

SEPTEMBER '23 MEETING MINUTES

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Meeting was held on Sept. 21st, 2023 at 2:15pm

Merrill Enrichment Center Conference Room – 303 N. Sales Street

Present: Laura Bertagnoli (Chair), Gene Bebel, Sharon Anderson, Sharon Harvey,
Jay Tlusty, Nathan Meyer (Aldersperson)

Excused: Teresa Baker, Jennifer Clark (ADRC representative)

1. Opening

- a. Bertagnoli called the meeting to order.

2. Consent Items

- a. Motion by Bebel second by Meyer to approve August '23 minutes.
- b. Motion by Meyer second by Harvey to approve Aug/Sept '23 vouchers. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment

- a. Bebel spoke regarding Pine Crest Nursing Home and the City. Meyer confirmed there is a link to the survey available on the City Website.

4. Operations

- a. MEC's open house will be September 28th from 2-6pm. Director shared we have all items for our gift bags and will be creating displays. Final decisions are being made on appetizers and refreshments. There has been a great verbal response and excitement for the open house. Director invited committee members to attend and socialize to get information and feedback from attendees. Anderson suggested name tags so people could identify Committee members. Name tags will be available for staff and instructors as well. Bertagnoli commended Nathan for the commercial he created on the MEC. He further stated that it is hard to measure the full reach of this marketing but initial views were about 40-50 which is more than any other committees that are on the city website. Anderson added she saw the featured link on FB for the MEC. Bebel shared the link for a survey regarding Pine Crest is on the Lincoln county website and was shared in the Foto News.
- b. Director shared some new class offerings in October as well including an informational session on becoming a poll worker, and free workshops. Bertagnoli commented on the affordability of our offerings compared to many others in our area and beyond. Director shared that our goal at the MEC is to offer activities, classes and educational workshops for all to afford. We are fortunate to have community members willing to share their talents at affordable rates.
 - i. Meyer asked for an update on our advertising in our newsletter. Director informed him that Ruth is our new LPI representative and she was on site calling local businesses. However, she did not use our phone, as offered, which is better because it is a local number. We did receive calls and messages from local businesses as they were concerned it may be a scam. Director did offer for her to come back again and use our phone if we are still in need of advertisers.
Tlusty asked the cost of advertising. Director will obtain that information from Ruth, our LPI rep for a cost breakdown and have it at the next meeting. Further discussion included Bebel mentioning that Clyde, the Chamber Director may be happy to help us with finding advertisers. Meyer added how busy Clyde is and may not have that kind of time. Director added that she will reach out to Clyde regarding the discussion and see if he could possibly mention it to businesses in our area that our newsletter is an opportunity for advertising. Tlusty also asked our reach with our newsletters. Director shared that we print 1700 and distribute as far north at Tomahawk and people can subscribe. He further asked how to subscribe. There is a full sheet in our newsletter but Director will go through the process to share with people how it works.
- c. Endowment Policy was presented to the Committee. Director had City Attorney Hayden and Finance Director Unertl review the document and both made suggested changes. Bertagnoli recommended having MEC in front of the word Endowment throughout the document for consistency. Anderson asked about reporting. Director will report as money comes in but official reporting is at end of year. Tlusty mentioned that we should have something in place that communicates how this money will be used. Money could be used for a variety of offerings to help pay to bring speakers in for example. Bertagnoli inquired into us having a wish list of sorts so people know where the money will be used. Meyer added how Park & Rec makes a detailed list of things that need to be done and how much it will cost. This could be the format for the MEC to use.
Bertagnoli brought up with question Bebel had mentioned in prior meetings regarding having two signatures if endowment money was pulled for use. Director shared that when money is received it is brought to city hall for deposit into the designated MEC budget account and to her knowledge there is no need for signatures when

money is pulled, but rather will report how that money will be utilized. Furthermore, Director reminded committee that we are *not* a 'traditional' endowment, i.e. one that makes investment income on the funds. Bebel made a motion to accept the Endowment Fund Policy with suggested changes made, second by Tlusty, motion carried.

- d. Director shared initial budget draft with Committee. Discussion centered on the amount of money we are requested to give back to the city. This number continues to increase and is currently exceeding what we have brought in this year. If the city continues to take more than we make the balance in our account as it stands today will be depleted within 4 years. If this keeps happening we would have to increase our fees which could prove detrimental to our attendance. Director also has a question about the ARPA funds and if we have to pay back what was given to our department. We strive to keep our offerings affordable to many people. Bebel reminded the committee that a few years back we were opposed to the \$10,000 that was expected of us and it was verbalized by the City that it should never go higher than that. Director will present the details along with our concerns, to the Council during our budget meetings. Director shared that we are considered a 'non-essential' department of the City. Director feels strongly and always will that we are absolutely an essential department of this city as we strive to keep people well on many levels. Committee members asked questions regarding the expo rental money and where that goes to. Director shared that it goes back into the building as a whole for maintenance, etc.

5. ADRC

- a. No updates

6. Discussion

- a. None

7. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn by Meyer second by Harvey.

The next meeting date is **October 19th, 2023 at 2:15pm at the MEC.** *Vouchers will be available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.*

Respectfully submitted

TMrachek



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

