

## **Town Hall Agenda with a presentation by Tracy Timmons - Meeting Minutes**

**Date: October 13 for the Morning Session: 9 am to 12:30 pm**

Welcome! We are so glad you were there. We appreciate the commitment of those who have built Bigfork into the place we love. We want to build on that foundation to maintain the legacy of a vibrant Bigfork.

Due to the technological difficulties, we sadly did not record Tracy's presentation. We are just as bummed.

### **Opening Remarks: Process to Increase Community Communication**

Introduction to topic: Chase Averill

### **Gracious Space Presentation**

Introduction to topic: Karin Henion

✓ Gracious Space Overview Presented

#### Take-aways from Tracy:

- Gracious Space allows a space for people to voice opinions.
- When every meeting starts with a reminder about Gracious Space, it allows the conversation to bring in all voices.
- An implementer, a person in charge, is needed to carry Gracious Space forward.
- Gracious Space helps to discover what barriers exist in engaging others in the conversation, volunteering, decision-making and more.
- It reminds us to carry into the meeting a spirit of welcoming and engaging others.
- Finally, Gracious Space emphasizes learning in public and admitting mistakes to be transparent in community involvement and decision-making.

### **Remaining & Existing as an Unincorporated Town:Funding & Positive County Relationships**

Introduction to topic: Claude Boiteau

✓ Grant Opportunities

✓ Council Bylaws

#### Take-aways from Tracy:

- The cost of becoming incorporated can motivate a town to figure out how to create positive working relationships among town & county entities as an unincorporated town.
- A poor relationship with the county government negatively affects the town.
- Poor communication among town entities can prevent a positive, proactive relationship with the county.
- An entity would need to be identified to be a bridge from the town to the county commissioners; it must be more than a couple of people with the relationship to the county.
- A positive relationship requires proactive actions to create the relationships with the county commissioners and government and to create lines of communication.
- It requires attending the county commissioner meetings and bring that information back to the town.
- The whole community needs to be educated on how to best work with the county.

- Seeking funding for the town requires town entities to actively work together first and then to work with the county entities.

## **Case Study: Red Lodge and Red Lodge Area Community Foundation**

Introduction to topic: Jen Bach

- ✓ [Asset Map Overview](#)
- ✓ [Mission, Vision & Culture](#)
- ✓ [Organizational Chart](#)

### Take-aways from Tracy:

- Over 10 years, Red Lodge Area Community Foundation (RLACF) has grown to 300 volunteers, 42 steering committees, an annual operating budget of \$700,000 and capital budget of \$1.2 million for a town of 2,500 people.
- Red Lodge is similar to Bigfork.
- The RLACF is a convener of nonprofits and a creator of a culture of philanthropy in Red Lodge.
- The RLACF welcomes volunteers. As a first step, they empower folks to show up at meeting to “learn more” without any expectation of volunteering, but to find where and how they fit.
- The RLACF diversified their revenue sources, including individual donations, memberships, and federal and state grants.
- The RLACF share the work to apply for federal and state grants among their community partners and nonprofits.
- To increase fundraising for the nonprofits, the RLACF hosts a shared fundraising event that raises \$300,000 a year to go directly to the nonprofits.
- The three most impactful “tools” to grow the RLACF were engaged, committed volunteers; staff; and Americorps VISTAs.

## **Case Study: Roberts and Community Councils**

Introduction to topic: Chase Averill

- ✓ [Roberts Asset Map Overview](#)
- ✓ [Sample Agenda](#)
- ✓ [Communication Model](#)

### Take-aways from Tracy:

- Roberts, an unincorporated town, realized that the poor communication among town entities was a barrier to funding, accomplishing large scale projects and relationships with the county.
- Having a community council has helped create a unified town vision; it took baby steps to get there.
- Before the town was silo’ed with every entity doing their own thing, now all of the entities come together once a month to be in the same room & talk about what is happening in a concise meeting format. They invite the whole community to attend as well to be inclusive.

- By coming together, they are able to have better data and insights into the demographics to help them be more effective in seeking funding.
- The community council has a proactive, positive communication and relationships with the county commissioners. They attend every meeting to be a helpful resource to the county commissioners.

### **Process of Creating a Unified Town Vision (Case Study: Red Lodge)**

Introduction to topic: Chany Ockert

- ✓ C3 Report to the Community
- ✓ Foundation Strategic Plan
- ✓ Council Operational Outline
- ✓ Council Ranking Activities
- ✓ Other Resources Provided

#### Take-aways from Tracy:

- Use listening sessions and open community conversations to increase collaboration, communication and planning together.
- This was accomplished on an ongoing basis through community conversations; steering committees open to all to attend; mailings; eNewsletters and paper newsletters and online surveys.
- The voter information can be a starting point.
- The whole community should be involved to rank the priorities for decision-making.

### **What Does Change Mean for a Town?**

Introduction to topic: Chuck Shields

- ✓ Montana Population Map
- ✓ Asset-Based Community Development
- ✓ Self-organization

#### Take-aways from Tracy

- Change builds on and honors the past and their hard work.
- It's important to go slowly to involve the whole community and manage expectations that change takes time.
- Positive change, including generational changes, is hard.
- No one can impose change or make decisions for others.
- The starting point for asset-based community development is the gifts of individuals, groups of people coming together and existing institutions.
- It welcomes everyone to be involved.

One question we didn't get to was: How many nonprofits are in Bigfork? 81. How many nonprofits in Red Lodge? 58.