

**Minutes of the May 5, 2025 meeting of the Sawyer County
Economic Development and UW-Extension Committee
of the Sawyer County Board of Supervisors
Board Room; Sawyer County**



Voting Committee Members Present:

- ☐ Chair: John Righeimer
- ☒ Vice Chair: Stacey Hessel
- ☒ Tom Duffy
- ☒ Steve Kariainen
- ☒ Randy Neumann

Others Present:

Mike Markgren	Sheldon Johnson
Liz Klein	Ariga Grigorian
Adam Lamoreaux	Mindy Simons
Jim Ferguson	Lori Baltrusis
Donna Knuckey	

Call to Order – Ms. Hessel called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Certification of Compliance with the open meeting law was met. Roll Call was taken. Quorum was met.

Meeting Agenda -- Set

Public Comments – None

Minutes from the previous meeting dated: April 7, 2025

Motion to approve made by: Mr. Duffy Second by: Mr. Kariainen

Motion carried without negative vote.

Sawyer County Agricultural Fair Association—

No report

University of Wisconsin-Extension Department Report –

Ms. Baltrusis submitted a quarterly report to the committee. Ms. Grigorian reported on a housing survey and community needs assessment work being done with municipalities; a 2-3 year wrap-up report is forthcoming. Ms. Knuckey updated the committee on the Youth Development work being done to set up the Youth in County Government project; she recommended a County Government Day to create interest with the schools, and aiming for 2026 to implement the program.

Hayward Lakes Visitors & Convention Bureau Report—

Ms. Simon presented an update on marketing: more users are spending longer times on the website, and YouTube viewing rates are high. The current campaign includes spring fishing, ATV Trails, camping and other outdoor recreational activities to bring tourism to Sawyer County.

Northwest Regional Planning Commission Report –

Sheldon Johnson spoke to the committee about three rounds of BEAD funding for broadband internet projects; round 1 is complete; the PSC granted NWRPC a six-month extension to see what develops in rounds 2 and 3 of the funding. Round 3 allows funding for non-fiber projects. The NWRPC Annual Meeting will be held at Flat Creek Lodge on June 25 at 9:30 am.

Economic Development Corporation Report -

Mr. Lamoreaux spoke to the committee on the Joint Finance meeting and marketing projects in progress: five new businesses are being highlighted, the Live, Work and Play in Sawyer County video is being edited, the business incubator has received inquiries but available cash is an obstacle for start-ups- the EDC still needs a permanent location, consulting work continues, and there will be a Small Business Academy offered at Flat Creek on May 9th.

Trail Reports--

Motorized- Ms. LaReau provided a written update: all trails opened May 1 (except FRSF trails opening May 15).

Non-motorized- Mr. Duffy shared a report from Ben Popp; 2000 have registered for the 2026 Birkie already. Ticket sales are underway for a concert on opening night of the Lumberjack World Championships.

Broadband Update—

No updates.

Board Appointed Committee Updates – None**Historical Society –**

Mr. Ferguson updated the committee on an arrowhead display and a new gangster exhibit coming soon. A photographer took photos of historical local items from the museum to create a wallpaper for use in the new Lumber Exchange building being built on Main St. He shared interesting history on Al Capone and the Hideout.

Correspondence, Reports from Conferences—Mr. Markgren reported on the topic of TIFs and Affordable Housing statistics discussed in a recent conference. He shared an illustrative chart showing the increase in building costs has almost doubled since 2020 and Mr. Lamoreaux confirmed that affordable housing is the number one challenge locally, childcare is second.

Future Agenda Items – Move up the Historical Society Report in the agenda

Meeting Date/Time – The next meeting of the Economic Development and UW-Extension Committee will be Monday, June 9 at 8:30 am in the Board Room.

Meeting adjourned at 9:32 am

Minutes recorded by Liz Klein, County Clerk