

RED WILLOW COUNTY VISITORS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 6, 2024

8:30 a.m.

2nd Floor Boardroom, Keystone Business Center

Minutes

Presiding: Daniel Stramel
Present: Tyler Loop, Bill Lesko, Kerri Unger, Andrea Harms and Carol Schlegel
Absent:
Guest: Sarah Schneider, Mariah Pierson, Kaylea Wiemers, Chris Vontz, Clint Coleman, Linda Buck and Linda Taylor

Call to Order: **Daniel Stramel** called the Red Willow County Visitors Committee (RWCVC) meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

Open Meeting Act: Open Meeting Act was available for review.

The agenda was suspended by **Daniel** to hear the grant requests under New Business so as not to keep the presenters any longer than necessary. All proposals were heard and then votes were taken on the individual requests. The minutes reflect the order in which the grants were heard and voted on. Committee discussion was held after guests had departed following their presentations or comments.

New Business: **Improvement Grant Request**

- Heritage Hills Golf Course – Chris Vontz
Well Panels Project Amount Requested: \$ 7,500.00
Chris Vontz, and **Clint Coleman**, Golf Course Co-superintendents, presented the grant request on behalf of **Heritage Hills Golf Course** for new well panels to run the submersible pumps that provide irrigation for the property. He indicated that continuity of a good water source is vital to providing the quality product that McCook and Red Willow County has come to expect. After discussion among the Committee members a motion was made by **Kerri** and seconded by **Bill** to approve the request. Motion carried 5/0.

Promotion Grant Request

- McCook Chamber of Commerce – Heritage Days – Sarah Schneider
Dates: September 18-21, 2021 Amount Requested: \$ 3,866.25

Facility Rental Grant Request

- McCook Chamber of Commerce – Heritage Days – Sarah Schneider
Dates: September 18-21, 2021 Amount Requested: \$ 375.00
Sarah Schneider, Director, presented the grant request on behalf of the **McCook Chamber of Commerce** for marketing of this year's Heritage Days and the facility rental of Norris Alley and Keystone Lobby/Café/Kitchen for the new Oktoberfest celebration. **Sarah** explained that the addition of Oktoberfest has increased the inquiries for class reunions and that they are attempting to appeal to a younger demographic. During the Committee's discussion, several comments were made concerning the positive direction Heritage Days was

taking. A motion was made by **Bill** and seconded by **Kerri** to approve the request. Motion carried 5/0.

Improvement Grant Request

- **McCook All-Inclusive Playground Committee – Mariah Pierson**
All-Inclusive Playground Amount Requested: \$50,000.00
Mariah Pierson, Project Chair, and **Kalea Wiemers** from the **McCook All-Inclusive Playground Committee** were present representing their grant request. The project would revitalize the community playground in Kelley Park to create an inclusive, safe and engaging space for all ages and abilities. A concrete pad, rubber surface base and new accessible/inclusive playground equipment will be installed. An ADA-compliant “Connection Walk” will provide seamless access throughout the playground. The proposed playground will be a sensory-rich, safe and inviting space for all ages and abilities. By having the playground located in Kelley Park, there will be handicapped accessible bathrooms, ample parking and proximity to the new Aquatic Center. During the question-and-answer period, concerns were expressed as to how it fits within the scope of the Committee’s mission to improve existing or create new visitor attractions and facilities in Red Willow County. Even though they feel it is a very worthwhile project for the City of McCook, more information needs to be gathered before a decision can be made. As a result, the grant request was tabled until the September meeting so that further investigation can be done as to the applicability of this project under the state statute the Improvement Fund was established under. **Carol** will reach out to both North Platte and Holdrege to ascertain if improvement funds were used in the development of their playgrounds.
- **High Plains Historical Society – Linda Buck**
Barnes/Sutton/FLW Display Amount Requested: \$18,220.00
Linda Buck, Site Manager for the **High Plains Museum**, spoke on behalf of the **Historical Society** concerning the grant request. This request is to replace the grant awarded by the Visitors Committee in August 2023 for the same project, to develop an interactive touch screen solution to highlight the history of the Sutton house, the Barnes family and the connection of Frank Lloyd Wright architecture to McCook. Due to unexpected and costly repairs to the Museum buildings, including a new roof on the main building and replacement of windows in the Carnegie Library, the Historical Society has been unable to commit the matching funds to this project. As a result, they are reapplying under the financial hardship clause in the grant program, which would not require a cash match. They would also like to utilize the stipulation that invoices can be submitted directly to the Visitors Committee with progress reports as they do not have funds available to pay and then wait for reimbursement at the end of the project. After confirmation that this project would not be undertaken without funding, a motion was made by **Tyler** and seconded by **Bill** to approve the request. Motion carried 5/0.

