



MARATHON COUNTY EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Courthouse Assembly Room, (B105), Courthouse, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI

Members	Present/Web-Phone	Absent
Chair Sara Guild	X	
Vice Chair Ka Lo	W	
Gary Beastrom	Phone	
Becky Buch		excused
Tom Rosenberg	X	
Rick Seefeldt		excused
Chris Voll	Phone	

Also Present: Kurt Gibbs, Craig McEwen, Donna Krause, Lance Leonhard, Jason Hausler, Michael Puerner and Toshia Ranallo.

WebEx/Phone: Alyson Leahy, John Robinson, Jean Maszk, Leah Giordano, Sarah Dowidat, Paul Daigle, Will Hsu, and Peter Weinschenk.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Guild called the meeting to order at 4:25 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Will Hsu, 145770 Walden Blvd., Wausau, WI 54401 spoke in support of agenda item 4b. *Support letter for renewal of Ronaldus and Ester Van Langen immigration in Marathon County, Wisconsin.*

3. **MOTION BY ROSENBERG; SECOND BY VOLL TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 5, 2021 EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination

A. Update on 2018-22 Strategic Plan Committee Objectives

Discussion:

Vice-Board Chair Craig McEwen encouraged the committee to continue to review their goals, objectives, outcome measures, and accomplishments of their Strategic Plan priorities listed below. He indicated the committee may want to reevaluate them due to an update in 2020. He asked them to consider using the ERC template to track progress. He also urged them to think about policy changes and potential resolutions that would help with the implementation of the strategic plan.

- 8.7 – Strive to provide affordable, reliable, high-speed internet access throughout the county (jointly shared with the Infrastructure Committee)
- 10.6 – Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.
- 10.8 – Encourage development and redevelopment of key employment centers in areas that possess strong market potential, provide good transportation access for workers, and promote the efficient movement of goods.
- 10.10 – Create an innovative atmosphere to foster an entrepreneurial-supportive environment.

Chair Guild identified several outcomes made or in process, and encouraged the committee to identify any others and to continue to discuss objectives and actions on moving them forward. It was suggested to look at all of the Strategic Plan priorities not only the lead committee's and identify how they could blend together. An immigration study was mentioned at various times as a potential topic for discussion.

B. Support letter for renewal of Ronaldus and Ester Van Langen immigration in Marathon County, Wisconsin.

Discussion:

It was the consensus of the committee to support a letter of support to renew the Van Langen's immigration status. The Van Langens have been owner-operators of a profitable 140-cow dairy operation in the county for over a decade. They have made a significant investment that annually generates a \$34,000 economic impact per cow for a total of approximately \$4 million per year. During their time in

Marathon County, they have established themselves as respected dairy farmers. As owner-operators of their farm, they have remained in business when many others have been unsuccessful. They have become leaders in the community in the following ways:

- Hosting many farm tours to display how using advanced technology has contributed to their profitable operation, including utilizing the first robotic dairy operation and the first use of a drones in the area.
- Serving as a Mentor farm for the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, which is located in Marathon County and is the first of its kind in the United States.
- Serving as a new host farm for the University of Wisconsin-Discovery Farms. Water quality is monitored from their cropland to showcase the reduction of runoff pollutants reaching surface waters from their installation of superior cropland best management practices.

Action:

MOTION BY BEASTROM; SECOND BY ROSENBERG TO HAVE CHAIR GIBBS SIGN A SUPPORT LETTER FOR THE RENEWAL OF RONALDUS AND ESTER VAN LANGEN IMMIGRATION STATUS IN MARATHON COUNTY, WISCONSIN. MOTION CARRIED.

5. Operational Functions required by Statute, Ordinance, or Resolution: None

6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

The following written reports can be viewed in the packet located on our [website here](#).

A. Reports from Committee-Affiliated Departments and Organizations

1. Marathon County Public Library (Leah Giordano)
2. MCDEVCO (Vicki Resch)
3. UW-Madison Division of Extension (Jason Hausler)
4. UW-Stevens Point Wausau Campus (Ann Herda-Rapp)

B. Report from Administrator on Budget Recommendation Regarding 0.5 Communities Extension Educator Funding.

Discussion:

Administrator Leonard reported he met with all county Department Heads including UW Extension Director while building his 2022 proposed budget. He will recommend pulling \$21,165 from the UW Extension contract and put those dollars within the County Administration budget to pilot a project management function to assist in broadband expansion and other potential projects. UW Extension played an important role assisting the county's Broadband grant applications and has the expertise in education and finding how to engage and educate the public, however Leonhard identified a shortfall on the operational side of project management.

7. Next Meeting Time, Location, Announcements and Future Agenda Items:

1. Committee members are asked to bring ideas for future discussion
 - Strategic Plan
2. Next meeting: **Thursday, November 4, 2021 at 4:00 pm**

8. Adjournment

MOTION BY LO; SECOND BY ROSENBERG TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:43 P.M. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted by

Toshia Ranallo

The recording of the meeting can be accessed at the link below:

<https://tinyurl.com/MarathonCountyBoard>