



**MARATHON COUNTY
EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

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

Committee Members: Sara Guild, Chair; Ka Lo, Vice-Chair; Gary Beastro; Becky Buch; Tom Rosenberg; Rick Seefeldt, Chris Voll

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

Also Present: Lance Leonhard, Jason Hake, Kurt Gibbs, and Toshia Ranallo.

VIA Web or Phone: Craig McEwen, Sandi Cihlar, Jean Maszk, John Robinson, Michelle VanKrey, Marla Stephnaski, John Happli, Ann Hamlin, Elizabeth Scully, Vicki Resch, Ralph Illick, Jason Hausler, Lee Webster, Ann Herda-Rapp, Mike Puener, Mary Detmering, Joyce Chekouras, Marla Stepnafski, Brian Kowalski, Jamie Matzcak, Ann Hamlin, and two unidentified callers.

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chair Guild called the meeting to order at 4:02pm.

2. Public Comment (15 Minutes)

Lee Webster, 155617 Pine Bluff Rd, Wausau, reported as of March 1, 2021, the Wausau School District students are back to school four days a week. It was a difficult decision but many factors contributed to the return of students. Many students were having a difficult time with virtual learning as well as a negative impact on their social and emotional behaviors.

There will be two referendum questions on the ballot for the April 6th Election:

1. \$4,000,000 for pupil services to provide staff with social workers, counselors, interventionists, etc. to help with increased problems with behavior and mental health.
2. \$148,800,000 for facilities improvement, building infrastructure and district wide safety and security.

3. MOTION BY ROSENBERG SECOND BY LO TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 4, 2021 EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination

- A. Committee discussion and possible action to formally refer the issue of the proposed recommendation for the Marathon County Public Library System to seek membership in the South Central Library System back to the Marathon County Public Library Board for additional review.

Discussion:

Chair Guild reported this agenda item was added as a recommendation from Corp. Counsel since the library continues to do their research. A Supervisor questioned the upcoming deadline mandated by state statute and the impact it would have moving forward. Chair Guild indicated if the deadline is missed, the issue would be postponed until next year.

Action:

MOTION BY ROSENBERG SECOND BY SEEFELDT TO RECOMMEND REFERRING THE ISSUE OF CHANGING LIBRARY SYSTEMS BACK TO THE MARATHON COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD FOR ADDITIONAL REVIEW. MOTION CARRIED.

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

6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports

- A. Broadband Task Force Update (John Robinson)

Discussion:

Broadband Task Force Chair John Robinson, gave a brief update on the taskforce's diligent activities to provide broadband service to underserved areas in the county. Fiber and Wireless PSC grants were applied for and they are waiting for the results. The taskforce continues to identify and pursue other funding opportunities.

Follow-up:

No follow up needed.

B. Strategic Plan Discussion (Vice Chair Craig McEwen)

Discussion:

Vice Chair Craig McEwen recognized the committee's designated 2018-2022 Strategic Plan Objectives. (8.7, 10.6, 10.8, 10.10.) He requested the committee to consider the following three questions to be discussed at the next meeting.

1. What was accomplished in 2020 by this committee relating to implementation of the Strategic Plan?
2. What are the plans for 2021 relating to the implementation of the Strategic Plan?
3. Does this committee understand their role for implementing the Strategic Plan?

McEwen will compile updates and accomplishments from all standing committees. He encouraged the committee to review the 2020 updated plan and use the template included in the [packet](#) to track progresses.

Follow-up:

Begin to fill out the template and discuss the questions above at the next committee meeting. Administrator Leonhard suggested the committee reflect on last year's agenda item discussions and actions to distinguish what the focus will be for 2021.

C. Discussion of the Governor's Proposed Budget and how it Impacts County Activities over which this Committee has Policy Oversight Responsibility.

Discussion:

Administrator Leonhard indicated the Governor's budget is a visionary document and is based on last year's annual budget. He and Chair Gibbs requests each standing committee to review the Governor's budget and identify funding for which the committee has policy oversight responsibilities. They ask the Chairs' to bring the committee's top recommendations to the Executive Committee for consideration.

Administrator Leonhard mentioned three non-starter funding streams listed below that have the potential to generate approx. two billion dollars of additional revenue. However, according to the WI Counties Association these funds are most likely to be removed from the proposed budget.

1. Expanding Medicaid
2. Legalizing recreational marijuana
3. Tax increase on high income earners and various business categories

Chair Guild shared her observations after reviewing the WCA Budget Summary as well as expressed insight from partners UW Extension and UW Stevens Point.

The committee identified the following items while prioritizing the top three to forward on to the Executive Committee.

1. Broadband
2. UW-Extension (includes \$2 million and 15 county-based agriculture positions for UW-Extension.)
Jason Hausler suggests the committee review these positions at this [link](#).
2. Workforce Development
3. Labor Changes
4. Wisconsin Arts Board Grants
5. Additional funding for Childcare
6. Dark Stores Assessments
7. General Transportation Aids

The following were identified for the UW Stevens Point Campus.

1. Continuation on tuition fees freeze
2. Expand Tuition Promise Program
3. Student mental health resources

Follow-up:

Forward the top three identified by the EEED to the Executive Committee for consideration.

D. Reports from Committee-Affiliated Departments and Organizations

1. Marathon County Public Library

Discussion:

Director Ralph Illick reported the library has received their new interior furnishings; looking to reopen within the next two months; and hiring more employees.

Follow-up:

No follow up needed.

2. MCDEVCO

Discussion:

Continues to work on all the activities mentioned at last month's meeting.

Follow-up:

No follow up needed.

3. UW-Madison Division of Extension

Discussion:

Hausler provided an Educator Update, and a document located in the [packet here](#) outlining the EEEC Strategic Plan Objectives that will assist the County Board Supervisors.

Follow-up:

No follow up needed.

4. UW-Stevens Point Wausau

Discussion:

Ann Herda-Rapp reported

- Tom Gibson started as the new Chancellor
- Continue COVID testing in the fieldhouse thru April
- This fall will be in-person learning, planning full rollout, fieldhouse, pool, etc.
- Discussions ongoing for consolidation with tech colleges
- Enrollment numbers looking good
- Need to offer FASA workshops, because numbers are low across all UW schools

Follow-up:

No follow up needed.

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

A. Next meeting: **Thursday, April 1, 2021 at 4:00 pm**

8. Adjournment

MOTION BY ROSENBERG SECOND BY LO TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:28 P.M. MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted by
Toshia Ranallo