

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

STEWARDS PRESENT: Mike Wellcome, Pete Schultz, Myrna Meadows, Tammy Riley, Ward Merrill, Travis Glowasky, Sherril Gautreaux, Alyssa Hackenmueller
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 Meadows; seconded by Riley and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the 10/12/16 meeting.

II. CHAMPION UPDATES

Beautify Koochiching County – The stewards are reviewing potential grant sources for county-wide signage.

Cross Border Initiative – This group has not been able to meet since the last Coalition meeting.

Workforce Development – The workforce survey went live on 12/1 and was sent to 250 e-mail addresses. The survey is open until 12/14. As of 12/5, around 40 businesses responded. A press release was drafted and sent out to all on the media list which resulted in an article in The l’Falls Journal. When the survey is closed, a sub-committee will analyze the results of the survey which is a significant undertaking and issue a report on the results.

In the meantime, the survey is on the website; frequent Facebook posts will be issued; and the l’Falls Chamber will post information regarding the survey on its FB page.

Grow and Diversify Business – No one present to represent this Driver.

Tourism – There are updates on birding opportunities through the Minnesota Ornithological Union which is developing a state-wide approach to accessing waste-water ponds which provide significant birdwatching. The MOU is reviewing the MPCA regs to allow access to viewing opportunities. A birding article ran in the l’Falls Journal over the weekend highlighting a specific bird that birders drove to the area to see. Strategic planning has been completed. The group adopted another goal in supporting the Tilson Bay boardwalk project. A tourism driver press release will be issued this week.

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. The next item is to create a single message for the Voyage Forward region.

III. QUARTERLY MEETING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

A proposed agenda and strategic plan outline were developed. The group discussed how to proceed with the quarterly meetings and decided that the meetings would not necessarily be quarterly but be based on the geographic region. The meetings will be tailored to focus on the community hosting the meeting and engage that community on a topic that is pertinent to them. Destiny Driver updates will be given and each driver will break out into a work session. The strategic plan will be worked on and distributed for review prior to the next meeting.

IV. BUDGET UPDATE

The decision was made to begin looking for external funds. Trustar, Border State and Bremer Banks were approached. Trustar pledged \$1000 on the spot; we are waiting to hear from the others. Individual donations are welcome. Discussions on filing as a 501(c) (3) were had and will be carried over the next meeting where the pros and cons will be weighed. Discussions on reaching out to Blandin Foundation were had.

A bill to Studio Gibbous for the website migration was presented in the amount of \$1056.51

A motion was made by Hackenmueller; seconded by Merrill and carried unanimously to pay Studio Gibbous for the website migration.

V. MARKETING (Sponsors, Logos & Decals)

The website is up and running and looks beautiful. Kudos to Travis and his gang for the outstanding work. A cost effective window decal will be researched. These will be for supporters of Voyage Forward. After Christmas, a Facebook boost will go out for Voyage Forward. A reminder to ask all stewards to go to VF website and sign up for the newsletter. Each Champion should send an e-mail out to their driver stewards. A press release will go out regarding the new website.

VI. SECRETARY/TREASURER ROLE

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

VII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next Coalition meeting will be January 10 @ 1:30 pm @ the Ranier Community Hall.

VIII. ADJOURN.

The group adjourned at 11:00.