



MARATHON COUNTY EXTENSION, EDUCATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, November 19, 2019, at 4:00 p.m.

Courthouse Assembly Room, 500 Forest Street, Wausau WI

Attendance:	Present	Absent
Sara Guild, Chair	X	
Romey Wagner, Vice Chair	X	
Gary Beastro		EX
Alyson Leahy	X	
Ka Lo	X	
Rick Seefeldt		EX
Loren White	X	

Others Present: Mary Palmer, Lance Leonhard, Ann Herda-Rapp, Dave Eckmann, Renae Krings, Lee Webster,

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

The Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. by Chair Guild.

2. **Public Comment:**

Lee Webster, Wausau School Board member, 155461 Pine Bluff Road, references that November 18-22 is National Education Week and speaks to the importance of education.

3. **Approval of the Minutes** of October 15, 2019, Extension, Education & Economic Development Committee Meetings.

Action:

MOTION BY LEAHY, SECOND BY WHITE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 15, 2019 MEETING. MOTION CARRIED.

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

5. **Operational Functions required by Statute, Ordinance or Resolution:**

A. Discussion and Possible Action by Committee – None

6. **Educational Presentations and Committee Discussion**

A. UW-Stevens Point Wausau campus update

Discussion:

UW-Stevens Point @ Wausau Executive Ann Herda-Rapp appears before the committee and provides a written report discussing several issues faced by the local university. Herda-Rapp explains that the enrollment projections for 2020 are down from last year; however, she explains that the method of calculating those numbers may have overstated the previous year's enrollments due to the allocation of online students. Ultimately, Herda-Rapp explains that the university is confronting a significant drop in student population across the state and that a strong economy drives prospective students to the workforce as opposed to education. Herda-Rapp indicates that the university continues to identify opportunities for collaboration and expansion of programs to drive student interest, such as nursing, pre-engineering, and MBA offerings.

Herda-Rapp also provides a brief recitation of other activity on the campus, including the delayed work on the pool remodel.

Follow through: None at this time.

- B. Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce presentations
 - 1. New regional talent attraction and retention website
 - 2. Greater Wausau Prosperity Partnership initiative

Discussion:

Greater Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Dave Eckmann and Economic Development Specialist Renae Krings appear before the committee and discuss the genesis, purpose, and content within the new regional talent attraction and retention website – greaterwausau.org. Eckmann and Krings demonstrate the functionality of the website to the committee, playing several videos and highlighting how the website can aide in the recruiting process for any entity in the area. Eckmann and Krings explain that the website will be managed by the chamber of commerce and that the chamber will frequently assess the website and incorporate feedback from employers and other users.

Eckmann and Krings also discuss the ongoing work of the Greater Wausau Prosperity Partnership (GWPP), which grew out of the Chamber's regional economic development strategic plan that was funded, in part, by the Marathon County Education, Extension, and Economic Development Committee. Eckmann and Krings demonstrate to the committee that the GWPP has established a website - <https://www.wausauchamber.com/economic-development> - to explain its three strategic goals, the corresponding objectives, and leads:

Goal 1: Talent - Matthew Rowe, Ruder Ware LLS

- Objective: Attract and Retain Skilled Workers and Talented Individuals.

Goal 2: Innovative Companies - Jen Nieuwenhuis Hardel, REI Engineering Inc

- Objective: Embrace Technology to Nurture and Grow Marathon County's Driving Industry Sectors.

Goal 3: Placemaking - Chris Ghidorzi, Ghidorzi Design | Build | Develop

- Objective: Develop Quality places and Amenities to Attract the Best and Brightest

Eckmann and Krings also explain that the GWPP has identified numerous tactics to attempt to accomplish its objectives:

2019 - 2020 Tactics & Initiatives

- **Tactic 1.2.1.** Develop a comprehensive new talent attraction website to market the Wausau region as a desirable destination. Use the new website as the central information hub for a broader (omni-channel) talent attraction campaign.
- **Tactic 1.1.2.** Support Granite Peak Ski Area in its expansion projects, encourage growth and expansion of its facilities.
- **Initiative 3.2.** Support the long-term redevelopment options for the Wausau Center Mall. Support the commission of a master plan that explores a range of viable long-term options.
- **Tactic 1.4.2.** Launch a Business-Driven Innovation Center or Center of Excellence focused on areas of specialized training & research. Create alignment among area employers and (K16) education partners to address talent holistically. Foster Innovation and entrepreneurship through the adoption of new technologies to grow local and regional economies. Develop a means for business to collaborate and cultivate relationships with other regional business to ensure the stability and growth of existing employers.

Eckmann and Krings also explain that they expect the GWPP to identify significant opportunities for the county to play a lead role, including in initiatives relative to recreation (particularly related to linking activities at the Nine Mile Recreation Area and Granite Peak) and education.

In response to a question from a committee member, Eckmann and Krings provide information relative to the Chamber's involvement in the ongoing work to revitalize the Wausau Center Mall. Eckmann explains that the work is a collaboration between multiple two foundations and the city. Eckmann expects additional information to be released on the project in the coming months.

Follow through: None at this time.

- C. UW Madison Division of Extension Update – discussion of work of educators, including efforts relative to Broadband Feasibility Study

Discussion:

Chair Guild delivers a written report from the Extension Office and notes that at the next meeting there will be a discussion regarding an educational program on the impact of tariffs on local economic development that is scheduled to occur during the Chinese New Year event in Wausau. Guild also indicates that the Horticulture recruitment is ongoing and that Supervisors Beasstrom and Seefeldt have been requested to participate in the interviews of prospective candidates.

Follow through:

None at this time.

7. Announcements, Next Meeting Date and Time:

A. Future committee calendar

1. The chair will work to schedule upcoming meetings to not conflict with other County Board meetings

8. Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, MOTION BY LANGE, SECOND BY WAGNER, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. Meeting adjourned at 5:49 p.m. MOTION CARRIED.

Minutes prepared

by Lance Leonhard on November 27, 2019.