

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Thursday February 20th, 2025 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 **Excused:** Elizabeth McCrank, Jennifer Clark (ADRC representative)

I. Opening

1. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

II. Consent Items

1. Motion by Holz, second by Weix to approve Jan '25 minutes. Motion carried.
2. Motion by Bebel, second by Tlusty to approve Jan-Feb '25 vouchers. Motion carried. Bertagnoli asked if the weights purchased for Strong Bodies would be available for Gigi's classes. Director shared they would be able to be used if needed. She also mentioned the increase in men participating in the Strength and Balance class, some from our Parkinson's group.

III. Public Comment - none

IV. ADRC

No representative present. Director shared the ADRC would be conducting a new 8-week workshop here starting April 2nd and running through May 21st. Sessions will be on Wednesdays from 1-3pm. The workshop will focus on Brain and Memory strategies that can be incorporated into everyday life. Holz added that Scott Seeger, one of the facilitators mentioned it on WJMT. Director shared that Jennifer Thompson is the other facilitator that will run the workshop here along with Scott. Tlusty confirmed there is no cost for the workshop.

Holz mentioned that Tomahawk radio and News Channel 12 out of Rhinelander is plugging the Meals on Wheels dining sites. Bertagnoli asked if our ADRC included Vilas County. Director checked and it is not a part of our areas ADRC.

V. Operations

1. The DeStash event will take place on March 29th in the Expo. We are pleased to offer this new event to the public which allows artists and crafters an outlet to sell their excess inventory. This is not a craft event in which people sell their final products. To date we have 24 registrations. Bertagnoli heard the \$25 fee may be a lot for just one person if they did not have much to sell. Director shared that people can share a booth but must both fill out a registration form for state reporting. Holz mentioned that any first time event can be tough.
2. After much effort of trying to arrange a Health Fair, we did not receive enough interest. Instead we will try to bring health providers to the MEC to offer workshops on specific wellness topics. Bebel suggested trying to reach out to Aspirus to see if they are looking to do a health fair as in the past with Ascension. He suggested we could provide a volunteer group to help out. Director feels that our Community Night Out might be so similar that may be why we didn't get the interest we thought we would.
3. Director shared the many workshops we have scheduled through June of this year. We are pleased to partner with local agencies to educate our public on a variety of topics including legal affairs, brain and memory strategies, and scams and fraud.
4. Director shared city updates regarding the purchase of the Armory as well as the status of Aldi's. Director spoke with City Administrator Akey for information. As for Aldi's we cannot confirm or deny. The city along with a \$400k donation from the Bierman Foundation purchased the Armory building from the state. The Fair Board committee also wants some control of it as well. This includes the garages which will be used to store Park & Rec equipment. Weix added The Boys & Girls Club is looking to lease for a longer time possibly up to 25 years versus 10 that the city proposed, based on the investment they would be taking on. They are looking to raise \$1.5 million for needed improvements including a new roof, classrooms, and a gym. Bebel asked how far of a reach the property extends. Meyer added that it includes the buildings as well. Bebel further inquired into who would be sharing the overall operating costs. Weix stated he did not have those answers quite yet.
Tlusty asked if the Boys & Girls Club would be leaving the middle school and how they would get to the Armory. Weix confirmed it is on the bus route. Discussion centered on the Armory's past which Harvey mentioned included hosting the dairy breakfasts, 4H displays during the fair, and more. added there were annual art shows along with family & consumer education.

VI. Discussion

1. Holz mentioned how popular baking is, specifically sourdough starters. Committee suggested looking to see if someone from NTC could run a class. Director did mention that we have tried in the past to get chef's to come and teach with no luck. Director and staff will begin to search for people to get classes offered.
2. Bebel would like to see other ends of town have our MEC sign as they are entering the community as some cannot find our building. Director will speak with our streets department head to see if we can add more.

VII. Adjournment

1. Motion to adjourn by Bebel second by Harvey.

The next meeting date is **March 20th, 2025 at 2:15pm at the MEC.** *Vouchers available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.*

Respectfully submitted, TMrachek



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