



CITY OF MERRILL
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
AGENDA • THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

5:15 PM

To attend remotely, call 316-302-5880 and PIN 261 544 488 #.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Minutes of previous meeting(s):
 1. Minutes of July 22, 2021 meeting and August 19, 2021 meeting
- III. Agenda Items:
 1. Gain approval to present the following to the Common Council for approval:
 - Vision
 - Mission
 - Values
 2. Presentation by Melissa Wrycha:
 - Current Situation - Occupations
 - Current Situation - Benefits
 - Target Audience - Persona
 - Communications - Objectives
 - Communications - Social Media
 3. Next Steps
- IV. Public Comment Period
- V. Establish date, time & location of next meeting
- VI. Adjournment



CITY OF MERRILL
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
MINUTES • THURSDAY JULY 22, 2021

Regular Meeting**City Hall Council Chambers****5:15 PM****I. Call to Order**

Alderman Blake called the meeting to order at 5:16 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Blake	Chair	Present	
John M. Van Lieshout	Aldersperson - Fifth District	Present	
Mark Weix	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	
Dan Wendorf	Park and Recreation Director	Absent	
Tammie Mrachek	Community Enrichment Center Director	Present	
Jessica Zellers	Library Director	Present	

Others in attendance (either in-person or remotely) included: Mayor Derek Woellner, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Tom Hayden, Scott Steele, John Greenwood, Renee Frederick, Melissa Wrycha, Mike Ravn and City Clerk Bill Heideman. Merrill Productions was present to videotape the meeting.

II. Introductions

Meeting attendees introduced themselves.

III. Agenda Items:

Establish a clear brand identity for the City of Merrill

This agenda item was discussed as part of the presentation by Scott Steele.

Presentation by Scott Steele, Vice President, Chief Marketing Officer, Church Mutual Insurance Company

Scott Steele gave a "Marketing, Branding & Communications" presentation.

The following topics were covered:

Marketing Strategy:

Create a Marketing Plan

Define Goals

Define Objectives:

Three objective options were presented. They were talent, business and tourism. After discussion, there seemed to be consensus that the primary objective should be a focus on talent.

Current Situation

Attachment: 2021-07-22 M and C Minutes (8302 : Minutes of July 22, 2021 meeting and August 19, 2021 meeting)

Branding:

Vision Statement

Mission Statement

Values

Brand Attributes

Brand Promise

Brand Personality

Brand Value Proposition

Brand Story

Tagline

Brand Identity

Communications:

Objectives

Four Pillars

Next Steps

IV. Public Comment Period

None.

V. Set time for next meeting

Wednesday, August 19th, 2021 at 5:15 P.M. in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

VI. Adjournment

Motion (Van Lieshout/Weix) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:55 P.M.



CITY OF MERRILL
MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS
MINUTES • THURSDAY AUGUST 19, 2021

Regular Meeting**City Hall Council Chambers****5:15 PM****I. Call to Order**

Alderman Blake called the meeting to order at 5:16 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Rick Blake	Chair	Present	
John M. Van Lieshout	Aldersperson - Fifth District	Absent	
Mark Weix	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Present	
Dan Wendorf	Park and Recreation Director	Absent	
Tammie Mrachek	Community Enrichment Center Director	Present	
Jessica Zellers	Library Director	Present	

Other attendees (either remotely or in-person) included: Mayor Derek Woellner, City Administrator Dave Johnson, City Attorney Hayden, Renee Frederick, Kyle Gulke, Andrew Polzin, Melissa Wrycha and City Clerk Bill Heideman. Merrill Productions was present to videotape the meeting.

II. Agenda Items:**1. Come to agreement on updates from the July 22, 2021 Marketing & Communications Committee meeting**

This agenda item was discussed under the presentation by Melissa Wrycha.

Presentation by Melissa Wrycha, Park City Credit Union

Melissa Wrycha gave a presentation and led discussion on an updated "Marketing, Branding & Communication Initiative" document.

As a result of discussion at the meeting, the following updates were made:

Vision Statement:

Merrill will be recognized as a welcoming city with a safe and diverse community, a vibrant and sustainable economy, and a comfortable quality of life for all.

