

**Minutes of the March 6th meeting of the Sawyer County
Economic Development and UW-Extension Committee
Of the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors
Assembly Room; Sawyer County**



Voting Committee Members Present:

- Chair: Tom Duffy
- VC -- John Righeimer
- Stacey Hessel
- Brian Bisonette - virtual
- Chris Rusk

Others Present:

Andy Albarado
Kate Ross-Barido
Lynn Fitch
Donna Knuckey
Lori Baltrusis

Ariga Griboryan - virtual
Sherry Beckman - Virtual
Jim Miller - virtual
Molly Lank-Jones
Ken Pearson – Virtual
Sheldon Johnson

Call to Order – Chair Duffy called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Certification of Compliance with the open meeting law was met. Roll Call was taken. Quorum was met.

Meeting Agenda --

Public Comments –

Minutes from previous meeting – A motion was made by Ms. Hessel to approve the minutes of the February 6, 2023, meeting; second by Mr. Righeimer. Motion carried without negative vote.

Sawyer County Agricultural Fair Association Report -

University of Wisconsin-Extension Department Report –

Ms. Baltrusis advised that there was a Grazers' Conference for farming in March. The Real Colors class is scheduled again for County Staff.

Hayward Lakes Visitors & Convention Bureau -

A written report was provided. Ms. Beckman included the 2022 arrival information for behavior of the consumer after they've been exposed to information from Travel Wisconsin. It shows July and June to be the busiest months of the year. The highest percentage of people who saw an ad and came to Sawyer County were from Minnesota. The average length of stay was 1.8 days; however, the maps indicate that visitors are staying in the northern part of Wisconsin longer than in the southern area. July, August, June and December had the highest Main Street activity.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission Report -

Sheldon Johnson advised that their board chair passed away last week. The household hazardous waste program dates have been set and include Saturday events from 8a-12p. The housing revolving loan fund have lots of funds available for 0% repayment loans on home improvements. A new trend looks to be finding individuals to purchase businesses that have owners ready to retire.

Economic Development Corporation Report -

Ms. Barido-Ross provided an update on events they will be holding. They have hired Dalton Hessel to highlight some local businesses. The housing project that has been underway is now waiting for news on which property is chosen. The Vibrant Spaces grant program to improve the parking lot by Frandsen Bank has not yet provided word if we have been approved. They have organized a local business social event; Andy Albarado will speak at the first one.

Library Updates -

A written report was provided. Ms. Lank-Jones reviewed several new programs. The state free park passes program offers a one-day pass and is still available at the libraries. They received a donation and will use it to purchase four iPads. Ms. Knuckey provided an update of the Winter Library activities and programming. Winter Library received 50 free state park passes. They have two grant applications out and are awaiting word of funding. Their library board approved a \$3500 repayment for the basement loan project. They will be setting up their fund-raisers for the next year at the Friends of the Library meeting next week, and they received a large donation from a Hayward church.

Motorized Trail and Non-Motorized Trail Report -

Mr. Duffy passed out a non-motorized trail report.

Broadband Update -

A written report was provided. Mr. Albarado advised there is another planning grant for getting internet usage to all, and he will be part of the group to investigate getting access to some of the \$1.5M funds. Visions Northwest is the designated planning entity. Mr. Johnson reviewed the requirements of the BEAD program. It is a 2-year grant to spend appropriated funds once awarded. Our application to join the regional plan is due March 7th. A broadband survey should be coming to the community soon. A motion was made by Ms. Hessel; second by Mr. Righeimer to have Sawyer County join the regional group to move forward with this grant application. Motion carried without negative vote. Mr. Albarado met with Mosaic who is finishing their 2nd project, and BevCom provided a map of their project from Radisson to Couderay. Charter is working in the towns of Spider Lake, Round Lake, and Bass Lake. The west side of Sawyer County appears to have fairly good coverage.

DNR Nursery Project -

Mr. Albarado provided a map showing some of our DNR designated parcels. It is known that Sawyer County has limitations areas for housing development which is next to the trail system and industrial business area. The DNR has indicated they need the property but it does not appear to be used for seedlings at this time. Mr. Righeimer made a motion to investigate a land swap with the state legislators for housing development; second by Ms. Hessel. Motion carried without negative vote.

Historical Society -

Meeting Date/Time – The next meeting of the Economic Development and UW-Extension Committee will be Monday, April 10, at 8:30 am in the Assembly Room.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 am

Minutes recorded by Lynn Fitch, County Clerk