



CITY OF MERRILL
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
AGENDA • THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2025

Regular Meeting **City Hall Council Chambers** **5:15 PM**

To attend remotely call 720-409-1945 PIN 571 780 287 #

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 - 1. Minutes from the May 15th meeting.
- III. General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 - 1. Discuss and consider the May Revenue/Expense Report
 - 2. Food Truck-a-palooza Review
 - 3. Annual Business Survey Videos - next steps
 - 4. Discuss and consider the revised Marketing Strategy
 - 5. Discuss and consider the Go-Pro Action Bundle
 - 6. Discuss and consider Business Survey Video production collaboration with Mazie Schlueter of Church Mutual
 - 7. Chamber of Commerce Update
 - 8. Lincoln County Economic update
- IV. Monthly Reports and Updates**
 - 1. Monthly Report & Statistical Analytics - Social Media Specialist Savall
 - 2. Consider placing monthly reports on file
- V. Public Comment**
- VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Thursday, July 17th at 5:15 pm**
- VII. Adjournment**

The Merrill City Hall is accessible to the physically disadvantaged. If special accommodations are needed, please contact the Merrill City Hall at (715) 536-5594.

**CITY OF MERRILL
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 5:15 PM**

- I. **Call to Order** Chair Fermanich called the meeting to order at 5:15 pm.
Present: D4 Alderperson Fermanich, D8 Alderperson Rutkowski
Present Not Voting: Social Media Specialist/Fairgrounds Coordinator Hallie Savall, Scott Steele, Sarah Sturm, Mayor Hass, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, Cameo Almi - Midwest Communications, Cloe Savall, LCEDC Sarah Guild (remote), Merrill Community Media
Excused: D5 Alderperson Landis Holdorf
- II. **Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 1. **April 17th meeting minutes.** - (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/D4 Alderperson Fermanich) motion/second place minutes on file. The motion passed.
- III. **General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 1. **Discuss and consider the April Revenue/Expense Reports** - There were no questions.
 2. **Annual Business Survey Results - Discussion** - Scott Steele led the discussion regarding the survey results. Additional information was provided at the meeting. The survey was sent to 385 businesses and 18% responded. 32 of 68 businesses advertised open positions. 62% of businesses responding stated they received applications outside of Lincoln County. Twelve of the businesses agreed to do a video about working and living in Merrill. Additional footage will be taken during the video to use as B-roll. The intention is to conduct this survey annually.
 3. **Discuss and Consider Marketing Strategy Revisions** - Chair Fermanich discussed the next steps in marketing and the strategy going forward. Scott Steele mentioned the campaign has been running for a while and thinks some fresh ideas should be used to freshen up the marketing strategy. Discussion regarding pausing the current marketing program was introduced. Sarah Sturm stated information from local realtors could benefit marketing. Following discussion (D4 Alderperson Fermanich/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) motion/second to pause the current marketing and advertising spending and re-evaluate for long-term marketing effective June 1, 2025. The motion passed.
 4. **Chamber of Commerce - update** - Sarah Sturm provided an update. She stated a youth apprentice has been hired at the Chamber. They launched a Tik Tok and Instagram page. The Chamber Golf Outing is scheduled for June 2nd.
 5. **Lincoln County Economic Development - update** - Sarah Guild was remote and provided an update. Information sessions will take place in

Tomahawk and Merrill to answer questions business owners or individuals may have regarding the Lincoln County Economic Development Corporation. The Merrill session will take place at Park City Credit Union on June 9th from 8:00 am - 9:00 am.

IV. Monthly Reports and Updates

- 1. Monthly Report & Statistical Analytics - Social Media Specialist Savall**
- The report was included in the packet. Hallie highlighted some items and reminded committee members of the Food Truck-a-palooze which will take place on Saturday, May 17th at the Merrill Fairgrounds.
- 2. Monthly Report - Midwest Communications** - The report was provided in the packet. Cameo highlighted some items and stated all ads would stop on June 1st per the previous motion.
- 3. Consider placing monthly reports on file** - (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/D4 Alderperson Fermanich) motion/second place monthly reports on file. The motion passed.

V. Public Comment There was no public comment.

VI. Date and Time of Next Meeting - Thursday, June 19th at 5:15 pm

VII. Adjournment (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/D4 Alderperson Fermanich) motion/second adjourn. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 5:41 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by City Clerk Anderson-Malm
Minutes are in draft form until approved at the next scheduled meeting.

