

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Thursday July 24th, 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, Elizabeth McCrank, Jennifer Clark (ADRC representative)

I. Opening

1. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

II. Consent Items

1. Motion by Tlusty second by McCrank to approve June '25 minutes. Motion carried.
2. Motion by Holz second by McCrank to approve June/July '25 vouchers.

III. Public Comment

None

IV. ADRC

1. Clark and Director shared information on the upcoming Prevent Falls Resource Fair which will be hosted by the MEC in the Bierman/Expo building. Jane Bentz, Foundation Director from Aspirus, is providing funding. Bebel recognized Aspirus and the Foundation for providing for our community as they did so for a retired educators offering on falls in the past.
Discussion centered around which organizations will be in attendance. To date we have Bone & Joint Therapy, Merrill Fire Department, Good News Project and Midstate Independent Living choices, LCHD, UW Extension, Strong Bodies demonstrations and participation, Stepping On booth ADRC, Riverside Athletic. Committee is still waiting to hear from others. Holz share that a friend just received a Lifeline device through the VA, which we will check into. McCrank shared the gun show had a company for hearing protection. Director will look into that. The MEC is thrilled to be hosting this Fair for our community.
2. Clark clarified Jenny Towers dining site for the Meals On Wheels program is paused due to lack of accessibility. Discussion took place on where to have the meals. Clark shared other communities have a Café 60 which is a partnership with local restaurants. The challenge is the food needs to meet certain criteria regulated by the program through the ADRC. Committee conversation included how much seating is needed to accommodate and how do owners know who is eligible. Clark stated participants receive a voucher and the restaurant has a separate menu. Director shared that the MEC and ADRC are meeting on July 28th to discuss options.

V. Operations

- a. Director shared the change to instructor fees to begin August 1st. We will streamline the process by simply taking 18% of the class fee. Prior to this, the structure was more complicated for both MEC staff and the instructor (to determine what the class cost would be), as we took our \$3 fee our in addition to 15%. This will result in the instructors getting more money at the same time not hurting MEC funds. Bertagnoli agreed that we are still much below elsewhere. *Motion to approve made by Tlusty and second by Holz.*
- b. Director shared a recap on meeting with Boys & Girls club CEO/Director Kim Larson. The Merrill B&G Club will hopefully be opening for the '26-'27 school year. Committee agreed that many people have no idea what is happening. Bertagnoli added an information session here would be of value. Currently the B&G Club is operating at the Middle School under Elise Schuler. Harvey shared "After the Bell" program is still going. They would like to start having people from our community meet with kids at Washington School and PRMS during the lunch hour, to begin building relationships. Three are activities they can do together such as games, quilting, etc. Director shared years ago we had a group of senior volunteers that participated including our staff, in this program and it was beyond rewarding for both groups. We would like to see this again. Director will work closely with Kim as the project continues.
Questions regarding funding shared the \$3 million from Bierman Foundation and a \$120k operating budget for this year.
- c. Director shared August Calendar as the MEC's hours are affected by the Fair. We are closed the 6th & 7th and have limited activities the 4th and 5th. Staff will be touring the Stevens Point Senior Center on the 6th.

Community night out is on Aug 19th. MEC will have an informational table along with displays by the entry to our space.

- d. Director provided a meal funds update. We provided meal tickets for JB's Food Truck on two occasions with one more left. We served a total of 19 meals. This is less than we were hoping for but it is a new offering and we will continue to try. Our funds for meals are still significant. We are working with the ADRC on possibly being a senior dining site.
- e. Senior Swim has not been attended as we hoped it would. There is one more offering left. Director thanked Dawn Smith for organizing these opportunities.

VI. Discussion

1. Bebel mentioned having local artists display their work at the MEC. In the past it was called an ArtShare Program. Director recalls we have explored this option in the past. Other committee members mentioned potential issues such as the liability, not being able to conduct sales here, etc. Overall, Committee agreed it would not work; however, a local art show may be a future idea for the MEC.

VII. Adjournment

1. Motion to adjourn by Bebel second by Harvey.

The next meeting date is **August 21st, 2025 at 2:15pm at the MEC.** *Vouchers available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.*

Respectfully submitted, TMrachek



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