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| Minutes | | | |
| November 13, 2019 | | | |
| **WRP Board Meeting** | | | |
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| Present: | | Bob Borremans, Sandy Decker, Carrie Diamond, Kenyon Kies, MaryAnn Lippert, Lisa Taylor and Jerry Wehrle | | |
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| Absent: | | David Armstrong, Michael Decorah, Seth Hudson, Todd Johnson and Errin Welty | | |
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| Others: | | Steve Peterson and Carol Wetuski | | |
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|  | Call Meeting to Order | | | |
|  | President Wehrle called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. | | | |
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|  | Approval of Minutes of October 9, 2019 Meeting | | | |
|  | Moved by Lippert, seconded by Kies to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2019 WRP Board Meeting. Motion approved unanimously. | | | |
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|  | Frank Frassetto, State Director, Rural Development, United States Department of Agriculture Presentation | | | |
|  | Mr. Frassetto talked about relationship between USDA and rural development councils. He shared that SRDC need to show relevance and the opportunity to create alignment with USDA. USDA gets operational budget focused on program delivery and outcomes. There are USDA grant programs that could create alignment between USDA and WRP. These include Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) and RRRR. These grant programs require WRP to have a plan on how to utilize the funds. He noted that community assessment is a fundable activity. He felt that the Small Community Forums would be a good program for USDA funding. He asked what data is collected and how is it used. The focus of the forums needs to be hanged from best practices to community capacity and development. Bring in agencies to address problems and discuss solutions and resources  He also said that technical assistance to small towns, especially related to revolving loan funds and opportunity zones. He thought that WRP needed to assist communities build leadership capacity. | | | |
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|  | Financial Report | | | |
|  | Borremans presented the Statement of Revenue and Expenses for the first quarter of 2019-20 fiscal year which shows income of $4,520 and expenses of $8,442.17. He also distributed the bank register showing banking transactions (revenue and expenses) since July 1, 2019. Lippert asked about what is included as “Program Income – Other.” Borremans said that he was not sure but assumed that it was Small Community Forum registrations that were not paid through the WRP PayPal account. He noted that the banking transaction entry for transferring PayPal receipts to the WRP banking account is identical to the amount identified as “Small Town Forums Program Income.” The “Program Income – Other” matched the amount of checks/cash he deposited into the WRP account.  Diamond asked what the reimbursement for Borremans and Wehrle were. Borremans said that 3 years ago when the agreement for executive director with Ricky Rolfsmeyer ended, he and Jerry Wehrle agree to perform some of the duties in the absence of an executive director. They volunteer their time, but a paid expenses for duties outside their normal duties as a board member. Borremans noted that the 2019 tax return has been prepared and has been submitted. Moved by Lippert, seconded by Diamond to approve the financial report. Motion proved unanimously. | | | |
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|  | Partnership Updates | | | |
|  | Borremans mentioned that WRP participated in the Wisconsin Counties Association Marketplace and made some good contacts. WRP was also able to link with the Cooperative Network who is sincerely interested in working with WRP on projects and establish a stronger collaboration. Wehrle and Borremans participated in the Cooperative Network Dairy Huddle addressing the agriculture crisis | | | |
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|  | WRP Manager Update | | | |
|  | Peterson reported that he has been busy reaching out to potential partners and updating the website. The number of social media hits has increased. He has also made some updates to the website.Peterson said that his contract with Monroe County will end on December 31, 2019. He has a number of employment opportunities that will not allow him time to continue as WRP manager. He hopes to continue with the board but that will depend on which opportunity he accepts. The executive committee will meet to discuss how to proceed if Steve departs the man anger position. | | | |
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|  | 2020 Summit Update | | | |
|  | Lippert handed out a written report she prepared on the Summit (See attachment 1). The theme is “Vibrant Rural Communities: From Talk to Action.” Lippert said that they had a tentative schedule for the bus tours. The participating companies are relatively close (about 15 minute travel time) to Marshfield reducing the time spend on the bus. Box lunches will be available for participants at the first venue. The group is planning on a reception at the end of the tour; not a dinner. Participants will be encouraged to go to dinner in the community. The keynote speaker will be Deb Brown who is a national speaker on issues related to community development. Lippert commented that there would be breakout sessions. There was discussion on whether there needed to be a breakout on broadband and the arts. The consensus of the group was not be provide a specific sessions related to these topics. It was suggested that there needed to be an agriculture oriented breakout session; possibly involving Farm Bureau and/orFarmer’s Union. Borremans noted that the Wisconsin Philanthropic Network is interested in providing a session on rural philanthropy that he thought would fit under the “Funding Community Projects” section. | | | |
