prospect visit – 12/29
- E.D. Conference Speaker Conference call – 1/3
- WI Assembly Committee Hearing - testifying – Madison –1/4
- SW-ITBEC Meeting – 1/5
- Prospect visit – 1/5
- Prospect Conference call – 1/8
- E.D. Conference Speaker Conference call – 1/8
- WI Rural Partners Board Meeting – Stevens Point – 1/10

- **UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**
    - Childcare Conference call – 1/12
    - WDAC Board of Directors meeting – 1/15
    - Prospect Conference call – 1/15
    - Monroe County Job Initiative meeting – 1/18
    - Prospect visit – 1/18
    - Prospect visit – 1/19
    - Monroe County Board meeting – report – 1/24
    - CGI Video Taping – 1/25
    - Governor's Conference on Economic Development (WEDA) – 1/31 – 2/2

- **NEWS/NOTES**
    - Jimmy Johns & Verizon - Tomah – construction of new building started
    - Tomah Museum – purchased empty lot from Tralmers for future home
    - Bank of Cashton – beginning on plans for new building on recently acquired Hundt property

S. Peterson informed the Committee on Assembly Bill AB 430. Peterson testified at a Hearing at the Capitol in Madison. He told the Committee that the bill's objective is to offer people who left Wisconsin for 5 years and then come back to the rural area to live and work could qualify for the student loan debt payback program. If they continued to live in the rural Wisconsin area for 5 years, they could get 5 annual payments of up to $5,000/yr. to pay off their student loan debt. S. Peterson said the bill still needs to be worked out more, but it would be a great recruitment tool to get our younger workforce back into our area.

MapNTour – S. Peterson reported that progress continues with this feature and it will be unveiled at the E.D. Conference. 100 businesses are listed on this virtual mapping system of the County.

Monroe County Economic Development Conference Update – S. Peterson reported that the registrations are coming in at a good pace with 179 registrations and 36 booths as of 1/10. He reminded Committee members about registering and that County Board Supervisors, outside this Committee, can register and request a per diem from the County.

- New additions to speaker line-up:
    - Jim Bialecki is speaking on behalf of the County
    - Bryan Antony (WHEDA) - Workforce Roundtable representing housing
    - Frank Frasetto – new WI Director for USDA Rural Development
    - Jon Hockhammer (WCA) and Jason Springer (PACE)
    - Angie Dickinson – PCA – moderator for the Broadband Roundtable
    - Joe Knilans – USDA & SBA federal role

REPORTS:

7 Rivers Alliance – no report

SW-ITBEC – Jackson County is officially the newest County member of SW-ITBEC.

Hidden Valleys - N. Van Wychen reports: The new magazines are being printed and will be available soon.

Local History Room – no report. There was discussion on the start of the installation of a new display created by Pica Grove. Because of this Committee meeting at Pica Grove over a year ago, a connection was made between the Local History Room and them which helped lead them to this project. N. Van Wychen said that the LHR is just a few hundred dollars away from their goal for this project.

Ft. McCoy – no report

Sparta Chamber of Commerce – no report

Tomah Chamber of Commerce – T. Thompson reported:

- Area Guide will be going to print, with 32,000 guides printed.
- The Discover Wisconsin episode on Tomah – Premiere Party – Feb. 15th. The showing will be at the Ho-Chunk Theater with free popcorn. Then the party moves to the Ground Round after the showing.
- The Head Shot event is coming up and there are only a few slots left for anyone who wants a professional headshot taken, so encouraged to make a reservation soon.
- Annual Chamber Banquet – February 26th at Cranberry Country Lodge. It will have an International theme with live music for dancing afterwards.
- New Travel Program – hosting a River Cruise on the Blue Danube for 9 days in 2018. Cost will be $2,800 per person and more details will be coming soon. Other Chambers in the State are offering these types of Travel Programs to their Chamber members with great success.
- Kite Flying Day – June 2nd. More details will be coming.
- Struggles continue with the finalization of the lease agreement between the Tomah Chamber and the City of Tomah on the new Chamber building. Former Tomah Mayor John Rusch spoke at the City Council meeting and has confused the issue even more. Anyone on the Committee was encouraged to attend the next Council meeting and show support of the Tomah Chamber on this issue.

Next meeting – Thursday, Feb. 8th – 9:00am – Three Bears Resort – Warrens. Final preparation for the upcoming Monroe County E.D. Conference being held there.

Motion by T. Thompson to adjourn. 2nd by N. Van Wychen. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 11:08am.

Submitted by:

Steve Peterson