Mission Statement:

To enrich quality of life through innovation, consistent and effective City services, while partnering with key stakeholders.

Values:

Two updates were made to the new values, as follows:

Partnership: Work together to get things done in collaborative and respectful manner.

Attachment: 2021-08-19 M and C Minutes (8302 : Minutes of July 22, 2021 meeting and August 19, 2021 meeting)

Diversity and Inclusion: Embrace the traits and characteristics that make people unique and provide a sense of belonging and support within our community.

Why would someone want to move to Merrill

The following suggestions were made as additional reasons why someone would want to move to Merrill: Exceptional Library, Athletic Facilities, Scholarship Opportunities, River Bend Trail, Multiple Recreational Opportunities.

2. Discuss raising awareness in the community about the committee's efforts

The following were suggested methods for raising awareness:

1. Facebook Live events
2. Timely social media updates
3. A "Marketing" employee
4. City website
5. Presentations to civic organizations/clubs

The possibility of city "informational" meetings was also suggested. It was noted, however, that those types of meetings have not historically been well-attended by the public.

III. Public Comment Period

None.

IV. Establish date, time & location of next meeting

Thursday, September 16th, 2021 at 5:15 P.M. in the City Hall Common Council Chambers.

V. Adjournment

Motion (Weix/Blake) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 6:21 P.M.



Merrill, Wisconsin

Marketing, Branding & Communications Initiative

Update 9.16.21



Overview

Merrill leadership is working to define a clear vision for their future, placing high value on community engagement, public service, economic development, education, diversity, equity and inclusion, collaboration and transparency.

By most accounts, Merrill has a good story to tell. Despite this, Merrill has struggled to consistently and clearly communicate its aspirations and achievements.

City officials have acknowledged the need to create and execute a marketing and branding plan that will contribute to building a positive future for Merrill that will have a direct impact on residents, businesses, visitors and other key stakeholders.

They have also acknowledged the need to more consistently and adequately inform residents and local businesses about issues, programs and initiatives that will have a direct impact on them or their neighborhoods and to regularly engage individuals in open and meaningful dialogue.

It is also important to align branding and marketing efforts with the Merrill Chamber of Commerce. By working together, we can present a unified, consistent and powerful message.



Vision

Merrill will be recognized as a welcoming city with a safe and diverse community, vibrant and sustainable economy, and a comfortable quality of life for all.



Mission

To enrich quality of life through innovative, consistent and efficient City services and strong partnerships with citizens, businesses and key stakeholders.



Values

Partnership: Work together to get things done in a collaborative and respectful manner.

Integrity: Act with transparency and be accountable for what we do and say.

Service: Provide professional, respectful service to those who live, work or visit.

Sustainability: Make decisions with an understanding of their impact on the environment, people, community and finances.

Diversity and Inclusion: Embrace the traits and characteristics that make people unique and provide a sense of belonging and support within our community.



Marketing Strategy



What are we trying to achieve?

We will move Merrill forward in building a robust economy.

Achieving this goal will require the collaboration, commitment and hard work of City officials, citizens, Chamber of Commerce, businesses and key stakeholders.



