

JUNE '21 MEETING MINUTES

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Meeting was held on June 17th, 2021 at 2:15pm

Merrill Enrichment Center Conference Room – 303 N. Sales Street

Present: Laura Bertagnoli (Chair), Paul Russell (Aldersperson), Gene Bebel, Rose Akey, Jennifer Clark (ADRC representative), Sharon Anderson, Josh Jaeger *Absent:* Sharon Harvey

1. Opening

- a. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.
- b. Bertagnoli and committee welcomed our new committee members Anderson and Jaeger as they were both absent last month.

2. Consent Items

- a. Motion by Bebel second Akey to approve May '21 minutes. Motion carried.
- b. Motion by Akey second by Anderson to approve May '21 vouchers. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment

- a. none

4. COVID-19 – Update on Operations

- a. Director shared that our attendance continues to increase each week. The numbers do fluctuate weekly. Our third week of each month tends to be heavy with instruction resulting in higher weekly averages. A notable decrease was seen when Gigi was sick during the last two weeks of May. Summer numbers tend to be lower on average over the years. To date we have over 2600 participants beginning the week of Jan 18th, many of whom are repeats in exercise classes. Director noted that attendance numbers *do not* directly reflect activity funds; for example our quilting room is mainly for outreach and walking, neither have fees. Director asked the committee to actively promote the Center as word-of-mouth is very powerful, as is social media.
- b. Discussion took place on the status of our funds. Director started discussion on our #10 and #26 budgets. Anderson asked what the City is responsible for regarding our department. This discussion was beneficial to our new members and also a great refresh for existing members. Director explained that budget #10 is the general budget, pays for our salaries, operating and IT expenses, etc. Budget #26 is our reserved funds which come from grants, donations, and activity fees which instructors get paid from. The MEC is expected to contribute back to the general fund, especially if we have overspent, which is rare. Protected funds, for example Memorials, are specifically given directly to the MEC by individuals and are not taken. We are allowed to use these funds as we see fit. Jaeger asked if we manage the rentals of the expo. This led to a further discussion of the 'gray line' that exists between the MEC and Expo operations. Additionally we discussed the money expected of the MEC to pay back into the general fund. Bebel asked if we rent our space in the evenings. At this time we do not because it needs to be staffed. If we happen to be open in the evening for other activities, then it would work.
- c. Instructor Fees were discussed relative to activity fees. \$2 fee covers book club and cards. Guys group is donation. \$3 fee covers all other activities including instructor led art classes and exercise. After a request for an increase in pay from an instructor, Director and staff are looking into our fee structure. Director consulted with the committee for input. Committee and Director agreed that increasing activity fee to \$4 would be detrimental for participants. If instructor fees go up, MEC would need to incur that cost. Akey mentioned insurance coverage for our classes similar to the Silver Sneakers program. Director will check into this as a possibility for our exercise classes. Anderson suggested bring a friend for free as a promotion to get new people here. Bertagnoli agreed. Director and staff had discussed that and other promotional ideas prior to the meeting. We will begin those in July or August.
- d. MEC will be open on Wednesday and Thursday during the fair this year for promotional reasons. Stephanie Zoellner, MEC Assistant joined the meeting as she is very familiar with 4H operations during the fair. She informed us that Wednesday is entry day and may bring the most 'dirty' foot traffic between the barn and the MEC. With that information we decided to keep the South entry locked and the doors to the expo open if people wanted to see what we have to offer. All entry doors will be open on Thursday. We hope this helps bring more awareness to the MEC and what we have to offer.

5. ADRC

Jennifer provided the following updates;

- a. ADRC will be opening their doors on Monday, June 7 for scheduled appointments only. Walk-ins will not be allowed at this point.
- b. \$25 senior farmers market vouchers start June 1st. Ages 60+. Can be used in the following counties; Lincoln, Langlade, Marathon, Wood. Contact the ADRC at 715-536-0311.
- c. The Remember Project will provide a short virtual play called, "In the Garden", a one act play about memory loss. Date: Thursday, June 24th, 2021. Log-on begins at 2:45 pm, the event will run from 3-5 pm, reservations required, attendance is limited. Call the ADRC for more information at 1-888-486-9545.
- d. Another Virtual Fall Prevention Event will take place in October with the ADRC of Central Wisconsin with partners Aspirus, Marshfield Clinic, and ADRC of Portage County. The last event registered over 80 people and was very successful.

6. Discussion

- a. Director informed committee on the progress of a city marketing committee as it seems to be in the final stage. Director shared email comments from Mayor Woellner.
- b. Upcoming is our Fall Craft & Market Event on October 2nd. We are expanding our show outside to include farmers and some flea market items in addition to a variety of food vendors. It will run on the same day as Barley Fest. Both events should bring many people to Merrill for the day.
- c. Committee asked if we would have a July meeting. Director will decide if needed.

7. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn made by Akey second by Anderson.

The next meeting date is *tentatively* **July 15th at 2:15pm in the MEC Conference room.**

Vouchers will be available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.

Respectfully submitted,

TMrachek, Tammie Mrachek, MEC Director