

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Thursday November 21st '24 MEETING MINUTES

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

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

I. Opening

1. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

II. Consent Items

1. Motion by Holz, second by McCrank to approve Sept '24 minutes. Motion carried.
2. Motion by Harvey, second by Holz to approve Sept-Nov '24 vouchers. Motion carried.

III. Public Comment - none

IV. ADRC

1. Jennifer Clark shared the following information regarding funding changes for the ADRC;
 - a. ARPA Funds will be eliminated which will eliminate some programs
 - b. Meals on Wheels will be negatively affected as they cut the funding by 40,000 meals. Frozen meals may be eliminated. There may be other funding sources, grants, etc., available that will be looked into.
 - c. National Caregiver Grants will also be reduced
 - d. The Marshfield ADRC will close around March 2025. They will still service clients but there will be no physical presence.
 - e. Staffing level changes will also happen in the new year
2. Bertagnoli asked if these cuts/changes were anticipated. Clark confirmed they knew there would be cuts coming but not to this level. ARPA funding during Covid helped greatly to support these programs. They will not have to get creative in how to offer services to people who are in need. Nothing is certain at this time.
3. On a positive note, the Stepping On Program in Merrill was very successful and will continue.
4. The ADRC will also offer a Fall Prevention Resource Fair in the New Year. Director mentioned that we could possibly partner with them.

V. Operations

1. This year is the 34th Thanksgiving outreach in which the MEC partners with a local church to provide a dinner to the community. St. Stephens United Church of Christ decided to offer the first sit-down meal since Covid. Director provided the numbers for sit down were very low (only 29), despite encouragement to attend at the church. Delivery (91) and pick-up (63) were similar to years' past. Discussion took place on how to get people to 'gather' again. Committee shared a few reasons why people may not be comfortable attending the sit down meals in addition to how to get them out to socialize by possibly volunteering or taking a friend. Tlusty asked if having a minimal delivery fee would possibly get them to the church. Director shared the regular deliveries are those who are not able to get out of the house so a fee may be discouraging. McCrank offered the idea to promote the program more heavily next year via meeting with community groups, service organizations, etc. Committee also mentioned there are a number of others offering a Thanksgiving meal – VFW, St. Paul's Lutheran, etc.
2. The MEC's Christmas Joy celebration will be held on December 19th starting with socialization and snacks at 10:30am, followed by music from the Brass Patina Group. Deliveries of meals and small gifts to those spending the holiday alone are from 1-3pm on the same day.
3. Director shared a year-to-date attendance report showing averages per day and month. (Please see attached documents) Our overall check in count for 181 days open, through the date of this meeting was 10,826. Director shared that a few of our activities have seen a decline in attendance based on ages and health of normal participants. The committee brainstormed ideas on how to increase attendance, especially on Thursdays, followed by Tuesdays. Offering more evening classes was also mentioned however there is competition with a few local businesses as well as the High School's community education program beginning in the New Year. Tlusty mentioned getting Brewer or Packer players here. Director had checked into this in the past and it was quite expensive but will check into it again as Tlusty mentioned Brewers may have a community foundation program that funds outreach.

4. Our Parkinson's group meetings have been well attended. We anticipate the group growing in 2025. We have partnered with a number of organizations who attend meetings to share educational, medical, exercise, resources, all focused on living with Parkinson's and those who support them.
5. Director shared final budget information with the committee. Budget #10 and #26 were discussed. Our year-to-date profit is just over \$10k, which is the exact amount that we need to provide back to the City's general fund. This is positive as we retain the remainder of our funds in each dedicated account. Director reassured committee that we are in a solid financial state moving into 2025. Director also discussed budget #26 (reserved and designated fund equity) with the committee, detailing each account and what they are used for. Summary report is attached.
6. Committee brainstormed ideas for new offerings for 2025. February and March are generally slower due to weather and people who go to warmer climates for the winter. We will be offering our Art De-stash event in March, along with our Health Fair in April, if there is enough interest. Tlusty requested business card size handouts to recruit more people for the men's group. Bertagnoli recommended having a puzzle competition. This is very popular right now and the MEC staff will look into it. Other ideas included a Mardi Gras party or similar events. Evening offerings were brought up again. After much discussion, besides payroll/staffing limitations, there is too much competition for evening and weekend offerings.

VI. Discussion - none

VII. Adjournment

1. Motion to adjourn by Tlusty second by Harvey.

The next meeting date is **January 16th, 2025 at 2:15pm at the MEC.** *Vouchers available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.*

Respectfully submitted, TMrachek



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