

**CITY OF MERRILL
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2026 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 (remote), D8 Alderperson Rutkowski
Present Not Voting: Social Media Specialist/Fairgrounds Coordinator Hallie Savall, Scott Steele, Sarah Sturm, Sarah Guild, City Clerk Anderson-Malm, City Administrator Akey
Absent: D5 Alderperson Landis Holdorf
- II. **Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 1. **Minutes from the December 18th and January 15th meetings.** - (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/D4 Alderperson Fermanich) motion/second to place minutes on file. The motion passed.
- III. **General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 1. **Review the Revenue and Expense Reports** - The reports were reviewed. There were no questions.
- 2 Status and discussion of business marketing**
 - . **videos** <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6kFFxrzho2qOfXZwH8J6fLJxMGmfhf3G> - The link was provided in the agenda packet to view the business videos. Scott Steele said the videographer was very easy to work with. SMS Savall said it was good to have a fresh set of eyes for the videos and agreed that she was easy to work with. D8 Alderperson Rutkowski liked the videos. SMS Savall she will receive the videos and will have them ready to go by the end of February. The videos will be rotated on Facebook for 3 months. She will monitor the views and the videos will target specific demographics. There was further discussion regarding Chat GPT and how the upgraded version would help SMS Savall with marketing. The additional cost would be \$20 per month. Sarah Sturm from the Chamber said they use the upgraded version for their posts, and it is very helpful. Following discussion (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/D4 Alderperson Fermanich) motion/second to approve the additional \$20/month for the upgraded Chat GPT service. The motion passed.
 - a. **Schedule vs anticipated timelines** - discussed above
 3. **Food Truck update** - SMS Savall stated that 21 trucks and 21 craft vendors have already signed up for the event. There will be a variety of trucks, and one from Milwaukee. The entertainment has been set and things are coming together. The event is May 16th from 11:00 am - 6:00 pm.
 4. **Chamber of Commerce update** - Sarah Sturm updated the committee with the following: Destination Guides are out, and they are working on distribution. Between the Green Bay and LaCrosse shows, they handed out around 1,200

guides. They are shipping 1,000 guides to visitor locations throughout the state. She thanked Scott Steele, Peter Tesch photography and Reindel printing for their help with the destination guides. The chamber also printed stickers that are available for purchase. In April, Shop, Eat, Drink cards will be available. These cards are free to Chamber members and available at the Chamber office. These cards feature area businesses to be filled/punched at the business, then turned into the Chamber to be entered to win Chamber Bucks. Sip and Stroll is scheduled for October 17th with further details to come. The committee discussed the 250th celebration. CA Akey said 40 flags at \$200 each will be available and the Chamber will act as the recipient of funds. Chair Fermanich stated communication should be with the Historic Preservation Committee, Chamber, Historical Society and VFW. SMS Savall and CA Akey will reach out to the organizations.

- 5. Lincoln County Economic Development update** - Sarah Guild updated the committee with the following: Linc and Learn was this morning at 7:30 am at Johnson's with about twelve people attending. The next Linc and Learn is in Tomahawk on March 19th. The Economic Summit is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28th at the Expo Center in Merrill. Fliers are out. There will possibly be a Business After Hours following the summit.

IV. Monthly Reports and Updates

- 1. Monthly Report & Statistical Analytics - Social Media Specialist Savall**
- SMS Savall updated the committee: Reaches and views have gone up from December. There are 100 new Facebook followers.
- 2. Consider placing monthly reports on file** - (D4 Alderperson Fermanich/D8 Alderperson Rutkowski) motion/second to place monthly reports on file. The motion passed.

V. Public Comment There was no public comment.

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

VII. Adjournment (D8 Alderperson Rutkowski/D4 Alderperson Fermanich) motion/second to adjourn. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:44 pm.

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