

Hidden Valleys of Southwest Wisconsin, Inc.

General Board Meeting  
Richland County Board Room  
Richland Center, Wisconsin  
February 19, 2014

The meeting was called to order by President Bernie Arena at 11:00 a.m. Members present were: Bernie Arena, Sandy Williams, Kersten Rocksvold, Joe Fisher, Francis Hynek, Don Seep, Ron Benish, Marie Sersch, Grant Loy. Sales staff: Carol Larson. Absent and excused were: Donna Douglas, Bob Thomas and Harvey Kubly.

Grant Loy made a motion to approve the minutes of the January meeting. Seconded by Ron Benish. Motion carried.

**Treasurers Report:** Sandy reported that IMS, LLC (our bookkeeping firm) will not have accurate financial reports available until after they reconcile all the accounts in QuickBooks from July to the end of 2013. Sandy will get bank statements to IMS.

**Committee reports:** no committee meetings today.

**New Business:** Bernie stated the board will be updating the ad contracts, the 2015 guide information and the ad rate information. Also Bids will be solicited from LaCrosse Graphics, Ripon Printing, W.D. Hoard & Sons, and Crescent Printing. Ron will look into another printer in Dodgeville. Bids will go out within the next 10 days. A motion was made by Don and seconded by Francis to have Next Level do all prepress work for the 2015 guide. Motion carried.

Joe reported on the Chicago Boat & RV Show stating it was challenging, different, and confusing getting into McCormick Center. There were 37,808 people in attendance at the high end show with a cross section of fishing boats to high speed boats to million dollar yachts. What Joe liked most at this show was that when he handed out Hidden Valleys guides, people were very interested in traveling to Wisconsin. There was not a lot of Wisconsin information besides Hidden Valleys. Joe brought 25 cases with him to Chicago which saved on shipping costs. The hotel ad parking alone was over \$1400. Thank you to ITBEC for their grant or Hidden Valleys would not have been able to attend this show. Bernie will check into securing a grant next year for this show.

One result of the show was an invitation to have our booth at no charge at United States Power Squadrons, District 20 Spring Conference and Expo. The Conference and Expo will be held at the Abbey Resort, Fontana, WI on Lake Geneva. The Expo will be held on Saturday, March 15, 2014 from 9:00 AM to 12:00. Bernie is considering doing the show.

Joe will also be at the Milwaukee Sports Show March 5-9, the Eastern Iowa Show March 14-16, and the Rockford RV Camping Show March 21-23.

Bernie will be doing a booth for Hidden Valleys at the Monroe County Economic Development Conference Feb 27 as well as the Wisconsin Governors Conference on Tourism (WIGCOT), March 2-4. During the Governors Conference, Wisconsin Ag Tourism (WATA) will have a basket of items from the Hidden Valleys area. They will be featuring local food during the reception.

Hidden Valleys partners Driftless Destinations, participated in 5 trade shows, sharing the 2014 guide. They distributed 300 guides at a two day show in Minnesota and will be doing Canoeopia in March. Bernie can find out the other shows.

Bernie reported that the Sparta Chamber goes through Hidden Valleys guides faster than other tourism information. Also she told of guest at a hotel who had a page out of the Hidden Valleys guide for what he wanted to do during his stay in our area.

Bernie mentioned that there had been a glitch in the delivery of guides to Lafayette County but sales person, Randy Kirking was able to find a location for the books.

Ron reported that he gave Iowa County board members an over view of guide as well as maps. He also explained about the Lone Rock airport needs to be on the map. Tri-county Regional Airport is publicly owned by Richland County, Sauk County, and Iowa County.

**Website:** Discussion took place about the upcoming annual board meeting in May. It was acceptable by all board members present for the meeting to be held in Green County for the usual 11 am meeting time. Location is still to be determined. Any other county wishing to host meetings during the summer months, let Sandy or Bernie know. Rocky will look to Crawford County for possible July or August in Prairie du Chien.

Joe started the conversation about the website asking questions such as, "What are we looking for?" What is our vision? Do we want more social media presence? This has a cost requirement and we would need to budget for that. The website could go in two directions. 1)-Redesign/enhance the current website or 2)-go with a totally new website. Discussion followed about selling banner ads on the home page each month and having more social networking/blogs on the web. The possibility of each county having a contact to blog once every 9 weeks seemed viable. Other ideas included a what's happening page, coupon/discount page, some sort of contest using emails to drive users to the website. Joe will contact Wisnet for their input to increase social presence on our website and what would the cost be for that. Also he will compile an information page for each county concerning Facebook, Twitter, and our website. Lastly, Joe will contact Next Level (our prepress company) to come up with a sales package which promotes web ads to be used as a sales tool.

**Remarks/concerns:** Francis will have his last Vernon County tourism meeting in mid March and would like Hidden Valleys representation there. He asked that Joe and Bernie be present for the meeting. He will get more details to them. Don asked that Hidden Valleys consider making a donation to the coffee fund. Cash donations from individual board members totaled \$35 which Don presented to the county clerk.

The next meeting will be March 19, 2014 to be held again in the board room of the Richland County Courthouse. Motion by Ron Benish to adjourn. Second by Francis Hynek. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:25 p.m.  
Sandy Williams, acting secretary