

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

Department Personnel Present: Cindy Burzinski, Vilas County Tourism  
Janet Christianson, Vilas County Tourism

Others Present: Stephanie McClellan, Vilas County Chamber  
Lyn Pilch, Pilch & Barnet, Inc.  
Ken Anderson, Conservation Congress  
Todd Powell, Area Guide  
Fritz Laeser, Edgewater Inn & Cottages

Media Present: None

Thorpe called the regular meeting to order at 9:03am in Conference Room #2 of the Vilas County Courthouse. The meeting was properly posted and notices sent to all media provided on August 25, 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 Rayala, seconded by Bakka to approve the minutes of August 4, 2009 as distributed; motion carried.**

**Extended Deer Season Proposals** – Anderson briefly reviewed the history of the two (2) proposals for an extended gun deer season starting in 2010: #1-start at the traditional Saturday before Thanksgiving for 16 days, followed by the 10 day muzzleloader season, followed by the 4 day antlerless season; or #2-start one week earlier than the traditional Saturday before Thanksgiving for 16 days followed by the 10 day muzzleloader season, followed by the 4 day antlerless season. While both proposals have a direct impact on the inspection of and opening dates of snowmobile trails, Proposal #1 could possibly delay the opening of snowmobile trails until the start of the Christmas vacation season. With the support of the proposals generally divided between Southern/Northern Wisconsin, Anderson encourage the Committee, either as a Committee or as individuals, to contact their legislators to express their support of Proposal #2, the earlier start date, as the least impact on the winter trails. It was Anderson's understanding the County Forestry Committee had a resolution supporting the early start proposal on their September 2<sup>nd</sup> agenda for discussion. While the proposed changes would not be effective until the 2010 season, Anderson urged the Committee to begin contacting legislators now, as well as County Board Supervisor/Committee counterparts in other counties.

Given the two proposals and recognizing the importance of the winter trail economy, the Committee unanimously agreed to support the early start proposal and wondered if the Tourism Committee could be added to the Forestry resolution in a joint effort. In checking with the Corporation Counsel, it was determined a joint resolution was not possible at this late date; however, two other options were noted: 1) Letters could be sent to legislators indicating the Committee's support of the early start proposal; or 2) Thorpe as Committee Chair could prepare a resolution, if supported by the Committee, for submission at the next County Board meeting. **Motion by Bakka, seconded by Teichmiller that the Vilas County Tourism & Publicity Committee support the extended deer season proposal starting a week before the traditional Saturday before Thanksgiving opening and authorize the Committee Chair to**

**prepare a resolution of such support to submit to the County Board at their September meeting; motion carried.**

**Fisheries Concerns** – Two fisheries proposals were also brought to the Committee’s attention – the minimum 40” musky size limit on all inland waters and the opening of inland water for trout season one week earlier than the general inland fishing season.

Related to previous discussions on the walleye fishery, Thorpe provided the Committee with information gathered from bait shops/sports shops from three (3) other northern counties – Price, Sawyer and Bayfield during a recent vacation. Questions/comments were similar to those raised during Committee fisheries discussions:

How can a neighboring state (MN) have such a great walleye fishery?

Fishing/hunting openers used to be very busy times; however, anglers won’t travel for a 1-2 fish limit.

Thorpe did learn of an organization, Walleye for Northwest Wisconsin, which was working with the DNR and local lake associations to improve fishing through a variety of programs including conservation, improving lake quality and habitat improvements.

Noting the MN legislature had passed a Walleye restoration act, Powell felt that had great contributed to the success of that state’s fishery as it provided a standard slot size to protect the breeding fish while offering good-sized catches for anglers. He again wondered why one hatchery would be operating at 10% while a hatchery 25 miles away was operating at 110% and reiterated there seemed to be little return to the angler for the license fees paid. Anderson felt that while stocking did provide some short-term help, investments in habitat improvement provided more permanent solutions.

The Committee felt that sport organizations specific to a fishery, such as bass or musky organizations, have been very influential in creating successful fisheries and that perhaps those interested in improving the walleye fishery could develop such an organization specific to walleye fishing.

Feeling it important to keep open communication with legislators regarding this important topic, the Committee directed Burzinski to check with both Meyers and Holperin to see if they would be available to attend a Committee meeting in either October or November (dates would be confirmed after consulting the legislator’s schedules) to discuss these concerns.

The Committee also expressed their thanks to Thorpe for her commitment to service and the personal effort she made in contacting individuals from other counties regarding the fishery concerns.

**2010 Vilas County Visitor Guide** – No updates at this time.

**Musky Marathon** – It was noted the Marathon is about half way through the season and the numbers remain up from last year.

