

JUNE '23 MEETING MINUTES

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Meeting was held on June 15th, 2023 at 2:15pm

Merrill Enrichment Center Conference Room – 303 N. Sales Street

Present: Rick Blake (Alderperson), Laura (Chair), Gene Bebel, Sharon Harvey,
Sharon Anderson, Jennifer Clark (ADRC representative) *Absent:* Teresa Baker, Jay Tlusty

1. Opening

- a. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

2. Consent Items

- a. Motion by Blake second by Bebel to approve May '23 minutes. Motion carried.
- b. Motion by Harvey second by Anderson to approve May/June '23 vouchers. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment

- a. none

4. Operations

- a. Director shared an update on our new check in system and summarized how check in works on the touch screen. The staff is still working through a few programming features to get it to the level we would like. Director shared the benefit of having the system take pictures of participants to be included in their information, especially for the Director as she is not at the main check in desk, also realizing how important it is to people to know their name. In addition, reporting features will be very beneficial during budget.
- b. Director shared the first draft of our endowment brochure with Committee members for their review and recommendations. It was decided to have the endowment be under our budget #26 which allows us more control over the funds versus a true endowment where another organization is involved. We can manage the funds more efficiently. Director explained how our current 'Memorial Fund' works. This is funded by individuals that may or may not specify how their donation is to be spent. Bebel inquired into the approval process of using money from the endowment fund. He asked who approves the expenditures out of the Memorial Fund. Director shared that she has the authority, along with the committee to spend the money as needed for the Center. However, Director also shared that she would seek approval from the previous Administrator if the amount was very large, such as a new bus for example and would also reach out to Kathy Unertl for guidance and approval of larger amounts. Bebel further inquired about the risk of the City taking money from our Memorial and future Endowment funds to cover the amount they request of us each year. Blake confirmed he did not believe they cannot touch that specified funding for other use. Director will work with the City Attorney and Finance director Unertl, to draft a document that states this, recommended by Bebel and Bertagnoli, as 5+ years from now many of us, if not all, will not be active in this committee and we wish to secure this funding so the Center can continue operations for many years into the future. Bertagnoli inquired into the recognition of donors, specifically listed in our newsletter. Director would adjust space if needed in the case we had a month of many donations. Bebel stated that people like to know how their donation is being spent. Director would utilize our newsletter and social media to report out how the money has been used. Anderson suggested looking to the Foto News also as other local organizations like the Humane Society and MAPS lists their donations in the paper. Director will inquire if there is a cost associated with this. Further discussion from the committee was focused on keeping track of donations. Director will create a spreadsheet dedicated to these specific donations and how the money has been used. We also will have our donation tree in the main hallway of the MEC which will showcase engraved wooden leaves with the names and/or message requested. Finally, Bebel recommended getting our completed brochure into funeral homes.
- c. Fall open house will take place in late September in the mid to late afternoon. Director will choose a date. Committee approved having the Athens zip code as our second newsletter reach prior to our open house, as our reach to Gleason seemed to produce awareness and new attendance. This would be our September newsletter. Anderson mentioned having some transportation to our open house. Director stated we have our bus as an option. Anderson recommended having cooking demonstrations, hair and makeup, etc., at the open house. Director asked what we wanted our open house to look like, suggesting what we are currently offering like our exercise classes along with craft/art demonstrations, and possibly have another 'new activity' offerings afternoon or evening, later in the year. Committee agreed and suggested having Anderson's ideas be incorporated into monthly sessions. Other suggestions for our open house were showcasing intergenerational opportunities and quilt room demonstrations. Director stated that we are having some difficulty getting seniors to work with our park&rec youth. Clark mentioned having these youth 'adopt' a group of adults we have here to play games or especially read together. Director asked committee to please promote this activity to get more adults to volunteer.

5. ADRC

- a. Jennifer Clark promoted the Senior Farmers Market stating there is a new process of submitting an application online as well as an increase in the amount offered to \$35.
- b. Clark placed emphasis on the Falls Prevention program offered through the ADRC, which is now her primary focus. She conducts home visits to assess their homes. Most of the local fire departments in the surrounding Wausau area stated that 42% of their calls are related to falls. Fall prevention resource fair September 20th from 1-4pm at NTC will offer a fall assessment. They will then have different interactive resource booths available featuring community guest experts. Desired result is that individuals will leave with an individual action plan to prevent falls.
- c. The Stepping on Program is in need of 2 facilitators to go through 3-day training so we can offer this great program **in our area**. This is a 7-week free program. This is a 3 day training both virtual and in-person. Anderson recommended Gigi Heinz, our yoga instructor. Clark stated this is an evidence based program so the people who work within this program need to have certain qualifications such as Physical Therapists, Vision experts, and other professionals. However, Gigi may be able to come in after the program and share what she offers here for people to maintain what they have learned. Bertagnoli asked for details such as

how much time, etc. Clark shared that the session is 2 hours a week for 7 weeks. There is a follow up session 3 months later to check in. Clark stated we need to debunk the myth that falling is just part of aging. This program helps understand it is not and there may be underlying issues like vision. In the Wausau area 65 people respond to the offering. Director offered to promote the program in our newsletter as we had in the past to try to bring this program to our area.

6. Discussion

- a. Rick Blake announced his resignation but will remain on the transit commission as he has been on for years. He suggested recommending to Mayor Hass that he be allowed to attend meetings as a community member which we all are in favor of.

7. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn by Harvey second by Anderson.

The next meeting date is **July 20th 2023 at 2:15pm at the MEC.**

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

Respectfully submitted

TMrachek

Tammie Mrachek, MEC Director



THE POWER OF INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

reference: Generation American Society on Aging

The power of intergenerational connections can transform individuals and communities.

Limited social interaction can affect an individual's mental, emotional, and physical health, potentially leading to adverse health outcomes.

Having sufficient social interaction can *positively* impact one's quality of life.

Connecting with others across generations adds another layer of benefits. **Young people and older adults have an opportunity to leverage intergenerational**

relationships to improve cognitive function, increase empathy, and live longer lives.

Everyone's first intergenerational experience occurs early on in childhood, often between children and parents or legal guardians. Those fortunate enough to have an extended family may often have intergenerational connections with grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Within the family unit, these relationships are imperative for the transfer of knowledge, traditions, and storytelling from one generation to the next.

Because many families are no longer in the same city or state, creating these opportunities within our community is more important than ever.

MEC and Partners are creating intergenerational opportunities

1. Summer playground (offered by Park & Rec) would like to partner with the MEC. We are looking for adults who would like to spend 1-1.5 hours a week with local youth (4th-5th graders) on a variety of activities through the summer. Activities include arts & crafts, a variety of games (cards, cribbage, checkers, etc.), baking/cooking, sewing, painting and more. We welcome any ideas you may have!
2. Child Care Shortage -Presentation by Renee Krueger, Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator.

There are a number of organizations and community members who have come together through a facilitated process to address local issues with child care capacity. Through this process, we have identified one of the most significant barriers for providing sufficient child care slots and extended hours is staffing availability. In brainstorming solutions, an idea was brought up about working with child caring agencies on job sharing opportunities. One example of this is working with the schools and early childhood curriculum to create a school cooperative placement. Another idea might be having retired community members who are interested in a few hours a day to fill needs or on-call circumstances. Our DREAM UP! Group is hoping to create an opportunity through the MEC to discuss this with our community members to see if this is something that would be of interest.