

MAY '23 MEETING MINUTES

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Meeting was held on May 18th, 2023 at 2:15pm

Merrill Enrichment Center Conference Room – 303 N. Sales Street

Present: Rick Blake (Alderperson-*via phone*), Laura Bertagnoli (Chair), Gene Bebel, Sharon Harvey, Sharon Anderson, Jennifer Clark – *via phone*. **Absent:** Teresa Baker, Jay Tlusty

1. Opening

- a. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

2. Consent Items

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

3. Public Comment

- a. Bebel shared that Don, a former Merrill resident who moved to Montana, came back to retire in Wisconsin and drove around Merrill and was so impressed with the progress the City has made.

4. Operations

- a. Director recapped the MEC Spring Craft Show. The quilt raffle brought in \$351 and the winner was Rose Daul, a crafter at the show; table fees totaled \$420 and the craft shop had \$900 in sales for a total of \$2670. MEC staff is looking into different offerings to draw in new crowds for a spring offering, as craft shows are saturating the market. Ideas from the committee were an Art Show involving local artists and high school art students. The Bell Tower Artisans showcase was mentioned. Chantel Kuczmarski, the City's communication coordinator was in attendance and mentioned bringing back a Taste of Merrill event. She also mentioned the Tourism Grants through the Chamber. Nathan Meyer, Media Productions, shared what he knew on this topic. The Chamber receives money from the room tax which is 6%. With this funding, the Tourism Commission provides grants for advertising in our area. Director will look into this for future events. Director mentioned the fall show has no vendors, only artists and crafters along with local farmer's market booths and food trucks. We wanted to make it a Merrill Day along with Barley Fest but that is no longer taking place. Instead on the same date there will be a Flea Market/Craft/Vendor event at the MARC. Our hope is this event will benefit both locations. Harvey mentioned making sure we have marketing by the MARC for our show. Bebel mentioned possibly having the Sawmill here for our fall show. Director will check into this.
- b. Our new check in system is here! Staff completed trainings and will begin the back end administration in addition to assigning key tags to participants. By mid-June, the system should be up and running.
- c. Summer offerings include two new groups; ukulele and woodcarving. Bus trips are up and running with strong participation. We will host an intergenerational presentation by The Lincoln County Dream Up! Team at the end of June and possibly July. Workshops are still running strong. Director noted that we are still in need of a presenter for Scams & Fraud. We do cover some of this information in our cell phone training. Director also shared how well attended the ADRC series has been which focuses on dementia and brain health. We are grateful for our community partners. This program will continue throughout the year. Bertagnoli asked about our fall open house. That will be addressed in our next meeting. Director asked committee to not wait for the meetings to provide information and ideas to her but rather throughout the month. Bebel mentioned the best advertisers are those who attend here. He also stated we should provide attendance numbers in our newsletter once in a while to bring awareness to the community of how well attended our offerings are. The point is that not all people are on Social media platforms.

5. ADRC

- a. Jennifer Clark joined via phone. The Senior Farmers Market Vouchers are available again this year.
 - i. Eligibility requirements; Must be a resident of Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon or Wood County, 60 years or older, or a Native American 55 years or older, and has a monthly household income that meets program requirements. Vegetables and herbs are Wisconsin grown. Individuals need to go to the ADRC office to sign up. Individuals receive \$35 in vouchers. Program runs from June 1st through October 31st.
 - ii. Bertagnoli asked Jennifer about the Meals on Wheels program. Clark stated that drivers are always needed and there is flexibility in scheduling. Director added how rewarding it is to participate in this program.

6. Discussion

- a. Bertagnoli asked how the intergenerational programs idea along with the MEC, Park & Rec, and Library combined offerings is going. Director shared the challenges of scheduling around 3 departments as well as all of the area summer events. This will have to take place next year.
As for Park & Rec summer playground, we have a few individuals that may be interested in teaching the kids a variety of skills. Director will work with Dawn Smith on scheduling.
- b. Bertagnoli asked if we had any results of distributing our newsletter in the Gleason area. Director shared that we received numerous calls and walk-ins the week after our newsletter was put into the Foto News. We will try to find locations in Gleason to have our newsletter. Prairie Pines was mentioned. It was worth the cost and we will consider what our next zip code will be prior to our fall open house.
- c. Bebel had a few ideas for offerings. One was an ice-cream social, which the MEC has done in the past. We will look to schedule something again. He also mentioned possible mom's groups, along with being a welcoming place for Hispanic members of our community. Harvey mentioned they have a cultural gathering at the park. She also coordinated through her Methodist church summer food for kids program averaging about 100 kids daily. Committee members also mentioned a newcomers group. *The MEC will try to create an opportunity for these groups to meet.*

7. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn by Bebel and Harvey.

The next meeting date is **June 15th 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