26 -Reserved - Non-Lapsing
M&C - Cable/Video

	ANNUAL BUDGET	CURRENT PERIOD	Y-T-D ACTUAL	% OF BUDGET	BUDGET BALANCE
REVENUES =====					
<u>Intergovernmental</u>					
45305-43439 State VSP Aid	24,324.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	24,324.00
45305-43510 CARES COVID-19 Reimb	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL Intergovernmental	24,324.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	24,324.00
<u>Licenses and Permits</u>					
45305-44900 Cable Franchise (Less Adm)	<u>95,500.00</u>	<u>20,483.96</u>	<u>43,955.09</u>	<u>46.03</u>	<u>51,544.91</u>
TOTAL Licenses and Permits	95,500.00	20,483.96	43,955.09	46.03	51,544.91
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TOTAL REVENUES	119,824.00	20,483.96	43,955.09	36.68	75,868.91
EXPENDITURES =====					
<u>Supplies & Expenses</u>					
55305-03-40000 MAPS Merrill Productions	35,650.00	16,058.02	16,058.02	45.04	19,591.98
55305-03-40022 Closed Captioning Legal	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55305-03-45000 Audio-Chambers & Expo	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55305-03-46389 Wi-Fi Public Replacements	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55305-03-46390 Software-Web Filtering	2,250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,250.00
55305-03-46400 Social Media Archiving	0.00	0.00	3,978.60	0.00	(3,978.60)
55305-03-46500 Festival Grounds & Expo	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55305-03-47250 City Website Hosting	4,650.00	0.00	4,650.00	100.00	0.00
55305-03-47500 Accela Live Streaming	10,250.00	2,081.59	2,081.59	20.31	8,168.41
55305-03-47523 CivicPlus - Meetings	4,600.00	0.00	9,415.35	204.68	(4,815.35)
55305-03-47533 M&C Committee - Resources	4,600.00	0.00	11.04	0.24	4,588.96
55305-03-47534 MWC Monthly Ads	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55305-03-47536 Visitor Guide Ads	3,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,000.00
55305-03-47555 Marketing Contractor	32,208.00	2,684.00	10,736.00	33.33	21,472.00
55305-03-47557 Social Media Contractor	32,500.00	0.00	40.00	0.12	32,460.00
55305-03-47566 M&C - Cell Phone	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
55305-03-47575 LCEDC Marketing	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
TOTAL Supplies & Expenses	129,708.00	20,823.61	46,970.60	36.21	82,737.40
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES	129,708.00	20,823.61	46,970.60	36.21	82,737.40
REVENUES OVER/(UNDER) EXPENDITURES	(9,884.00)	(339.65)	(3,015.51)	0.00	(6,868.49)

26 -Reserved - Non-Lapsing
 MFG - Events

	ANNUAL BUDGET	CURRENT PERIOD	Y-T-D ACTUAL	% OF BUDGET	BUDGET BALANCE
REVENUES =====					
<u>Intergovernmental</u>					
45324-43515 Federal ARPA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL Intergovernmental	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<u>Miscellaneous Revenues</u>					
45324-48500 MFG Events-Donations	0.00	900.00	7,000.00	0.00	(7,000.00)
45324-48525 Food Truck-Spot Rentals	0.00	25.00	650.00	0.00	(650.00)
45324-48550 MFG Events - Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
45324-48725 Craft Show Revenues	0.00	475.00	1,525.00	0.00	(1,525.00)
45324-48750 Event Revenues	0.00	1,277.00	1,277.00	0.00	(1,277.00)
TOTAL Miscellaneous Revenues	0.00	2,677.00	10,452.00	0.00	(10,452.00)
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TOTAL REVENUES	0.00	2,677.00	10,452.00	0.00	(10,452.00)
EXPENDITURES =====					
<u>Supplies & Expenses</u>					
55324-03-40000 MFG-Food Truck Expenses	0.00	3,460.00	6,461.25	0.00	(6,461.25)
55324-03-40024 MFG-Craft Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL Supplies & Expenses	0.00	3,460.00	6,461.25	0.00	(6,461.25)
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TOTAL EXPENDITURES	0.00	3,460.00	6,461.25	0.00	(6,461.25)
REVENUES OVER/(UNDER) EXPENDITURES	0.00	(783.00)	3,990.75	0.00	(3,990.75)

Food Truck-a-Palooza 2025 Recap

First off, I want to thank all of our Sponsors and Volunteers. We couldn't have had this event without you.

I am waiting on all the numbers yet for expenses and revenues to see where we end up this year. Hopefully I will have that for July's report

Personally, I think the event was very well attended. We figure there were over 3,000 in attendance throughout the day. The food trucks overall were happy with the turnout. We did have 6 trucks that sold out of food before the event was over. I did send out feedback forms for the Food Trucks, Craft and Vendors and also for the attendees. Without going into the 26 plus pages of info, here is a summary of what they had to say. I asked them what we did well, where we can improve and what they would like to see next year.

