

**VOYAGE FORWARD COALITION  
MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 15, 2016 9:00  
RAINY RIVER COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**STEWARDS PRESENT:** Mike Wellcome, Sheila Demenge, Myrna Meadows, Tammy Riley, Ward Merrill, Travis Glowasky, Sherril Gautreaux, Alyssa Hackenmueller, Alan Rasmussen

Absent: Doug Skrief

**I. WELCOME**

- a. To approve the agenda.

**A motion was made by Merrill; seconded by Meadows and carried unanimously to approve the agenda.**

- b. To approve the minutes of the previous Coalition Driver meeting.

**A motion was made by Gautreaux; seconded by Demenge and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the 10/12/16 meeting.**

**II. CHAMPION UPDATES**

Cross Border Initiative - The stewards are beginning to work with legislators on different options for checking into the country while boating or snowmobiling. The current entry point at Bohman's Landing is not ideal. They will coordinate their efforts with the border cities.

Workforce Development – The workforce survey has been entered into Survey Monkey with the purpose of the survey to determine the skills, training, and recruitment needs of the employers. The results of the survey will be shared with the economic development organizations and the high school and colleges to determine if different classes or programs could be offered to better prepare students for jobs in the area. A press release is ready to share with the media when the survey is ready to roll out. Mike and Travis will work to get the survey on the website.

Grow and Diversify Business – The group has discussed issues in recruiting new businesses which include wages, education, healthcare, housing and community attractiveness. The group is reviewing the companies on the KEDA database and who gets the press releases. The group is participating in the Grow Minnesota! program sponsored by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to retain and develop businesses in Minnesota. The group discussed forming a summer networking event where summer residents or visitors can brainstorm about business retention and development.

Tourism –A Google Maps workshop was held in collaboration with RRCC/UMD-SCDP/I'Falls Chamber of Commerce in October. The workshop was very informative in helping folks get on Google Maps. Another workshop will be scheduled in the winter; we will push for more businesses to attend the workshop. The stewards will continue to work on mapping their assets on Google Maps. This initiative doesn't cost a dime, just the time it takes to input the information. When completed, the Voyage Forward region will be mapped and take advantage

of the free advertising that comes with Google Maps. The group was approached by the “Polar Polers” to ask support for a boardwalk project planned for the Tilson Bay Ski Trail system. The boardwalk would offer spring, summer, and fall access to the trails system allowing for full year use. Our support would help with grant fundraising. The group asked to use the Voyage Forward logo on their fundraising brochure. Meadows reported on a group of birders that came to the area recently. The birders were interviewed and an article will run in The Journal. The group is working on their strategic plan and also a press release on the benefits of tourism that will be distributed to all local newspapers.

Economic Development/Marketing Partnership – As part of creating a single message and brand, the cities of Littlefork, Ranier, Northome and Big Falls have agreed to put the Voyage Forward logo on their cities’ letterhead and website.

### III. WEBSITE

The website has been moved over to HostGator and is almost completed. The stewards reviewed the website. A discussion was had about how to include sponsors on the website such as NHED. The decision was made to use the term “partners” or “supporters”. The group discussed targeted Facebook marketing for the website rollout highlighting each destiny drivers.

**A motion was made by Meadows; seconded by Ward and carried unanimously to spend \$50 on targeted Facebook marketing.**

### IV. BUDGET UPDATE

The decision was made to begin looking for external funds. The group needs a modest amount of money to sustain itself through the end of 2017.

The group discussed how to acknowledge “supporters or partners” and decided on “window clings” that run \$1 a piece.

**A motion was made by Merrill; seconded by Riley and carried unanimously to fund \$100 for window clings.**

### V. SECRETARY/TREASURER ROLE

We will need to work on a job description for Coalition Secretary/Treasurer and to finalize the Driver Mission Statement.

### VI. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Coalition meeting will be December 6 at 9:00 am @ the Ranier Community Hall.

### VII. ADJOURN.

The group adjourned at 11:00.