

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee
Thursday August 15th '24 MEETING MINUTES
MEC Craft Room 303 N. Sales Street 2:15pm

Present: Mark Weix (Alderperson), Jay Tlusty,
Carol Holz, Sharon Harvey, Jennifer Clark (ADRC representative)
Excused: Laura Bertagnoli (Chair), Gene Bebel, Elizabeth McCrank

- I. Opening**
 1. Weix called the meeting to order.
- II. Consent Items**
 1. Motion by Tlusty, second by Holz to approve July '24 minutes. Motion carried.
 2. Motion by Tlusty, second by Harvey to approve July/Aug '24 vouchers. Motion carried.
- III. Public Comment**
 1. Tlusty asked if the name changed from Merrill Festival Grounds back to Merrill Fair Grounds or if it was Lincoln County Fairgrounds, and why. Meyer stated it was a simply a formality because everyone was still referring to it as the Fairgrounds. Director asked if it was causing confusion. Meyer confirmed that it did. Meyer also stated that Lincoln County does not have an association with the fair.
- IV. ADRC**
 1. Clark shared that the ADRC is offering a 7 week Stepping On Program in Merrill September 11th – October 23rd (Wednesdays) from 9:30-11:30am at the Lincoln County Service Center. This is a free program, however, contributions are welcome. Jennifer shared that Wisconsin is still the #1 State in the Country to have the most deaths due to fall. Tlusty inquired as to the possible reasoning behind that, with Minnesota having the same type of winter weather. Clark said there is no definitive answers but added a few of her own insights such as weather, alcohol, people being on multiple medications, overall chronic health issues, higher rate of older adults vs. neighboring states. Tlusty asked if it is broken down by county. Clark stated that information can be found on the State website. Mrachek added that the Strong Bodies program and Stepping On are complimentary. Weix asked how the program is promoted and if there are men attending. Clark shared the ADRC works closely with many partner organizations, Cities, Counties, Meals on Wheels, Senior Housing, conducting presentations, newspapers, etc. There are predominately more females but a fair amount of males that also attend, often as a couple with their wives.
- V. Operations**
 1. Director recapped the Festival of Quilts. (Document is attached) Planning for this event starts a good year prior to the event. It is a huge undertaking. There is so much work done behind the scenes. We would not be able to run this show without the volunteer committee who handles a lot of the administrative and organizational work, along with the numerous numbers of additional volunteers.
Attendance was 508 which included 67 free admissions (vendors, volunteers, and committee). Holz asked how that compared to the 2022 show. Director found it was 529 attendees. Quilt raffle brought in \$897 compared to 2022 at \$809. Total show profit was \$2270.45 compared to 2022 show at \$1208.02. Director shared that we had the wrap up meeting and suggested we consider a one day show vs. two day, due to budget/payroll constraints. Attendance seemed slower on Saturday compared to the last show. Holz shared her thoughts that Friday had mostly ladies attending. People still had their weekend to do other things. Director shared the challenge of trying to find a time to run an event when there are always an abundant amount of events in the surrounding areas. Holz also added that people know that August is the month of our Festival of Quilts and it may be best to keep that consistent.
Tlusty asked if we get to keep our profits. Director informed committee that we are required to pay into the city at the end of the year, a certain amount of dollars, as we are considered non-essential. The money stays in the Quilt Room budget lined-itemed under The Festival of Quilts. He further asked if we know the amount we will need to provide. Director stated that we have not started our budget sessions yet so that number is no known at this time. Weix added it may be a good idea to ask our new Finance Director to attend our next meeting. Director will reach out to Emily.
Tlusty also mentioned the positive effect the Festival has on our entire community including small businesses and that many people may come back to visit. Holz added some of our volunteers were from neighboring communities. She further added that we do not currently have a quilt shop in town. Director mentioned that is a business opportunity. Weix asked if we had people from out of the area attend. There were many from around the whole state and other states as well. We can look at our quilt raffles to see if they listed location. We will have a map posted at our next show so people can pin where they are from.
Director shared the results of advertising for this event. Total amount spent was \$833. We measured the effectiveness with a list of where we advertised at the check-in desk. The strongest results were word of mouth, quilt shops, and Facebook. We will no longer advertise in newspapers (exception is the Foto News) as we did not see a return on that investment. Director expressed disappointment in the news channels (7, 9, and 12) for not covering our event after reaching out via Press Releases, emails, and phone conversations.
 2. Director shared highlights of September calendar. The MEC's annual Fall Craft & Market will be held September 28th from 9am-2pm. Both the expo and the Steckling buildings will be full. We have 4 food trucks this year. Weix

mentioned it is the same weekend as MHS Homecoming. That has been beneficial for our show. One new offering is the “Brass Patina’ Musical Group on September 19th at 1pm. Our Parkinson’s Support Group will begin September 25th at 1pm. Our annual holiday shopping trip will be October 24th, a full day in Appleton at the Fox River Mall.

VI. Discussion

1. Director asked Committee to help promote the Endowment Fund. It started out with a few donations and has been stagnant since. Director will also make a plan to conduct presentations in the community to educate people on the purpose of the Endowment. Holz asked how those funds are used once received. Director stated the funds go into their own account under the Enrichment Center and that money cannot be touched for any other purpose in the city. Additionally, donors’ can specify if they want the donation to go to certain programs that the Center offers. Trusty added for consideration to have mailings go out, similar to St. Vincent De Paul. Director will look into the cost. Placement at funeral homes is also possible.

VII. Adjournment

1. Motion to adjourn by Holz second by Harvey.

The next meeting date is **September 19th, 2024 at 2:15pm at the MEC.** *Vouchers available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.*

Respectfully submitted, TMrachek



Tammie Mrachek, Director
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2024 FESTIVAL OF QUILTS RECAP

Committee: Kay Maluegge, Annie Amenson, Nadine Grunsnick, Barb Zimmerman, Sue Seslar, Pat Taylor, Kathy Hauser

Dates/Times: August 2nd 1-6pm & 3rd 9am-3pm

Vendors:

1	Pine Tree Fabrics
2	Quilt Kits & Beyond LLC
3	Needle Workshop/Quilting Workshop
4	Creative Looks by Jody
5	Sew Pieceful Quilting
6	The Wool Gathering, LLC
7	The Olde Homestead Quilt Shop
8	Created Anew Designs
9	Stitch By Stitch Q.S.
10	Pinery Patches
11	Sew Smart
12	A Little Piece Of Mind

Budget

Quilt Entries = 105 (57 people total) = \$515

Vendor entry fees = \$785

Attendance = 508 = \$1398 (67 free admissions-vendors, volunteers, committee)

Quilt Raffle brought in \$897

Food sales = 2086.50 Profit was \$678.01

Total Profit = \$2270.45

Advertising

Word of mouth, quilt shops and FB were noted as the best form of advertising. Remainder was (in order) Foto News, City Pages, Newsletter, Signs in town, and Country Register. We **will no longer** advertise in newspapers. Exception may be Merrill Foto News.