Food Trucks -

Layout was better than last year; I was happy with the turnout; We could've used more garbage cans; Just a few to many Food trucks; People were friendly; This went better than I was expecting for the weather; Picnic tables by the trucks would've been nice; Easy to get into our space; the map beforehand was great; Communication with event staff was great; I will be back next year; Thank you for putting something like this on in our area;

Craft and Vendors -

Map this year was good; Good turnout; next year don't have too many of the same thing; bathrooms would be nice if they were all open; Easy to find our spot; Advertising was great; Bigger space than expected; Shorten the hours; Limit people leaving early; We would like a better location for next year;

Attendees -

Music was great; Layout was better than last year; We need a map for where every truck is; more tables by the food trucks; Fair rides would be awesome; nice to have bounce houses for the kids; tent with no music would be nice for families/friends to talk; Great to see so many vendors; Variety of Food options was great; Music was too loud; Put the soda and beer in the middle of the trucks so they are easier to get to; turnout was great; glad to see the community come together;

MERRILL MARKETING STRATEGY - REFRESH

Modified: June 12, 2025

Marketing Objective:

Inspire career-driven individuals and families to stay in or relocate to Merrill by showcasing a community where meaningful work and affordable living meet quality of life.

Core Messaging:

Merrill Wisconsin offers diverse job opportunities set against the backdrop of small-town charm, fulfilling lifestyle and four-season outdoor adventure.

Priorities:

One: City Generated Storytelling Initiative

A. Community Photography & Video Standards

Establish consistent branding and quality across all city-promoted visual content.

- a. Develop repeatable standards, processes, and templates for photography and video use in community promotions.
- b. Apply these across all departments, events, and themes (e.g., lifestyle, business, recreation).

B. Real People, Real Stories

- a. “Why I moved here/Why I love it here” Video Series
 - i. Create 1–2 minute video shorts featuring diverse individuals and families who either relocated to Merrill or did not grow up in the community.
 - ii. Interview content to include:
 1. Why they chose Merrill.
 2. What pleasantly surprised them.
 3. What they love about living in Merrill.
 4. What they love about their job or career.
 5. Additional positive reflections on life in Merrill.

C. Capture life in Merrill

- a. Build a robust library of emotionally resonant photography showcasing real moments of working, living, and playing in Merrill.
- b. Combine original photography with high-quality stock imagery where appropriate.

D. Digital Distribution Strategy

Leverage platforms and channels including:

- a. Facebook Groups (targeting relevant towns/cities).
- b. YouTube Shorts for storytelling content.
- c. LinkedIn for skilled trade and professional audiences.
- d. SEO-optimized landing pages and cross-linked web content.
- e. Hyperlink integration to related resources and community websites.

E. Team with:

- i. High school career centers.
- ii. Local colleges or trade schools.
- iii. Workforce development boards.
- iv. Job fairs.
- v. Trade events.

Required resources: Initiative budget, business liaison, script writer/interviewer, videographer and video editor, social media coordinator, SEO and hyperlink/content strategist, analytics and performance tracking support.

Two: Geo-Targeted Social Campaigns

A. Hyperlocal Paid Ads on Facebook

- a. Deploy targeted digital ads to attract individuals and families considering relocation by focusing on regions with:
 - i. Higher costs of living.
 - ii. Limited job opportunities.
 - iii. Higher crime rates.
 - iv. Traffic congestion and urban stress.

These hyperlocal campaigns will highlight Merrill’s advantages—affordable living, job diversity, safety, and quality of life—to drive awareness and interest in relocation.

Required Resources: Campaign budget, digital advertising strategist, content creation (copy + creative), ad placement and targeting support, SEO and hyperlink/content strategist, analytics and performance tracking.

Local Champions: Community Ambassador Program

Empower trusted community members to authentically promote Merrill as a great place to live, work, and play.

- A. Recruit a small group of local workers, business owners, educators, or civic leaders to serve as informal ambassadors.
 - a. Collaborate with the Merrill Chamber of Commerce.
- B. Create flyers, talking points, and branded assets for sharing.
- C. Consider optional perks or recognition for participation
- D. Ambassador Activities:
 - a. Share city-generated content on social media and local online communities.
 - b. Comment and engage in relevant Facebook groups.
 - c. Personally invite friends and family to job fairs, community events, or local tours.

Required resources: Initiative budget, ambassador program coordinator, content pipeline and support materials, analytics and engagement tracking.

