

Members Present: Linda L Thorpe, Emil Bakka, James Behling, Charles Rayala, Erv Teichmiller

Others Present: Al Hanley, Assured Associates
Ken Anderson, Chair –Vilas County Delegation to the Conservation Congress &
Vilas County News Review
Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages
Cindy Burzinski, Vilas County Tourism
Janet Christianson, Vilas County Tourism

Media Present: Eric Johnson, Lakeland Times

Thorpe called the regular meeting to order at 9:01am in Conference Room #2 of the Vilas County Courthouse. The meeting was properly posted and notices sent to all media provided on April 28, 2009.

Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to accept the agenda to be taken in any order at the discretion of the chair; motion carried.

Motion by Bakka, seconded by Rayala to approve the minutes of April 7, 2009 as distributed; motion carried.

Introductions/Announcements – None

Fisheries Concerns – Prompted by recent conversations with bait shop owners and local guides as well as from posted information on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) website regarding restocking, creel count tabulations, etc., Behling expressed concern with the apparent decline in the area's fisheries. As a vital component of the area's spring/summer/fall tourism, and wondering what options might be available, he proposed that a group of professionals be invited to speak to the Committee to provide necessary data. Behling indicated he would be gathering information over the next month and should have some data available by the next meeting. He hoped that by bringing forth the available data along with the information provided by individuals who work closely with the area's fisheries, some options, if necessary, could be formulated.

Anderson noted that to date, there has been no information presented, no discussion brought forth or resolutions proposed to the Conservation Congress regarding fisheries concerns. While there may be talk around, no one has appeared at the monthly meetings on this topic.

Teichmiller noted that it was important that the data be 'accountable' and not based on opinion or 'it used to be like' statements as change may be the result of multiple factors – some can be altered, some cannot. Pilch also noted a national study which had been completed on fishing trends and that she would forward a copy to Burzinski. During the discussion several names were mentioned that might provide information in the fisheries areas – Guides Demlow (Conover), McClellan (Manitowish Waters) & Powell (Eagle River) along with Gilbert (DNR Fisheries Biologist), Price (Conservation Warden) and Wayre (Presque Isle – Conservation Congress). Bakka noted that it was important to explore all sides. Behling indicated he would contact the name individuals and others they may recommend to see if they can attend the June 2nd Committee meeting to discussion this topic. He noted his intent in raising this issue was to look at the data, listen to concerns and determine a path, if any, for the Committee.

Anderson noted at this time that there was a proposal for a free fishing weekend during the winter (possibly February) and it was hoped it could be made to coincide with Michigan's event to be less confusing for border lake anglers (similar to current open water regulations). He would have more information on this after a meeting later in May.

2010 Vilas County Visitor Guide – Burzinski noted the contract with Assured Associates for the development of the 2010 Vilas County Visitor Guide had been reviewed and approved by Corporation Counsel. After reviewing the contract, **motion by Teichmiller, seconded by Rayala to accept the contract from Assured Associates for the 2010 Vilas County Visitor Guide and authorize the Committee Chair to sign the contract; motion carried.**

The Committee confirmed Hanley's previous directive regarding a biking cover for 2010 and Hanley indicated he would have some cover designs ready for the Committee's review at their June meeting. So Assured could see the ad design format the ad agency would be using, Pilch indicated she would get a copy of the format to Assured.

Musky Marathon – The poster designed by Pilch & Barnet was presented to the Committee. They felt the poster was eye-catching and approved it being sent out as soon as possible.

Christianson noted just receiving an email regarding a drawing prize from the 2008 Marathon. The individual offering the half-day guide service on behalf of a club had recently passed away and Christianson indicated she would be contacting the club regarding available options and would keep the Committee updated.

Vilas County Chamber – Burzinski announced the Chamber was co-sponsoring a Business Securities Seminar on Thursday (May 7th) in Boulder Junction starting at 8:30am. This Seminar has been well received in the past and provided updated security information to local businesses.

