

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Thursday September 19th '24 MEETING MINUTES

MEC Conference Room 303 N. Sales Street 2:15pm

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

I. Opening

1. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

II. Consent Items

1. Motion by Bebel, second by McCrank to approve Aug '24 minutes. Motion carried.
2. Motion by Bebel, second by Tlusty to approve Aug/Sept '24 vouchers. Motion carried.

III. Public Comment

1. Bertagnoli inquired into a past discussion on a possible need for a moms group based on a new family in her neighborhood. Discussion that followed was the resources already available in our city such as the library and Park and Rec departments both great places for parents and kids to meet others. Bebel mentioned our first discussion on this topic was that moms needed a group just for themselves and daycare is limited to private schools in our area. Director asked committee if the MEC should offer a Mom's group in the New Year. McCrank thought it was a good idea with stipulations regarding bringing children in as not to disrupt our current community here, as Director had expressed that concern. Director will discuss with staff and make a final decision.

IV. ADRC – not present

V. Operations

1. Director shared the success of our first Parkinson's meeting held on August 28th. We had 12 people including some caregivers. Bertagnoli asked if we considered having a meeting just for the caregivers. We may consider offering a separate meeting and see what the response is. Tlusty asked how often the group meets. Director shared at this time we meet once a month but interacts via email throughout the other 3 weeks. The State of WI highly recommends having a facilitator so the Director chose to take on this role as the search for one was not successful. Director does have awareness and understanding of Parkinson's which is helpful for the group. Director shared we are creating a flyer to share in doctors' offices and with other community partners. McCrank stated that Parkinson's is the fastest growing medical diagnosis nationwide, for seniors and feels our group will continue to grow. Bebel and McCrank asked if we could provide one page flyers to post at various community organizations. Director and staff will be creating this within the next few weeks.
2. Fall Craft & Market will be held on September 28th from 9am-2pm. Both the Expo and Steckling building will be full with a variety of homemade, handcrafted and homegrown products. We are having difficulty finding produce and fall harvest items such as pumpkins, corn stalks, etc. Committee members asked if we reached out to farmers markets which we had done. Director asked committee to try to find vendors if they have connections.
3. Budget focus at this time is capital requests which the MEC currently has no needs. Director is working with Emily, the city finance director, on a 10 year plan. Some items that would be on the request would be our bus (tires, parts, etc), chairs and tables, appliances. Director stated that we are fortunate and somewhat unique in the state as our Center is under a city umbrella and funded as such to a certain degree. Committee members asked questions for clarification of the \$10k expectation to give back to the city, along with how our Endowment Fund plays into that. Director stated the Endowment cannot be used for administrative costs. McCrank and Holz asked clarifying questions regarding how departments function within the city and why we need to give any money back to the city. Director explained the \$10k is an estimate of what we may possibly have to give back to the city to help balance the budget. These funds are generally pulled from our activities account. Bebel recommended that we ask for more funding for education. Director will look into other Centers to visit in order to explore new opportunities for the MEC, in addition to potential further education. Bertagnoli asked if we have seen a decrease in attendance due to our fee structure change that took effect this year. Director shared that we have not, however what we have is a decrease in our card playing groups. Some have decided to go to Les and Jims to play, but one main reason is that many of our participants are aging out and we have very little new people coming in. MEC staff is brainstorming ideas for new offerings such as puzzle tables and other games. We are open to new ideas and invite people to share with us what they would like to see. Director provided an overview of budget #26. Tlusty brought up the possibility of having a pool table here to draw in more guys. Director shared the reason we do not have one is space constraint. The expo has many rentals as well as the MEC using the space for a variety of activities that there is no place to store it. The option of a portable table like a folding ping pong table or a table top were other ideas.

VI. Discussion - none

VII. Adjournment

1. Motion to adjourn by Bebel second by Tlusty.

The next meeting date is **October 16th, 2024 at 2:15pm at the MEC.** Vouchers available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.

Respectfully submitted, *TMrachek*


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