



MARATHON COUNTY EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, March 7, 2019 – 1:00 p.m.

Courthouse Assembly Room, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI

Attendance:	Present	Absent
Sara Guild, Chair	X	
Romey Wagner, Vice Chair		EX
Gary Beastrom	X	
Jean Maszk	X	
Alyson Leahy	X	
Rick Seefeldt	X	
Ka Lo	X	

Others Present: Lance Leonhard, Melinda Osterberg, Jason Hausler, Ralph Illick, James Warsaw, Gerard Klein, Brian Kowalski

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

The Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee meeting was called to order at 1:04 p.m. by Chair Guild.

2. **Public Comment** – None

3. **Approval of the Minutes of the December 11, 2018, Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee Meeting.**

MOTION BY MASZK, SECOND BY LO, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 11, 2018, EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

4. Policy Issues Discussion and Potential Committee Determination – None

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

6. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion**

A. Update from Marathon County Library Director Ralph Illick

Discussion:

Marathon County Library Director Ralph Illick appears before the committee to discuss several of the most prominent ongoing efforts within the Marathon County Library System.

LENA Start Marathon County – Illick explains that LENA stands for (Learning ENvironment Aalysis) and is aimed at improving the language development of children from birth to the age of three. Illick explains that this period of development is extremely important and that this program was developed to help bridge the gap that is often found between affluent families and less-privileged families. Marathon County is one of only three public libraries in the country that are currently leading such a program. The

Marathon County program relies upon 5 local partners and is currently envisioned to last at least five years.

Public Library Redesign Project – Illick explains that the Public Library Redesign Project was a multi-year project that was aimed at determining the best method to deliver library system services in the State. Illick indicates that as a result of the project, a great deal of information was gathered and Marathon County could pursue significant changes in how it operates. Illick explains that currently Marathon County is a member of the Wisconsin Valley Library System; however, the library board may consider moving to the South Central Library System to link itself to additional resources. Moreover, to improve statewide delivery of library materials, the Wausau Library will serve as the secondary delivery hub (Dane County currently serves as the only hub for statewide delivery).

Library Renovations – Illick explains that each of the 9 library locations will be undergoing renovations to varying degrees, including improvements in technology, in the near future.

Surveys of Library customers – Illick indicates that the library system will be releasing a survey to gain insight into customer expectations and desires relative to hours of operation and other information with the intent to improve customer service and employee safety at each of the locations.

B. Discussion of the County Administrator’s Work Plan – Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee goals

Discussion:

Chair Guild explains to the committee that the Administrator’s work plan was recently presented to the County Board and she thought it valuable to recap the specific goals within the plan that are within the purview of this committee.

Deputy Administrator Leonhard explains that with respect to the first goal (e.g., the evaluation of the pool and fieldhouse to determine their relevance going forward), Administrator Karger will be delivering a report to the committee at its April meeting. With respect to the second goal (e.g., expanding high speed internet access), Chair Guild indicates that this committee has completed much of its work; however, it will be responsible for some level of ongoing monitoring with the Infrastructure Committee. Finally, with respect to the third goal (e.g., increasing the student population attending UW Stevens Point @ Wausau), Deputy Administrator Leonhard explains that Administrator Karger is currently working on clarifying the goals and action steps under that objective. Chair Guild indicates that she will attempt to coordinate Campus Executive Ann Herda-Rapp attending the committee’s April meeting. A committee member references that the committee may seek to examine whether to take a policy position on the state’s role in funding higher education or allowing expanded revenue options for universities.

C. Report from UW-Extension Area Director – recent programming by local educators

Discussion:

Area Director Hausler references the recent hiring of educator Melinda Osterberg to coordinate the county’s broadband expansion efforts. Hausler reviews the work of the other educators, as referenced within the written report and answers questions from the committee. Hausler notes that a joint meeting of all the county extension agents within the multi-county area over which Hausler serves as Area Director will be held on May 7, 2019.

Follow through: Administrator to post a non-meeting notice relative to the meeting in the event that a sufficient number of committee members indicate they will be attending the May 7 meeting.

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

A. Committee members are encouraged to reach out to Chair Guild with potential topics for future meetings. Chair Guild explains that MCDEVCO recently moved its office to 1415 Merrill Avenue and will be opening the GEARS Center on April 1st.

B. Next Meeting Date and Time

1. April 16, 2019 at 4:00 pm at the new MCDEVCO Offices at 1415 Merrill Avenue

8. Adjourn

MOTION BY BEASTROM, SECOND BY MASZK, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

Minutes prepared

by Lance Leonhard on March 20, 2019.