She indicated the May 14th Chamber meeting had been moved from St. Germain to Presque Isle as Presque Isle will be hosting an Artists Reception on the 14th from 4pm-6pm as part of the multi-county Artists Interactive campaign. This is an opportunity to talk with the artists whose work is on display. As some Committee members indicated an interest in attending, **motion by Behling, seconded by Rayala to authorize any Tourism & Promotion Committee member to attend the Vilas County Chamber meeting and/or the Artists Interactive Artists Reception on May 14th being held in Presque Isle; motion carried.**

Pilch & Barnet – Pilch indicated that a cooperative effort with Discover Wisconsin has provided updated footage of all Vilas County communities for use in the television commercials. This will allow the ads to come in under budget which allows for expanded use of the ads either in the same markets or add additional markets. As the television ads will be ready for review soon, Pilch requested the Committee designate someone to review and approve the ads. **Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to authorize Burzinski and Thorpe to review and approve the television ads and update the Committee at the next regularly scheduled meeting; motion carried.**

Pilch indicated that the budget remains on track.

She also indicated that Oneida County was planning their Resort Tour (their first in almost 10 years) for June 4th for the Hazelhurst area and the invitations should be headed out as soon as a few final details are

worked out. As reservations would need to be made before the Committee's next meeting, **motion by Behling, seconded by Rayala to authorize any Tourism & Publicity Committee or staff member to register for and attend the Oneida County Resort Tour on June 4th; motion carried.**

Pilch indicated that the Artists Interactive project has started and there is good representation from Vilas County artists. Video has been shot and the ads started in the various markets on May 4th.

Pilch briefly noted some tourism numbers from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism and noted that the full reports are scheduled for distribution during National Tourism Week, May 10th – 16th.

Pilch indicated she had been informed by Kari Zambon, Regional Representative to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism, that the Department had revised their regional map (which would be used in all Department tourism publications) and that there were concerns regarding the 'names' of the various regions. While areas to the south had descriptive names (Eastern Lakes, Southern Gateway, etc.) the northern area was designated as 'Northeast'. Zambon had noted she would continue working for uniformity on the map. Pilch suggested contacting Sara Fischer to see what options might be available.

Pilch indicated she had attended Michigan's state tourism conference and while it had a decidedly different atmosphere than the Wisconsin conference, she did pick up some valuable information regarding proposed Michigan advertising. With a prediction of a decrease in tourism related jobs, it is anticipated that there will be crossover in the same markets (Chicago, Indiana, etc.) and it is a good idea to be prepared and to know what the competition may be planning.

Burzinski distributed a copy of the proposed banner ad for the Chicago Tribune (with biking photo). Teichmiller expressed concern regarding the dark border being used and that the background of the pictures (in this case the trees) may be lost; however, Pilch indicated that the border helped the interior graphics to 'pop' and also set the ad apart in print where the background is usually white. She did indicate that she would check into the darkness of the picture and thought it may just be that the graphic was designed for the web and not for printing which could account for some of the darkness. After additional discussion, **motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to approve the banner ad as presented (with Pilch checking into the concerns expressed); motion carried.**

Burzinski indicated that the Vilas County Getaway Giveaway had been arranged with Black Bear Lodge donating a 2-night stay for 4 people, the County's Corporation Counsel had reviewed and made recommendations regarding the official rules and that the information was now posted on the website. The giveaway ends July 31st so the drawing will be at the August 4th Committee meeting.

Copies of the Pilch & Barnet monthly report were distributed.

After reviewing the advertising style guide as proposed by Pilch & Barnet to ensure the continuity of the ads throughout all advertising medium, **motion by Teichmiller, seconded by Behling to approve the style guide as presented, with the noted updating to include the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's new slogan and logo; motion carried.** There was some concern expressed regarding the use of the Department's new logo. Pilch indicated that part of the grant is the agreement to use the Department's logo and slogan.

Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant – The Committee was updated on the JEM Grant for Original Gangster's Paradise, a fall marketing and public relations plan, which had been approved for Vilas

County. Pilch indicated that while it was geared to the fall, advertising would begin ASAP after June 1st to help take advantage of the July release of the film. She also reviewed the budget allocations of the grant. She indicated that now the work would begin with the chambers and their members to develop the various elements of the grant designed to bring the traveler to the area. Pilch noted that she, her staff and the chambers were very excited to receive the grant and there are some great ideas and potential avenues to explore. Laeser noted that the Wisconsin Department of Tourism has already listed a 'northern' and 'southern' tour on their website and Pilch indicated she would be checking this out as additional information for the visitor to the website. Noting that Corporation Counsel had reviewed the JEM grant contract, **motion by Bakka, seconded by Behling to accept the JEM contract for "Original Gangster Paradise" and authorize Thorpe to sign as Committee Chair; motion carried.**

2009 Departmental Publicity Calendar – The process continues smoothly as the departments continue to submit great information. Burzinski further noted appreciation to the media for their continuing coverage.

Out of County Travel – Burzinski indicated that the Superior Chamber of Commerce was holding an open house on Monday, May 11th that she would like to attend. As one of the chambers selected to cooperate with the Department of Tourism as a result of the closing of the Wisconsin Welcome Centers, Superior was taking this opportunity to acquaint itself with the other areas/communities of the northern area and Burzinski felt it was important to meet the people who would be representing this area. **Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to authorize Burzinski to attend this open house; motion carried.**

Thorpe noted that North Central ITBEC would be holding their tourism meeting in Portage on May 21st. As these are regularly held meetings (normally every other month), **motion by Teichmiller, seconded by Bakka to give blanket authorization to Thorpe and Burzinski to attend any ITBEC meeting as scheduled for the remainder of 2009; motion carried.** As Burzinski is involved in sub-committees of ITBEC which may be called as needed, she had previously received blanket authorization to attend ITBEC marketing sub-committee meetings.

Department Reports – Burzinski updated the Committee on sport show attendance figures. She noted attendance for the Camping show increase from 7,590 in 2008 to 11,924 in 2009. Attendance for Canoecopia also increased from between 20,000-21,000 in 2008 to over 21,000 in 2009. Additionally, overall sales at Canoecopia remained consistent with the previous year which was seen as positive considering economic conditions. Estimates were that 30% were first time attendees and 20% had previously attended; the remaining 50% had attended the show at least twice before. Burzinski noted she was still awaiting attendance information on the Fishing show.

Department reports were distributed and Burzinski noted that while visits to the website appear to be holding their own, inquiries are behind when compared to the same time last year. While this is to be expected considering the Committee's change in ad agencies and in advertising formats, both Pilch and Burzinski indicated they would keep a close eye on this to determine possible options. Burzinski also asked Pilch about alternative tracking methods and Pilch indicated she would check and get back to Burzinski.

Budget/Approval of Bills – Burzinski indicated that the Department controlled items are in line and everything appears on track. As the new JEM Grant is a reimbursement grant, there will be expense outlays prior to reimbursement, so Burzinski will be checking with the County Clerk about creating a line item in the budget to reflect the Grant expenses/reimbursements.

Motion by Rayala, seconded by Teichmiller to approve the bills as presented – Cindy L. Burzinski - \$174.90; Janet Christianson - \$96.25; Oneida County Tourism Council - \$2,000.00; Pilch & Barnet - \$3,100.00; Lambeau Telecom Co. - \$20.63; Vilas County Chamber - \$281.45; Siegel Display Products - \$196.43; motion carried

Possible Committee Evaluations – The Committee determined to place this item on a back burner and requested it be placed on a later agenda - either October or November.

Correspondence – Thorpe read responses that had been received from both Holperin and Meyer regarding the Spring Hearing questions on changes to the muzzleloader season. Both responses had indicated the questions had been defeated and thanked the Committee for their input.

Next meeting – Next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2009 at 9am in Conference Rooms #1, #2 & #3.

Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to adjourn at 11:03am; motion carried.

Minutes reflect the notations of the recorder and are subject to change by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Christianson