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**NORTH CENTRAL ITBEC BOARD
AND
TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING**

Thursday, December 2, 2021

Florence County Courthouse
Florence, WI 54121

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER: North Central ITBEC Vice-Chair Phil Idsvoog called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Board Members: Cindy Gretzinger, Forest County. **Board & Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Wendy Gehlhoff, Florence County; William Chaney, Forest County; Arlyn Tober, Shawano County; Phil Idsvoog, Portage County. **Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Sara Brish, Portage County. **REMOTE PARTICIPATION: Board Members:** Brad Hamilton, Wood County; Clancy Whiting & Jenny Short, Marinette County. **Board & Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Keri Beck, Langlade County; Cindy Burzinski, Vilas County; Lance Krolczyk, Oneida County. **Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Carolyn Ritter, Vilas County; Autumn Rockhill, Marinette County. **EXCUSED: Board Members:** Joseph Wildcat, Vilas County; Al Haga, Portage County. **Board & Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Mike Klimoski, Langlade County; Lance Pliml, Wood County; Samantha Boucher, Oconto County; Jim Winkler, Oneida County; Theresa Serrano, Shawano County; Donna Kalata, Waushara County; Debbe Kinsey & Bill Bialecki, Lincoln County; Stephanie Holman, Oconto County. **Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Allyson Bickel, Marinette County; Cheri Collins, Forest County; Matt McLean, Wood County. **STAFF:** Bill Korrer, Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) Field Services Representative. **OTHERS:** Jeff Anderson, Wisconsin Department of Tourism; Jim Rosenberg, WEDC.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 30, 2021 JOINT BOARD MEETING MINUTES: Motion by Chaney, second by Hamilton, to approve the September 30, 2021 meeting minutes as printed. Motion carried.

CHAIR'S REMARKS: Vice-Chair Idsvoog observed that it was a long ride up here for him and he isn't the farthest from Florence County. But considering it is early December in northern Wisconsin, the drive wasn't bad.

PROJECT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- a. WCA Opioid Litigation: Bill updated the Board and Committee on the WCA Opioid Lawsuit Litigation saying that the distributors portion of the opioid lawsuit has proposed a \$26 billion settlement, while maintaining there was no wrongdoing on their part. Discussion followed.
- b. American Rescue Plan Act: Bill Korrer said that while many of the counties have had discussions on how to invest the ARPA dollars, he reminded the Board members that the hospitality industry is the unfortunate poster child of businesses being decimated by COVID. Discussion followed.
- c. Northwoods Rail Transit Commission: Bill Korrer said that there isn't anything new on the proposed sale by Canadian National railroad of approximately 650 miles of under-used track in Wisconsin and the UP to shortline operator Watco. Discussion followed.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Bill Korrer reported that three checks were issued since the last meeting. The total of those three checks was \$1,074.00. There is currently an undesignated fund balance of \$23,255.36.

MARKETING REPORT:

- a. 2021 Promotions Plan Status: The 2021 marketing has been completed.
- b. 2022 Promotions Plan and Funding Request: Sara Brish reviewed the 2022 marketing plan with the group. Discussion followed.

COUNTY ISSUES ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Vice-Chair Idsvoog asked when Marathon County was last approached about joining the North Central ITBEC and noted the change in leadership within the Wausau CVB. Bill Korrer said that he and Dave Dumke had met with the CVB and MCDEVCO at least 10 years ago. The North Central ITBEC's modified equalized value dues formula has Marathon County's annual contribution at \$3,729.00. Vice-Chair Idsvoog said that he will reach out to Marathon County Board Chair Kurt Gibbs.

STATE DEPARTMENT UPDATES:

- a. Tourism: Jeff Anderson shared that the Travel Wisconsin Winter Campaign is underway. Recent research revealed that 91% of those polled said they are planning travel in the next six months. Internally, the Travel Wisconsin camping page has shown a 417% increase in interest. The new Travel Wisconsin website rollout is underway. There is also a new snow reporting page.

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- b. WEDC: Jim Rosenberg reminded members of the Main Street Bounce Back award program for new businesses opening in existing vacant storefronts. This is a \$10,000 award that is being administrated locally by the regional planning commissions. Mr. Rosenberg said that WEDC is also keeping tabs on the rising issue of small-town grocery stores disappearing.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA: Marathon County Participation Follow-Up; Annual Board Actions.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting will be in Forest County on Thursday, January 27, 2022 starting at 10:00 a.m. The location will be the Forest County Courthouse in Crandon. The meeting will be in the Board Room.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Chaney, second by Hamilton, to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. Motion carried.