Define objectives

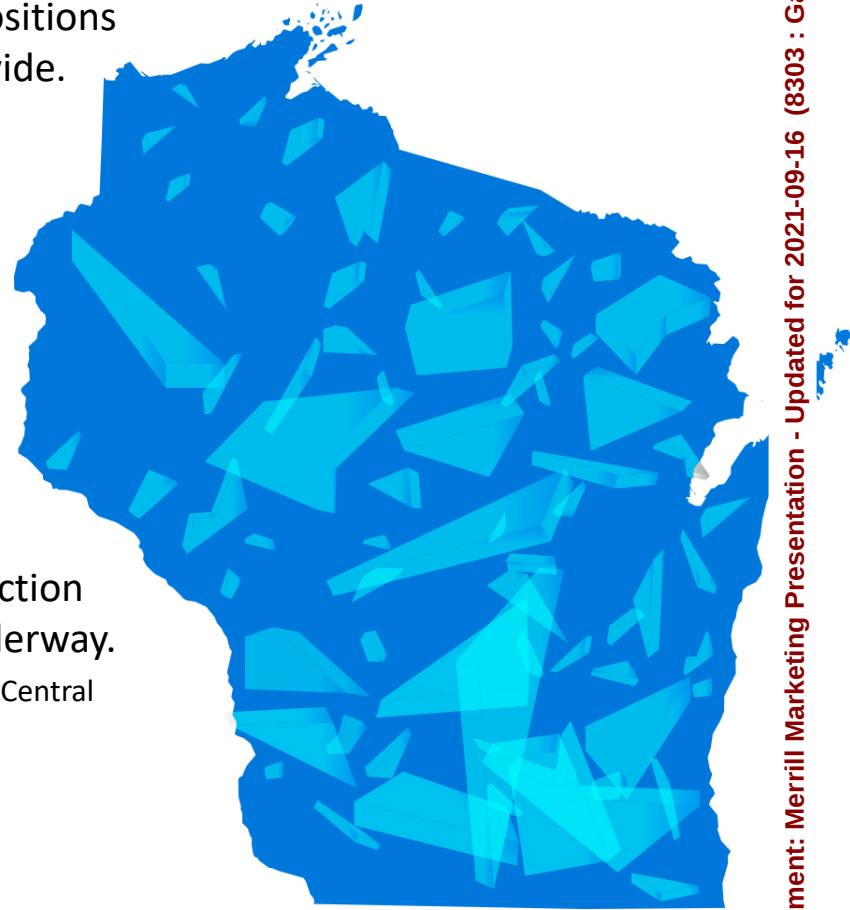
In a rapidly changing world, we will establish Merrill as a magnet for talent attraction and as an anchor for talent retention to achieve:

- Influx of qualified candidates applying to targeted industries and positions in Merrill.
- High percentage retention of existing workforce in Merrill.
- Effective and collaborative local, regional and statewide business and education partnerships.
- Consistent messaging.
- Efficient use of resources.
- Strong Merrill economy.



Current situation

- Deep shortage of a skilled workforce to fill open positions not only in Merrill and Wisconsin, but also nationwide.
- A growing skilled-workforce shortage that is expected to worsen over the next decade.
- In Central Wisconsin:
 - The need for highly skilled workers is increasing, especially in the areas of technology, medical, manufacturing and finance/insurance.
 - The need for middle skilled workers is increasing, especially in the areas of construction, healthcare and labor.
- Wisconsin has multiple, uncoordinated talent attraction and retention efforts by multiple organizations underway.
 - This fragmented effort results in competition within our own Central Wisconsin region – even our own state – for talent.





These were from a 2017 report “Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)”, U.S Department of Commerce.
Need business insights on niche sectors and middle and highly skilled needs for Merrill.

Current situation – occupations

Employment Projections for Central Wisconsin:

- Highly Skilled:
 - Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction (management and technology)*
 - Management of Companies and Enterprises**
 - Educational Services
 - Waste Management and Remediation Services (management and technology)**
 - Professional, Scientific and Technical Services**
 - Healthcare and Social Assistance
 - Finance and Insurance*
- Middle Skilled:
 - Real Estate and Rental and Leasing**
 - Mining, Quarrying and Oil and Gas Extraction (labor)
 - Administrative and Support**
 - Waste Management and Remediation Services (labor)**
 - Construction**
 - Manufacturing
 - Transportation and Warehousing
 - Healthcare and Social Assistance
 - Accommodation and Food Services

*Driver: Above average job concentration and expecting an increase in employment

**Emerging: Not yet concentrated, employment growing

High- Growth Occupations (WI)

1. Technology

Computer systems analysts
Operations research analysts
Web developers
Machine/process programming
Software developers/applications

2. Medical

Personal care / home health aides
Biochemist/biophysicist
Nurse practitioners
Cardiovascular technologists and technicians
Diagnostic medical sonographers

3. Manufacturing

Industrial machinery mechanics
Insulation workers, mechanical
Chemical equipment operators and tenders

4. Finance & Insurance

Real Estate brokers
Personal financial advisors
Actuaries

5. Service

Taxi drivers & chauffeurs
Cooks, restaurant



Current situation – benefits

Why would someone want to move to Merrill?

