

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Thursday August 21st, 2025 MEETING MINUTES

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

Present: Laura Bertagnoli (Chair), Mark Weix (Aldersperson), Gene Bebel, Sharon Harvey,
Carol Holz, Elizabeth McCrank

Excused: Jennifer Clark (ADRC representative), Jay Tlusty

I. Opening

1. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

II. Consent Items

1. Motion by McCrank second by Weix to approve July '25 minutes. Motion carried.
2. Motion by Bebel second by Holz to approve July/Aug '25 vouchers. Bebel asked if all is well with our new fee structure. Bertagnoli and Director that it is going well and stated how much easier it is to understand when explaining it to new instructors, in addition to them getting paid more.

III. Public Comment McCrank mentioned her friend loved the tatting class. Overall we had a great response and have added an additional offering. Harvey noted the MEC's display case for the Community Night Out was wonderful and many people stopped to look and pick up newsletters. Bebel noted that the men's group has grown to 39 participants! This is exactly what the goal was and we hope to continue growing. *This helps combat isolation, loneliness and depression.*

IV. ADRC

Director shared information on the upcoming Prevent Falls Resource Fair which will be hosted by the MEC in the Bierman/Expo building. The focus is to educate people on how to prevent falling, what the risks for falls are, and how to improve your balance. To date we have Bone & Joint Therapy, Merrill Fire Dept., Good News Project, Midstate Independent Living choices, LCHD, UW Extension, Strong Bodies, Stepping On - ADRC, Riverside Athletic.

A MEC meal site, in partnership with the ADRC, will be examined in the New Year.

V. Operations

a. Budget

- i. Director shared she will be meeting with the finance director Ley, City Administrator Akey and Mayor Hass to begin budget discussion to bring MEC assistant Zoellner to 32 hours. The MEC wants to expand offerings and it is becoming more challenging to continue with current payroll hours. Committee supports the request and agrees it is important to retain strong performing employees. Holz mentioned Mayor Hass commenting on how fortunate we are as a City to have so many long-term employees and we should not hesitate based on benefits. McCrank added the fact that even though it is only 5 more hours for payroll, there is more flexibility in scheduling vacations and offerings when all three employees are at 32 hours. In addition she added that if the city expects businesses to pay insurance the city should expect to extend this to city employees.
- ii. Advertising expense was more than usual as the MEC has new ads in the MAPS Community Education paper as well as the 2026 Chamber Book.

b. The MEC staff toured the Stevens Point Senior Center on Aug 6th. We met with the Senior Center and ADRC Directors. It was a valuable benchmarking visit as we realized opportunities for us to realize our constraints and how to grow our programming. Our main constraint is space. One idea is for the MEC to utilize the Steckling building (year round) for activities and possibly connecting the buildings in the future. Director will discuss this idea with Administrator Akey. Zoellner shared her visit to Stoughton Senior Center on a recent MEC bus trip. There are many programming ideas that we will explore.

c. September Calendar

- i. Line Dance Lessons Sept 6th 1-3pm
- ii. Prevent Falls Resource Fair Sept. 16th 9:30am-Noon
- iii. Fall Craft & Market Sept 27th 9am-2pm

d. October offerings

- i. Oct 1st – begin Genealogy 8 week course
- ii. Oct 2nd – Lions Eye Bank of Wisconsin Educational/Informational Event

2. Discussion

- a. AARP Tax-Aide - Susan Mortensen, local coordinator with UW-Extension for AARP Tax-Aide stopped in to discuss the MEC as a possible location for tax aide. We have been a site in past years prior to Covid. Director is pushing for the possibility to have this offered to our community again as there is a definite need. Susan stated they are in need for people to volunteer to go through the training. Susan will keep in touch when she is able to provide more detailed information.

3. Adjournment (3:15)

- 1. Motion to adjourn by Bebel second by Harvey.

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

Respectfully submitted, TMrachek

	<p>Tammie Mrachek, Director Merrill Enrichment Center City of Merrill (715) 536-4226 MEC@ci.merrill.wi.us 303 North Sales St., Merrill, WI 54452 www.ci.merrill.wi.us</p> 
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