Three: Reformat "Experience Merrill" City Website Landing Page

Create a welcoming, conversion-focused landing page that highlights Merrill as an ideal place to live, work, and raise a family—while making it easy for visitors to take the next step.

Include:

- A. **Compelling Town Overview:**
A concise, emotional pitch emphasizing career opportunities, affordable living, and four-season lifestyle.
- B. **Visual Impact:**
Showcase real-life images and videos of homes, businesses, families, downtown life, and outdoor recreation to convey authenticity and warmth.
- C. **Resource Links:**
 - a. Job listings and workforce support.
 - b. Housing availability and affordability.
 - c. Four-season recreational activities.
 - d. School district and educational resources.
- D. **"Move Here" Guide (PDF):**
A clean, shareable document with average housing costs, businesses, local services, healthcare, and recreational highlights.

Required resources: Initiative budget, content writer and editor, UX (user experience) designer, web development and site maintenance support, SEO strategist, analytics and engagement tracking.

Four: Earned Media & Word of Mouth Strategy – Pitch the positive stories.

Leverage local and regional media outlets to share compelling stories that elevate Merrill's brand and generate organic buzz.

- A. Proactively pitch stories to news outlets, radio stations, and podcasts and include in City social media efforts about:
 - Merrill's inclusion in regional features (e.g., *Discover Wisconsin*, "Top 10 Small Towns to Move To").
 - The city's rebranding and marketing initiatives.
 - Signature local events (e.g., rodeo, Food Truck-a-Palooza, county fair).
 - Human-interest profiles on families, workers, or entrepreneurs thriving in Merrill.
- B. **Provide:**
 - Access to real residents, workers, and employers for authentic, relatable storytelling.
 - Photos videos, quotes, and background materials to make coverage easy and appealing.

Required resources: Initiative budget, media communications specialist or PR liaison, content coordination and story pipeline, analytics and media tracking tools

Future Efforts for Consideration:

Merrill Graduate Initiative: Stay or Return Campaign

Encourage Merrill high school and college graduates to build their futures in Merrill—whether by staying after graduation or returning after time away.

- A. Develop an emotionally resonant, repeatable campaign that highlights the personal, professional, and lifestyle benefits of living and working in Merrill.
- B. Key Content Components:
 - a. Graduate Spotlights:
Interviews and video shorts featuring young adults who chose to stay in or return to Merrill—sharing why they made the decision and what they’ve gained.
 - b. Business Perspectives:
Interviews with local employers highlighting job opportunities, career growth, and community support.
 - c. Online Engagement Hub:
A dedicated landing page or microsite offering resources, job listings, testimonials, and guides for navigating post-graduation life in Merrill.
 - d. Team with:
 - i. High school career centers.
 - ii. Local colleges or trade schools.
 - iii. Workforce development boards.
 - iv. Job fairs.
 - v. Trade events.

Required resources: Initiative budget, initiative coordinator, content pipeline and storytelling materials, digital content development and campaign management.

Create an Alumni Connection – Alumni Program

Connect and reconnect with Merrill High School alumni to build a sense of hometown pride, encourage community ambassadorship, and share opportunities to live and work in Merrill.

- A. **Partner with Merrill High School** to identify and engage active alumni classes and networks.
- B. **Develop an outreach program** that:
 - a. Shares content with alumni through email, social media, or school newsletters
 - b. Invites participation in alumni events or community initiatives.
 - c. Encourages alumni to visit, return, or refer others to live and work in Merrill.
 - d. Establishes an online alumni hub or social group for ongoing connection and storytelling.

Required resources: Initiative budget, alumni/ambassador program coordinator, outreach materials and content creation, digital community setup and moderation, analytics and engagement tracking tools

From: [Savall, Hallie](#)
To: [Anderson-Malm, Lori](#); [Fermanich, LaDonna](#)
Subject: FW: Some GoPro Info
Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025 10:24:05 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Please add the information in the following email for the M & C packet regarding the future purchase of a GoPro Camera for Marketing. Thanks!



Hallie Savall

City of Merrill

(715) 536-5594 Ext. 255

Hallie.Savall@ci.merrill.wi.us

City Hall

1004 E. First St., Merrill, WI 54452

www.ci.merrill.wi.us



From: Brown, Dustin
Sent: Wednesday, June 11, 2025 9:52 AM
To: Savall, Hallie
Subject: Some GoPro Info

GoPro Action Bundle – \$479.99 (currently on sale at Best Buy for \$379.99)

Bundle includes:

- HERO13 Black Camera
- The Handler Floating Hand Grip
- 2x Enduro Battery
- 2x Curved Adhesive Mount
- 64GB SanDisk Micro SD Card
- Mounting Buckle + Thumb Screw
- USB-C Cable
- Carrying Case

<https://www.bestbuy.com/site/gopro-hero13-black-action-camera-bundle-black/6601248.p?skuld=6601248>

Additional \$50-100 could be added for another storage micro SD card, dependent on how much video recording is desired at one time.

