



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

**Thursday, July 1, 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	X	
Gary Beastro	Phone	
Becky Buch	W	
Tom Rosenberg	X	
Rick Seefeldt	X	
Chris Voll	W	

**Also Present:** Lance Leonhard, Michael Puerner, Donna Krause, John Robinson, Jason Hausler, David Dickerson, and Toshia Ranallo.

**VIA Web or Phone:** Ann Herda-Rapp, Leah Giordano.

**1. Call Meeting to Order**

Chair Guild called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

**2. Public Comment – None**

**3. MOTION BY ROSENBERG; SECOND BY LO TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 3, 2021 EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING WITH THE CORRECTION TO 5A 1 AND 2 TO READ “NEXT APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE” IN REPLACE OF “CIP COMMITTEE”. MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination – None**

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

**6. Educational Presentations/Outcome Monitoring Reports**

**A. Reports from Committee-Affiliated Departments and Organizations**

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

1. Marathon County Public Library (Leah Giordano)
2. MCDEVCO - Chair Guild provided the update at the request of MCDEVCO staff.
  - Applications open July 12, 2021 for \$5,000 grants for microbusinesses with five or less employees that were affected by COVID-19. Details to apply can also be found in the [Marathon County eNewsletter](#).
  - MCDEVCO is now at full staff with three full time and one part time employees.
3. UW-Madison Division of Extension (Jason Hausler)
  - Hosted a regional dairy judging contest on June 16, 2021 as a part of the Area Animal Science Days event.
  - Janell Wehr in the Horticulture field has been working to expand a garden on the corner of Thomas St. and Grand Avenue. A sign will be going up this week.

**Discussion:**

Jason Hausler reported that Melinda Osterberg has obtained other employment and her last day with UW Extension will be July 13, 2021. Osterberg played an intricate role in the Broadband Taskforce. Discussions are needed to decide what the appropriate role is for extension employees and to identify the best way for the county to move forward in managing broadband activities. Administrator Leonhard asked the committee to consider the following options:

- 1) Should the position that Osterberg occupied relative to broadband, remain with UW Extension?
- 2) Should the position be allocated with other work within the scope of services provided by UW Extension?
- 3) Should the resources for this position be reallocated and analyzed to create a county position during budget discussions? This position could also include programs such as leadership and economic development, child and youth care, human development, community food systems,

local government education, etc.

4) Should the position be contracted out to one of the county's partners?

Administrator Leonhard identified County Administration staff as a temporary short term solution to assist in efforts that need immediate attention. Communication Specialist Sarah Dowidat will help with outreach and Executive Admin Toshia Ranallo will support meeting preparations and minutes. Hausler anticipates administrative tasks will be provided by a newly hired UW Extension administrative assistant by August. However, project management including preparing RFP's, grant writing, and education are major responsibilities that will need to be addressed. Hausler provided the committee a list of tasks outlined by the Broadband Taskforce and highlighted areas that UW Extension identified in which they can be of assistance. This document can be accessed in the packet located on our [website here](#).

Supervisor Robinson gave an update on current Broadband Taskforce activities and explained immediate needs that include generating support letters that are critical for grant applications which are due on July 27th. The Taskforce will be meeting on July 7, 2021 to review ISP provider proposals and make recommendations.

The HR Finance Committee will be having a series of public meetings in late July and August to ask the community for their input on how to spend \$26.3 million American Rescue dollars.

Robinson commended Melinda Osterbrink for all her efforts and support to the Broadband Task Force.

Supervisor Comments:

- Supportive of staff. Should hire a full time person to fill this as a county position to focus on Broadband education and research as well as any future similar projects. Position could change over time.
- Support hybrid position partnering with Lincoln County and UW Extension
- Contract with MCDEVCO for grant and project management. Keep UW Extension for education and research.
- UW Extension current position allocates 10-15 hours a week for Broadband. Not sufficient.
- Contract a part or full-time person depending on funding options
- Ask extension to continue broadband 10 to 15 hours a week with just an education emphasis and hire someone else to do the grant and project management. Two points of contact for the broadband initiative.
- Reallocate the hours into a position focusing on our Broadband initiative and pursues other areas of the strategic plan. Single point of contact.

4. UW-Stevens Point Wausau (Ann Herda-Rapp)

- Working with MCDEVCO to bring in food vendors on campus
- Gearing up for Fall semester
- Some furnishings have been repurposed

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

a. **Announcements:** Fair will be next month August 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>.

b. Next meeting: **Thursday, August 5, 2021 at 4:00 pm**

1. Continue to discuss Broadband position at next meeting.

8. **Adjournment**

**MOTION BY ROSENBERG; SECOND BY SEEFELDT TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:13 P.M. MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted by  
Toshia Ranallo