

**CITY OF MERRILL
ENRICHMENT CENTER COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2026 MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING MEC CONFERENCE ROOM 2:15 PM**

I. Opening

Call meeting to order -

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

II. Consent Items

1. Approval of February meeting minutes

2. Approval of February vouchers - Motion by Bebel second by Weix to approve February minutes.

Motion carried. Motion by Holz second by Harvey to approve February vouchers.

III. Public Comment Bertagnoli had difficulty opening our newsletter via the automatic link provided by LPI. MEC staff was able to open the document. We will see if any other people who subscribe are having issues.

Bertagnoli was approached by a community member if the MEC would be able to host an art exhibit showcasing what is going on in Gaza. Director referred the question to Akey who stated we do not want to do that in a city department.

Statement was made they could rent the expo for such an exhibit.

Bebel asked if event numbers are included in our attendance. To date they have not been but we will begin including them in our monthly/annual numbers.

IV. Discussion

Financial review with City Administrator and Finance Director

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Rod Akey (City Administrator) and Emily Ley (Finance Director) were in attendance to discuss our budget. Rod and Emily proposed the MEC's reserved and designated funds be moved into the general budget, with the exception of monies donated specifically for the Center. MEC committee members had a number of questions relative to availability of the money we collect in fees that will end up in the general fund;

McCrank asked how the MEC is different from water, sewer, etc. for example. Akey stated there is no tax money going into utilities.

Holz stated for clarification that if the MEC wanted to buy a pool table at a cost of \$10k, that the director would need to request this during budget sessions. The answer is yes. She further shared for confirmation that we need to

anticipate how much money the MEC is going to generate along with how much our expense will be, based on the past 3-5 years, before going into budget.

Trusty asked the question that once implemented, is the MEC money that goes into the general fund only available for the MEC to use as needed. Ley and Akey stated that money goes into the general fund for the overall needs of the City.

Bebel questioned if the money we contribute into the city general fund be used for other departments. Ley and Akey commented yes. Ley further commented that our control is within/during the budget process. We need to ensure we have listed everything we need for the upcoming budget year; with the understanding we may not receive all of our requests. McCrank questioned again, for clarification, the MEC fees collected and put into the general fund would help to subsidize other programs within the city? The answer is yes.

V. Operations

1. Limited activities in April due to Expo rentals

2. New class offerings -

- a. Director discussed our limited activities in April due to expo rentals and voting. Noting that when these things happen our income will be less.
- b. New offerings at the Center include classes that are more expensive and run for more than a day. This will reach a new group of participants for us.

VI. Adjournment

Motion by Bebel, second by Holz

The next meeting will take place on April 16th at 2:15pm in the MEC Conference room. Public attendance is encouraged.

Respectfully submitted, T Mrachek - MEC Director