Full/Tall Tripod example if desired - \$30:

(additional cost for an adapter if a full tall tripod is desired rather than handheld only)

<https://www.amazon.com/CAMBOFOTO-Camera-Tripod-Professional-Mirrorless-Camcorder/dp/BOCQP46NQG/>

Options also include tabletop shorter tripods if you're not looking for the height.

Our current situation as far as video editing is that we don't have any computers on the higher end for rendering videos, storage configured to accommodate large and bulk videos, and we aren't as knowledgeable in the video editing space. I know there is free software we could utilize, but not sure on the end goal here. Because of this, it may be beneficial to pick up an external drive to offload video footage that we need to keep and work with.

Dustin Brown

Information Technology Manager

City of Merrill

(715) 536-5594

May 2025 Social Media Analytics

Facebook Page Reach: 13,280 (Up 57.3%)

- *The number of people who saw any content from your Page or about your page, including posts, stories, ads, social information from people who interact with your page and more. *Reach is different from impressions, which may include multiple views of your posts by the same people.*

Facebook Page Visits: 35,057 (up 59.7 %)

- *The number of times your Facebook page was visited.*

New Facebook Page Likes: 50

Cumulative Facebook Page Likes: 3,653

Link Clicks on page - 428

Content (Most Popular by Reach)

1. Pool Filling (Reach 2,405; Likes, Reactions, Comments and Shares 25)
2. Water Utility (Reach 1,784; Likes, Reactions, Comments and Shares:32)
3. Baseball tourney (Reach 1,535; Likes, Reactions, Comments, shares and link clicks: 25)
4. River bend trail closure(Reach 1,107; Likes, Reactions, Comments and Shares: 22)
5. E-recycling (Reach 743; Likes, Reactions, Comments and Shares: 10)

LinkedIn -

We Currently have 46 followers on LinkedIn. Posts include - Ground Breaking Ceremonies, Chamber Ribbon Cuttings, Chamber Business after Hours, City of Merrill Years of Service Recognition (if employee agrees).

YouTube

We currently have 38 subscribers for the Main City Of Merrill YouTube Channel. The City of Merrill Meetings page has 35 followers. This is where all recorded meetings are uploaded for people to watch. There has been an increase in videos being watched which is good to see. Nathan and Draco have been doing a great job getting meetings uploaded.

The Mayor communications videos are uploaded every month onto the Main City of Merrill page.

Website Analytics - please see Website Analytics Summary.

June 2025 Social Media Report

Tasks -

I have met with the Mayor to discuss events and happenings within Merrill
I have met with LaDonna to go over goals and the agenda for the coming month.
I attended Ribbon Cuttings for businesses in town.
I helped out at the Chamber Golf Outing.

Social Media -

I have been getting June's events in the Calendar and working on July happenings as well.

Future Marketing Opportunities

Movie Land Events -

Movie Under the Stars - 3 events this summer. One of which will be at the Airport.
I am working with Dylan Thomas who is lead for these events. He has done a great job with getting sponsors and spreading the word.

The Fireworks event on the Fifth of July - The Park and Rec Commission has agreed to allow 5 Food Trucks to come in for the festivities provided they are pre-registered and have all necessary licenses and permits.

Upcoming events for promotion -

The Fair

Labor Day Car show at the Fairgrounds

Tour of Lights

Food Truck-a-Palooza 2026

Looking forward to next year and the 250th birthday for America.

Website Analytics 2025									
	Acquisition	Experience Merrill		Home Page		Park & Recreation		Food Truck-a-Palooza	
	"midwest"	Views	Active Users	Views	Active Users	Views	Active Users	Views	Active Users
May 2024	68	103	92	3602	2365	753	455		
June 2024	72	76	70	3342	2324	826	494		
July 2024	101	88	82	4040	2868	989	573		
August 2024	87	429	373	4362	3263	804	461		
September 2024	136	2539	2495	2820	1783	516	339		
October 2024	294	1586	1545	2639	1457	317	198		
November 2024	288	1636	1561	1989	1144	344	211		
December 2024	270	1845	1789	2143	1207	325	208		
January 2025	306	3096	3026	2409	1235	534	307		
February 2025	307	774	717	1981	1028	586	340		
March 2025	375	618	539	2361	1271	635	355		
April 2025	371	574	540	2212	1261	664	418		
May 2025	509	891	856	2314	1326	902	513	1389	883