Merrill offers extraordinary life/work integration with terrific career options, quality of life, outdoor recreation and friendly community.

Career/Job Opportunity:

- Variety of career options and skill level opportunities in multiple career fields.
- Good pay and benefits.

Lifestyle:

- Small town atmosphere.
- Community, volunteerism, neighborhoods are all part of the values and culture.
- Cost of living.
- Short commute to work.
- Land availability to build (residential/commercial).
- Safety.

Education:

- Multiple higher education institutions in the area.
- Work to career programs.
- School to business collaboration.
- Scholarship opportunities.
- Historic public library.
- Athletic facilities.

Natural Environment:

- Four-season recreational and outdoor spaces and activities.
- Natural resources (e.g. lakes, rivers, parks, etc.).
- Wisconsin and Prairie riverfronts.
- River Bend Trail system
- Nature and wildlife.

Community Structure:

- High quality city services.
- Established community.
- Proximity to Wausau.
- Proximity to highways.
- Small-plane municipal airport.

Cultural and heritage:

- Historic sites.
- Traditions.



Target audience – persona

- People, ages 25-45 – Mid-level professional and mid-level laborer, early to mid-career.
- Recent high school and college graduates.
- Places a high premium on professional and personal growth and development and a desire for “purposeful work”.
- Places a high premium on social:
 - Socially active – network with peers, friends and family.
 - Socially conscious – environment, local connections, natural vs processed.
 - Community focused – be part of something.
- Places a high premium on lifestyle:
 - Prefers to live in a natural area close to an urban-type center.
 - Not interested in big city living – more inclined to small city living.



Communications – objectives

Objectives

An official city-wide communications plan is needed to maximize communication effectiveness. Consider the following five broad objectives designed to meet Merrill's intent in creating a communication strategy.

1. *Increase Awareness:* Information about Merrill policies and programs should be available to all of our audiences and for priority projects to be common knowledge among our key audiences.
2. *Increase Engagement:* Encourage and enable residents, businesses and partners to participate in public policy formation. In addition, generate high levels of participation in, and attendance at, Merrill programs and events.
3. *Provide Access:* Reduce barriers to communication in order to reach the broadest possible audience.
4. *Enhance Transparency:* Conduct Merrill business and decision-making in the open, making information about policies and operations available to all.
5. *Reinforce Credibility:* Provide honest and responsive communications that will help Merrill build trust and credibility with our residents, businesses and partners.



Communications – pillars

Four Pillars

1. *Clear and Direct:* Strive to use the direct and straightforward language to communicate Merrill's policies and programs to ensure that all communications are understandable and accessible to the widest possible audience.
2. *Proactive:* Whenever possible, provide information on emerging issues, and follow up to ensure the most accurate and complete information is available to the public as soon as is possible.
3. *Transparent:* Be open in communicating what is happening and make information about the policies, finances, and operations of Merrill available to all citizens.
4. *Listening and Learning:* Communication flows two-ways, both providing information and receiving feedback. Listening to residents, businesses and partners builds better trust and credibility so the policies and programs reflect the needs and wishes of the community.



Communications – social media

- Facebook should be a primary channel for engaging the community.
 - Melissa Wrycha will draft a social media plan and can help establish the Page.
 - There must be a person assigned to managing the Facebook engagement.
 - Minimum Admin responsibilities could include:
 - Manage page roles and settings
 - Edit the page
 - Create and delete posts
 - Monitor posts (daily, but not constantly)
 - Send messages as the Page
 - Respond to and delete comments and posts
 - Remove and ban people from the Page
 - Create reports and provide insights



Next steps

- Refine current situation slides as outlined.
- Approve and present to City council for approval.
- Scott Steele to provide a press release announcing the marketing and branding effort.
 - Who will be the City council spokesperson for the marketing/branding effort?
 - Draft to Marketing Committee 9/24.
 - Changes from Committee 9/30.
 - Release 10/1 to Merrill and Wausau media outlets.
 - Invite Tina Scott, FotoNews, for an interview.
- Melissa Wrycha to provide a social media plan (due date TBD – City to first commit to managing a Facebook Page).