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**NORTH CENTRAL ITBEC BOARD  
AND  
TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
JOINT MEETING**

Thursday, December 5, 2019

Natural Resource Center  
Florence, WI 54121

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER:** North Central ITBEC Board Chair Mike Klimoski called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

**ROLL CALL: Board Members:** Larry Neuens and Lori Moore, Florence County; Phil Idsvoog, Portage County. **Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Charlie Rayala, Vilas County. **Board & Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Mike Klimoski and Angie Close, Langlade County; William Chaney, Forest County; Greg Sekela, Oconto County; Robert Sivick, Waushara County. **EXCUSED: Board Members:** Brad Hamilton, Wood County; Marvin Anderson, Vilas County; Arlyn Tober, Shawano County; Tom Tallier, Forest County; **Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Daniel Miller, Shawano County; Kellee Gallion, Forest County; Matt McLean, Wood County; Sara Brish, Portage County. **Board & Tourism & Economic Development Advisory Committee Members:** Lance Pliml, Wood County; Cindy Burzinski, Vilas County; Al Haga, Portage County; Samantha Boucher, Oconto County; Russ Fisher and Jim Winkler, Oneida County; Bill Bialecki, Lincoln County; Donna Kalata, Waushara County. **STAFF:** Bill Korrer, Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) Field Services Representative. **OTHERS:** Debbe Kinsey, Lincoln County; Jeff Anderson, Wisconsin Department of Tourism; Wendy Gehlhoff, Director - Florence County Economic Development Commission; Jim Rosenberg, WEDC; Roger Rayala. Introductions were made around the room.

Lori Moore and Larry Neuens welcomed everyone to Florence County for today's meeting.

**APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2019 JOINT MEETING MINUTES:** Motion by Idsvoog, second by Sekela, to approve the September joint meeting minutes as printed. Motion carried.

**CHAIR'S REMARKS:** Chair Klimoski said that there's too much snow too soon. The warm spell and associated rain pushed the frost out of the ground and now all the snowfall is insulating the ground from freezing up again. Plus, all the snow pushed hunters out of the woods by Thanksgiving.

**PROJECT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

- a. WCA Opioid Litigation: Many state attorney generals are refusing to accept a proposed class settlement. The lead plaintiffs Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and Summit County, Ohio, agreed to a \$260 million settlement. The agreement reached calls for the distributors AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal Health and McKesson to pay a combined \$215 million, according to a lawyer for Cuyahoga County.
- b. Northwoods Rail Transit Commission: The Northwoods Rail Transit Commission had their last scheduled meeting canceled at the last moment. Bill Korrer said that Canadian National (CN) Railroad had an eight day strike, which would really slow down harvested agriculture product movement and propane shipments in advance of the winter heating season. Those things, coupled with the Wisconsin frac sand slowdown, could mean even more erratic freight rail movement within the state. Wendy Gehlhoff said the DOT contacted the Executive Committee of the Northwoods Rail Transit Commission with information that CN had reached out to gauge interest of a possible sale of some of their rail holdings. This is a marked change of position for CN.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** Bill Korrer distributed copies of the current financial report to the group. There is currently an undesignated fund balance of \$9,456.26. Mr. Korrer suggested that the Board may want to transfer some funds into the sports show travel line since there's only \$1,600.01 in there at the present time. Motion by Close, second by Chaney, to transfer \$1,900.00 from the North Central ITBEC Project Funds account into the Sports Show Mileage Reimbursement line item account. Motion carried.

**COUNTY ISSUES ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:** Phil Idsvoog shared that Portage County is beginning to reduce funding to non-mandated services and agencies. He fears this will become the trend in local governments, if it hasn't begun already. Robert Sivick said that they look at economic development and tourism funding as an investment in the community. Jeff Anderson said it's not just funding reductions, there are also cases of the shifting of slotted dollars, such as room tax revenues, towards items that are usually allocated general tax revenue dollars. That is most likely against state statutes because a minimum of 70% of room tax receipts, by law, are to go towards direct tourism promotional efforts. Wendy Gehlhoff said that Florence County passed a resolution to become a Second Amendment Sanctuary County. The Florence County Board also said no to a recreational marijuana resolution.

**MARKETING REPORT:**

- a. 2020 Sports Shows Update: Angie Close reported to the members on the present sports show schedule for 2020. The Marketing Team selected three sports shows again the year. The Department of Tourism's SEM co-op project showed good results. This project optimizes key words used in search engines and ran for six months. End results were a 4% increase in clicks, which in layman's language means more exposure for the 12 member counties in the North Central ITBEC area.

**DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM UPDATE:** Jeff Anderson started his report with a 'thank you' to all the Fall Color reporters. The Winter Snow Report web page opened up early with all the snow. Mr. Anderson said that one third of Travel Wisconsin's web activity is winter traffic, they are forecasting up to 10 million web visitors. The Big Bundle Up charity drive is underway. Nominations are being accepted for the Governor's Tourism awards. More information of the five award categories is available at [www.industry.travelwisconsin.com](http://www.industry.travelwisconsin.com). Travel writers will be in state next fall and FAM tours are being set up to showcase all the state has to offer. Mr. Anderson participated in a power of tourism presentation during the Oneida County budgeting process. Jim Rosenberg from WEDC said it is very encouraging to hear all the activity going on locally.

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**CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA:** Annual housekeeping items.

**SET NEXT MEETING DATE:** The next meeting will be on January 30, 2020, in Forest County. The exact location is to be determined.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Idsvoog, second by Rayala, to adjourn at 11:20 a.m.  
Motion carried.