

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Thursday May 21st, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

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

Present: Mark Weix (Aldersperson), Gene Bebel, Sharon Harvey, Carol Holz, Elizabeth McCrank, Jay Tlusty-via call in, (**Excused**) Laura Bertagnoli (Chair)

Agenda

I. **Opening (2:15)**

McCrank chaired the meeting in Bertagnoli's absence. McCrank called the meeting to order.

II. **Consent Items**

1. Motion by Harvey second by Holz to approve April meeting minutes. Motion carried.
2. Motion by Bebel second by Holz to approve vouchers. Motion carried. Director responded to committees' questions regarding a negative balance in vouchers, pointing out the annual cost of our check-in system at \$1900 along with new sewing machines for our quilting outreach room.

III. **Public Comment**

No public comment

IV. **ADRC**

1. Director informed the committee that our ADRC representative, Jennifer Clark, will no longer be able to be on the committee. This is due to lack of staffing. Many of our community partners are in a similar position. McCrank asked if there would be any legal recourse for us. Director did not think so but will check with City Administrator. Bebel asked if there were any other community partners who may be able to be present. Director shared that all of our agencies are running under staffed, but to keep in mind that we all work together throughout the year to serve the members of our community, the most recent being our Prevent Falls Resource Fair which included the MEC, ADRC, Lincoln County Health Dept., and Aspirus Health.

V. **Operations**

1. Director shared the success of our Prevent Falls Resource Fair with our community partners mentioned above. Both Channel 9 and 12 covered the event which gave the MEC excellent exposure! Over 60 participants attended. Stephanie and Tammie offered small sessions of our Strong Bodies Class and Riverside Athletic Club offered Silver Sneakers. Both were well attended and educated people on the benefits of these programs. We will work with our community partners to provide this event again in the future.
2. Line Dancing is our newest offering which started May 7th which is averaging 14 participants already! Tlusty recommended trying to have ballroom dancing as well.
3. We are pleased that our higher priced classes - epoxy pouring, garden art, watercolor painting, are doing very well. This was based on people asking for them or instructors reaching out to us. We may try to have a few more evening offerings over the summer and fall. We are also working with a variety of new organizations to offer workshops. Some of these are conducted after our Gather at the Table meal. Harvey questioned the differences between the Grief book club and Grief support. Simply stated the book club is more broad grief, not necessarily just the loss of a person.
4. We will have Kimberly Larson here to present updates on our Boys and Girls Club. *The date is June 10th at 11am.* The newsletter write up has an error and states June 11th.... This is incorrect. We were able to fix the online newsletter.

VI. **Discussion**

The committee provided the following suggestions for our new newsletter format;

1. Putting the picture of our bldg. on the top again as it helps people identify the building and separate it from the Fairgrounds.
2. Adding our address and contact information at the top as it is more visible than on the bottom of the page.
3. Testimonials were suggested to be added again along with pictures of participants – which will make it more personal.
4. Committee agreed that we can advertise and market the Center relentlessly and still not reach those who choose to not participate.
5. If we are going to post attendance makes it relative – i.e. compared to last month/year, etc.
6. McCrank suggested reaching out to Hallie Savall to help the community distinguish the difference between city buildings; MEC, MARC, Fair grounds, etc.
7. Also recommended was reaching out to the Historical Society during their History hunt to include the MEC.

VII. **Adjournment**

Motion by Bebel second by Weix

The next meeting will take place on June 18th at 2:15pm in the MEC Conference room. Public attendance is encouraged.

Respectfully submitted,

TMrachek - MEC Director

Enrichment Center Mission *To improve lives through social, physical, and educational opportunities.*