**Vilas County Chamber** – McClellan noted the Chamber is finalizing plans for the Resort Tour to be held October 6<sup>th</sup> in Arbor Vitae. There will be a tour of 3 facilities, lunch at Red Crown Lodge, with a speaker from the Wisconsin Innkeepers Association. Invitations should be out shortly.

McClellan also noted that the packet distribution program between the County Chamber and Headwaters, Inc (Rhineland) would be ending as bulk mailing postal regulations would substantially increase the costs to Headwaters. While the Chamber has reviewed alternate proposals, none have been cost effective. The Chamber will make a decision regarding the packet program at their next meeting.

The next meeting of the Chamber is set for September 10<sup>th</sup> in Land O'Lakes at 1pm.

**Pilch & Barnett** – Pilch distributed a proposal regarding the [www.vilas.org](http://www.vilas.org) website to increase the interactivity and incorporate technological advances. When asked about the program WordPress, hosting fees and responsibilities, Pilch noted WordPress was a generally available program and that she would need to discuss hosting options with Burzinski and the County IT Department and would have more details for the Committee at the October meeting.

Pilch distributed the proposed 2010 Media Marketing Plan. While substantially the same as 2009, some media markets have increased costs which can decrease the placements. As the winter and spring TV promotions are done, the dollars which were allocated for production in 2009 can be utilized to expand to the Chicago Public Television market. An additional promotion (Fox Valley) may be possible if the Chamber members choose to pool their funds previously allocated to the packet distribution mailings; however, individual chambers are also in a budget crunch and those dollars may be cut/allocated to other individual chamber projects. The Committee will further review the Media Marketing Plan, along with the budget, at the October meeting.

Burzinski indicated that the winner of the spring getaway contest had been drawn; however, she has been unable to contact the individual either via phone or email. The Committee indicated an alternate should be drawn.

**Original Gangster's Paradise Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Grant Promotion** - Pilch indicated that OGP JEM grant funds were available to run a contest promotion. She proposed a "Go on the Lam" getaway where people could submit an essay as to 'why I need to getaway'. The essays would be judged (panel comprised of P& B employee, Chamber representative, Tourism Director and member of Tourism Committee) and the winner would receive an all-expense paid weekend (October 16-18) and agree to provide feedback on their weekend, including pictures and video. If approved, the contest would run the month of September and the winner selected during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of October. **Motion by Teichmiller, seconded by Rayala to endorse the concept of the 'Go on the Lam' getaway contest promotion, provided there are funds in the grant to cover the promotion; motion carried.**

The Original Gangster's Paradise TV ad was viewed and was well received by the Committee. The ad is running August 31 through October 15<sup>th</sup> in the Madison (cable and network), Milwaukee (network) and Chicago (cable) markets.

**Out of County Travel** – Burzinski requested permission to attend a Governor's Lac du Flambeau Area Promotion Committee meeting in Tomahawk in September. **Motion by Rayala, seconded by Teichmiller to approve Burzinski's travel to Tomahawk for the Governor's Lac du Flambeau Area Promotion Committee; motion carried.**

**Department Reports** – Pilch & Barnett's July report was distributed and reviewed. Their August report and the Department Report are not available due to the early Committee meeting date. Thorpe noted that the September ITBEC meeting will be at the Eagle River Inn on September 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Budget/Approval of Bills** – Burzinski indicated that the Department controlled items remain on target and that due to the early meeting date, some invoices were expected in the next few days. **Motion by Rayala, seconded by Teichmiller to approve the monthly budget and bills as presented – Cindy L. Burzinski - \$99.00; Lambeau Telecom Co. - \$26.15; Clermont Printing & Office Supplies - \$35.75; motion carried.**

Burzinski briefly spoke about the possible 5% departmental cuts for the 2010 budget. As soon as the directive from the Finance Committee is received, she will have better idea of the actual percentage and will have a 2010 budget proposal ready for Committee Review at the October meeting.

**Correspondence** – Thorpe noted that she, Bakka and Burzinski had attended the August 20<sup>th</sup> press conference during the Governor's Northern Wisconsin tour for the presentation of the Original Gangster's Paradise JEM Grant.

Thorpe also felt that thanks you should be sent to the individual she contacted regarding fisheries information and will work with Burzinski on getting those sent out.

**Next meeting** – Next regular Tourism & Publicity Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 1, 2009 at 9am in Conference Room #2; however, the date and time may be changed to accommodate the legislator's schedules.

**Motion by Rayala, seconded by Bakka to adjourn at 11:30am; motion carried.**

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

Respectfully submitted, Janet Christianson