

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Thursday March 20th, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

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

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

Excused: Laura Bertagnoli (Chair)

I. Opening

1. McCrank acted as Committee Chair in Bertagnoli's absence. McCrank called the meeting to order. Director shared that Bertagnoli would like to have another committee member step up to be the Chair. The committee all agreed they felt she is doing a fine job and wished for Director to share that message with her. If she would prefer another member take the position, it will be decided at the next meeting. Bebel questions if we needed a motion. Director shared that we did not.

II. Consent Items

1. Motion by Tlusty, second by Holz to approve Feb '25 minutes. Motion carried.
2. Motion by Holz, second by Harvey to approve Feb-March '25 vouchers. Holz questioned Director on the \$546.75 purchase of wreaths. Director shared the purpose of the wreaths stems from a long history of the MEC placing wreaths on the graves of those who have passed many years ago and may no longer have any family or friends in the area. Tlusty stated we probably could buy more due to how many graves may still not have a wreath on them. Director agreed and may look into having more posts made. Director also shared that we are now purchasing soda, as requested by our participants. We are selling them for \$1 each at a slight profit.

III. Public Comment - none

IV. ADRC

Clark stated she did not have too much to share due to the ADRC moving into their new location on the Lakeview Drive Campus near the Wausau Airport. Bebel asked what the purpose of this move was as sometimes when counties combine; our local agency may lose its identity. Clark shared that she felt the main reason for the moves were to have a one stop campus for all resources such as Northcentral HealthCare, Park & Rec, Social Services, UW-Extension, etc. It is also conveniently located on bus lines.

She did share the annual Advocacy Days would be held again this year in Madison on May 13th. Registration is open through April 25th. She also shared what a great experience it is as advocates can speak to legislators at the Capitol after a morning session to help prepare how to speak with them. McCrank asked if our local legislatures, Mary Felzkowski and Calvin Callahan will be in attendance. McCrank asked if in the past month if there were any changes to the meals on wheels program. Clark said there is nothing new but Erin was writing grants to try to offset costs along with searching for other funding sources.

V. Operations

1. Upcoming
 - a. Director shared that we have 30 spaces full for our DeStash event will take place on March 29th in the Expo. Tina Scott, editor of the Foto News was kind enough to write a feature article for the MEC as this is a new event to the area. Director shared MEC Marketing & Program Coordinator; Vicki Gaedtke should be credited for coming up with the event while searching for new ideas to bring to the MEC and the Merrill Community. Polka Dotted Pie agreed to be at the event to serve a lunch. We are excited to bring something new to Merrill and hope that our community as well as neighboring community members will attend. Premier created our signs again for this event.
 - b. Upcoming Workshops were discussed that include ADRC's boost your brain and memory which meets a once a week for 7 weeks. We are hoping for more people to commit to this important offering. Gigi Heinz will offer a free workshop called Walking Home focused on end of life decisions including Advance Health Care Directives. Finally we have Mary Klug offering Medicare Educational Seminars started in April and going through June. Holz asked how we decide which agencies to provide similar informational sessions. Director shared that she has reached out to multiple agencies in our community and beyond throughout the years and will continue to do so. Harvey had recommended Mary as she was giving information sessions (not selling) at Riverside Athletic Club, knowing that I was searching for someone to offer Medicare. In the past we had Mary from the ADRC. We do reach out to many businesses as to not favor any one agency for all workshops topics. We stress informational only, no selling can happen here.

2. New Class offerings in the month of April include our Spring Décor class, along with the popular wool dryer ball class.
3. A new offering was brought to our attention by Natalie Bassett, Chaplain from Aspirus Hospice. She had an idea of combining grief support with a book club. She reached out to Katie Denton from the ADRC and they came to the MEC for a meeting. The result will be our new book club opportunity to help those who are navigating through a difficult transition in life. McCrank added what a brilliant idea this is to have an individual focus on attention and feelings onto something external which bridges what they are feeling inside to cope. Director agrees that it is brilliant and we are excited to offer this to the community. The first group will be in May.

VI. Discussion

1. Holz asked if any new bus trips are on the horizon. Director stated lunch bus trips are not doing well, which could be based on meal costs going up. Bebel mentioned fish boils that used to be offered here. Randy no longer is offering those. Director will look to see if there is anyone else willing to offer a meal here for a reasonable cost. Food trucks are also taking the place of some of these offerings. Holz recommend winery trips. We have had them on the list in past years and will offer them again this year.

VII. Adjournment

1. Motion to adjourn by Tlusty second by Bebel.

The next meeting date is **April 17th, 2025 at 2:15pm at the MEC.** *Vouchers available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.*

Respectfully submitted, TMrachek



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