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|  | WRP Partnership/Sponsorship Solicitation | | | |
|  | The consensus of the group it that solicitation of organizations to be WRP partners and/or Summit sponsors is a responsibility of the entire board. The partnership solicitation should focus on utilities, banks, health care serving rural communities. It was noted that the partner/sponsor sell sheet identified that the partner/sponsors will be recognized at the Summit. It was agreed that this should be changed so only names are printed in the Summit program. Peterson will update the sell sheet.Lippert said that the Summit planning committee has a good list of organizations to approach and felt that they would be able to increased the number of sponsors for the summit.Peterson said that he would put a spreadsheet out on the website that could be used to identify who was approaching which organization. He also noted that every sponsor or partner should provide a high resolution logo for publication on the WRP website. He also noted that in-kind partnerships/sponsorships are acceptable. There was discussion on a possible location for the 2021 Summit. The consensus of the group is that Mauston should be contacted to determine their interest in serving as the site. | | | |
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|  | Small Town Forums – 2019 Wrap-Up | | | |
|  | Wetuski noted that the partners in planning and holding the Small Town Forums were the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, the Downtown Action Council, Arts, Wisconsin, WEDC, USDA and WRP. She said the 2019 Small Town Forums were well attended. Moving the session to the morning (rather than the traditional afternoon sessions) had a beneficial impact. Bill Ryan is working on a report summarizing information collected at the forums. Draft report should be ready in several weeks. Lippert and Decker asked about what role WRP had in selecting the communities for the forums and wondered if their suggestions for site selection were being considered. The consensus of the group is that WRP has little input into community selection and would like to see greater involvement and openness in the selection process. Wetuski stated that the committee was open to ideas and suggestions. The sites for 2020 have not yet been finalized. Carol said that she would get a list of past forum locations.  The group asked Decker, and she accepted, serving as the WRP representative on the 2020 Small Town Forum planning committee.  It was noted that since Gail Sumi from the League of Wisconsin Municipalities there has been better structure and organization to the forums. | | | |
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|  | Top Rural Development Initiative Award Process | | | |
|  | Decker noted that there was a discrepancy between the informational flyer and the website. The flyer notes that the deadline cited February 27 as the deadline and felt we had to honor that date. This will decrease the evaluation time of the application but should be acceptable. Selected award winner(s) should be notified that they will be requested to be present at the award ceremony at the Summit. Peterson will update the website to reflect the new date. There was discussion on several related topics: making awards based on percentage of applications, making awards by category, using WRP external evaluators and cash payment to award winners. Following discussion it was decided to use WRP board members to evaluate applications and defer decisions on the other items. It was noted that the procedures were revised this year and let’s use those for this year. We can evaluate how well the changes worked and whether further improvements are needed.  There was discussion on how to effectively showcase/use TRDI aware winners. It was also suggested that award winner may be good presenters at the Small Town Forum. It was also noted that there should be an email blast and Facebook post to promote the TRDI awards, application process and application deadline. | | | |
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|  | WRP Board Membership | | | |
|  | It was noted that there was a vacancy on the board and that George Petak has expressed interest in serving on the board. Motion by Borremans, seconded by Kies to appoint Petak to the WRP board. Motion carried unanimously.It was further noted that several board members (Michael Decorah, Dave Armstrong and Todd Johnson) had missed several meetings over the last 6 months. Wehrle will contact each one to determine their interest in continuing to serve on the board. | | | |
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|  | WRP Committees | | | |
|  | It was noted that one of the benefits of being a partner was appointment to the WRP Advisory Council. Since that council does not exist it was agreed to remove it from the list of benefits as a partner. | | | |
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|  | By-Laws | | | |
|  | There was no time to discuss any possible changes to the Bylaws. It was agreed that the executive committee will review the bylaws and suggest changes at a upcoming meeting. | | | |
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|  | Other Items | | | |
|  | None. | | | |
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|  | Adjournment | | | |
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|  | Next Meeting: | | December 11, 2019, 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Conference Call - Phone Number: 1 (605) 313-5146, Access Code: 715134#, Host Code: 381692# | |