

**Minutes of the August 11, 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

Mike Markgren
Liz Klein
Lori Baltrusis
Mindy Simons
Laura Bruce

Others Present:

Donna Knuckey
Ann Larson
Bridget Rongner
Kim Clark

Call to Order – Chair Righeimer 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: July 7, 2025

Motion to approve made by: Mr. Righeimer Second by: Ms. Hessel

Motion carried without negative vote.

Library Budget Updates--

Weiss- Ms. Larson presented Weiss Library documents to the committee; the library is asking for an additional \$35,000 for 2026 operations.

Winter- Ms. Knuckey presented Winter Library documents to the committee; the library is not asking for additional funding in 2026.

Mr. Markgren explained the statutory formula used to calculate county support for libraries in the region; Sawyer has historically paid more to the local libraries. This goes on the tax bill and does not come out of county operations.

University of Wisconsin-Extension Department Report –

Ms. Baltrusis updated the committee: the Spooner Agriculture position is still open and Clean Sweep events are coming up.

Ms. Rongner gave a presentation on how the FoodWise program has served the county and thanked Sawyer County and Kim Clark for her work with the program in the community. FoodWise will be discontinued due to the SNAP-Ed funding cuts. Replacing the program will cost \$60-80,000, and that amount is not included in the UW Extension's 2026 budget allocation.

Ms. Baltrusis reported that Washburn County is going to continue a version of the program using excess funding carried over from another account and suggested that Sawyer could choose to allocate funds and share in the program with Washburn. The 2026 budget reflects a general increase in expenses on track with 2025.

Hayward Lakes Visitors & Convention Bureau Report—

Ms. Simons reported on July advertising campaigns in parenting publications to reach families with children, an email campaign, and statistics showing meaningful website engagement. HLVCB will be putting out flags at the intersection of Hwy 63 and Main St. crosswalk during busy events for pedestrian safety.

They are not asking for an increase in the 2026 budget.

NWRPC Report—No report

Resolution 2025-32 Canadian Wildfire Smoke was presented and discussed. The board is asking higher levels of government to look into the problem of three years of forest fire smoke entering Wisconsin skies and impacting public health and the economy.

Motion to approve the resolution as written and send to designated government officials by: Ms. Hessel

Second by: Mr. Kariainen

Motion carried without negative vote.

SC/LCO Economic Development Corporation Report— Ms. Hessel reported that the EDC will have a permanent office in the new Lumber Exchange building in 2026. A THRIVE grant was received.

Trail Reports--

No motorized reports.

Mr. Duffy reported on non-motorized trails; the Lumberjack Festival conflicted with the Pow Wow and will again in 2026- the dates are set by Stihl. Work is being done on Birkie and upcoming events include a Trail Run and Labor Day bike race.

Board Appointed Committee Updates –

No reports. Ms. Hessel reported that the County Fair is next week, August 14-17 and a new secure fence has been installed around the fairgrounds. Marshal Savitski has been mowing the grounds.

Correspondence, Reports from Conferences—

No reports

Future Agenda Items – None

Adjournment – 9:11 am

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

Minutes recorded by Liz Klein, County Clerk