

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee
Thursday November 20th, 2025 MEETING MINUTES
MEC Conference Room 303 N. Sales Street 2:15pm

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

Agenda

- I. **Opening (2:15)**
Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.
- II. **Consent Items**
 - a. Motion by Tlusty second by Holz to approve October '25 minutes. Motion carried.
 - b. Motion by Bebel second by Tlusty to approve Aug-Oct '25 vouchers.
- III. **Public Comment**
None
- IV. **ADRC**
 - a. Clark shared the results of the first offering of a Presentation focused on Balance and Falls. Cindy Caylor from Bone & Joint assisted in facilitated. They had 22 people attend. They taught 12 exercises that people can do at home. Bertagnoli asked the length of the offering and if it could be coupled with the health fair. Clark stated it was around 1.5 hours and felt the health fair already had booths that focused on Strength and balance testing and getting up from falls. Holz asked if they would have this offering again. Clark feels this will be a good offering to continue with, as the time commitment is less than the current Stepping On program. Clark stated possibly adding some guest experts as well.
 - b. Clark discussed an update to the Meals on Wheels program, stating there is now a waitlist through December for anyone new trying to get meals. They are looking into providing other options for these people such as mail order meals. They did look into transferring monies from congregate into MOW but that was not approved.
Bebel and Tlusty discussed the shrinking services within Lincoln County, one being childcare and the negative impact these canceled programs will have on our community.
Director shared the MEC will be a location for congregate meals hopefully beginning in February of 2026.
Weix shared that the library has a good pantry on the third floor. Director shared that ours are available in both entry ways.
- V. **Operations**
 - a. Director shared her disappointment, but not surprised that the MEC's budget request to get the Administrative Assistant position to 32 hours did not pass. We will make the same request next year. Committee discussion included getting the alderpersons here to visit so they can see first-hand how busy our days are. Director will email an invitation to that group. Weix suggested Director to put monthly newsletters in the Alderspersons mailboxes. Director will begin doing that with our December newsletter. He also suggested that our attendees call their alderpersons to let them know how much they appreciate the MEC and all of the services we provide. Bebel and Holz suggested putting our attendance numbers in our monthly newsletters.
Director shared the detailed Reserved and Designated Fund Equity report from Finance Director Ley. Bertagnoli asked for charts like Director had provided in previous budget sessions. Director was told to simply provide the numbers without the charts for the budget packet. Committee agreed, including Aldersperson Weix, that charts would be much easier than a bunch of numbers. Director agrees and will create charts for future budgets.
Discussion continued regarding our balance in our accounts and wanted to confirm the \$10k

that will be moved to the City. Director confirmed. Bebel added that we use our money for our needs and prepare ahead of time prior to the next budget. Bebel added the city needs to remember that the Bierman Foundation funding is one of the main reasons the city is able to provide these invaluable services to our community.

- b. The Director is still waiting to hear from the United Way if our Grant request is approved. We are hopeful to find out by the end of the year.
- c. The MEC is partnering with St. Johns Lutheran Church this year for the Thanksgiving meal. There will be 250 meals delivered to our community members this year. We are thankful to be a partner in this annual outreach.
*The MEC will also host its 27th annual Christmas Outreach Program. The Church Mutual Choir will be performing beginning at 11am in the Expo area of our building. Refreshments and snacks will be served. All are welcome to attend. As part of this outreach, we will be delivering meals and gifts to those spending the holidays alone.
The committee suggested we invite alderpersons, city employees and the Mayor. Director will send an email invitation.
- d. The MEC is excited to be a location in the New Year for the ADRC's Gather at the Table congregate dining. Director shared that we are having a meeting on December 2nd to begin planning. We are hopeful this will also expand our presence in the community and increase attendance. The Library hosted two so far this year. Harvey attended and shared that the last meal at the TB Scott Free Library had around 40 people. A Medicare presentation preceded the meal and people were very interactive.

VI. **Discussion**

VII. **Adjournment** (3:15)

The next meeting will be January 15th, 2026 at 2:15pm in MEC Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted,

TMrachek

Tammie Mrachek

MEC Director

Enrichment Center Mission

To improve lives through social, physical, and educational opportunities.