Public Comment: **Linda Taylor**, Mayor of McCook, commented that the brochure/information display at the Airport is very out of date and does not adequately reflect the vibrant community we are. She requested that current information be available there.

The agenda was reinstated.

Minutes: There was a motion made by **Andrea** and seconded by **Tyler** to approve the July 2, 2024 minutes. Motion carried 5/0.

Financial Status:

Balance in Promotion Fund as of July 31, 2024 =	\$ 40,811.35
Balance in Improvement Fund as of July 31, 2024 =	\$ 280,321.32
Balance in Promotion Fund Budget as of July 31, 2024 =	\$ 119,398.71
Balance in Improvement Fund Budget as of July 31, 2024=	\$ 349,908.33

Old Business: Promotion Grant Follow Up

- McCook Chamber of Commerce – Bash on the Hills / Crazy Days
Dates: June 17, 2024 Amount Approved: \$ 3,380.00
- High Plains Historical Society
Website Development Amount Approved: \$ 2,030.00
Actual Expense: \$ 1,649.98

After reviewing the follow up information provided, the consensus was that it was complete and the grant funds will be processed.

Director's Report: McCook Branding Exercises – Carol reported that this process is ongoing but if anyone is contacted by **Secret Penguin**, the firm facilitating the branding exercise, to please respond to them so that we have as much input to the end result as possible.

Correspondence – Carol was asked to comment or provide letters of support for the following:

- History Nebraska – Rural Nebraska Historic Preservation Grant Project – Keystone Hotel – This request was for comment on an already approve grant request to fix drainage issues in the back of the Keystone that, at present, allows water to come into the basement and to install security cameras for increased surveillance of the building.
- History Nebraska – Norris Historical Site Grant Application – Letter of support for funds for the upkeep of the Norris Home.

New Business: The Kansas Sportsman – Possible New Media Buy – Carol was approached by **Shane Gilster** to place ads in **The Kansas Sportsman**. The publication is produced twice a year. **Shane** also represents the Nebraska Game and Parks guides we advertise in and thought we may be interested. After discussion a motion was made by **Kerri** and seconded by **Bill** to NOT advertise in this publication. Motion carried 5/0.

Approval of Claims: The following claims were submitted for payment:

Claim Summary – Promotion Fund 0990 879

Visa Statement

• 2-1751 Adobe Subscription	64.49
2-1751 HonorboundIT Service Plan	25.00
2-6030 NGPC – Small Game Guide	625.00
2-6040 MEDC – Intern Wages – June	316.50
• 2-6070 McCook Chamber-Bash on the Hills/Crazy Days	3,380.00
• 2-6070 High Plains Historical Society Website Dev.	<u>1,649.98</u>
	6,060.97

A motion was made by **Bill** to pay the claims as presented and was seconded by **Kerri**. Motion carried 5/0

Claim Summary – Promotion Fund 0990 879

2-6000 July Wages	4,091.67
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A motion was made by **Tyler** to pay the claims as presented and was seconded by **Andrea**. Motion carried 5/0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Carol Schlegel