**Presque Isle Community Men’s Club**

Meeting minutes January 2nd, 2025

Opening: Meeting called to order by President Mike Bugenske at 9:00am with 12 members and 2 guests. Our 2 guests were Mark Tishler and Nancy McKinney

Opening song: Jay Kettler

Pledge of Allegiance: Mike Bugenske

Prayer: Mike Bugenske

Introduction of Guest Speaker: Mike Bugenske

Speaker was Chuck Weisen, President of the Friends of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, discussed the Viking Expedition tour Boat Program.

The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary started discussions with Viking in 2016 to have them add Alpena as a “Port of Call”. The first year for Viking was in 2022 when there was 9 Port Calls in Alpena. This increased to 20 in 2023 and there were 26 in 2024. Viking is scheduling 20 for 2025, 20 for 2026, and 20 for 2027.

Viking started in 1997 with 4 River Cruise ships and now has well over 10,000 employees.

These cruises are considered “Expedition” Cruises, there are no casino’s on the ships, most guest are 65 and over, mostly retired, well educated, and don’t know much about the Great Lakes. The ships are muh smaller than the larger ships, these normally carry around 385 guests and staffed with a crew of 260. There are two Viking ships that make Port Calls in Alpena, the Polaris and the Octantis. Each one is 665’ long, 77’ wide, draft 20’, and cruise at 18 knots.

When the Ships make the Port Call in Alpena, they arrive around 8am and depart around 6pm. Guests that depart take a tender boat to shore. The 2 most popular shore excursions both are in Presque Isle. One is the “Catch & Cook” where they boat a Charter Boat in Presque Isle Harbor, catch some fish, and then take them back to a restaurant in Alpena where the fish are prepared for them. The other excursion is to the Presque Isle Light Houses. They also offer walking tours in Alpena.

The Cruises that arrive in Alpena typically start in Toronto, CA on Lake Ontario and come through the Welland cancel to go around Niagara Falls, into Lake Erie and will normally have a Port Call in Detroit before arriving into Lake Huron and Alpena.

The ships are registered in Norway and due to the Jones Act of 1920, they are highly regulated as to what they can do in US waters. The ships will normally spend more time in Canadian waters as they are able to use all the amenities the ships offer – which includes submarines that can go down 1,000’.

Normally, about 70% of the guests on the ship due come ashore.

Break and 50/50 Drawing:

* $10.00 won by Less Fissette

Officer and Committee Reports:

* Minutes: Mike Grochola
  + December’s minutes were submitted, Motion by Dave Wolf to approve the minutes as presented, 2nd by Mark Kinney, All Ayes, motion passed
* Financial reports: Mike Grochola
  + Submitted December 2024 report. Motion by Larry Fields to approve the report, 2nd by Dave Wolf, All Ayes, motion passed
  + A summary report of 2024 Charitable Contributions was made available to all members
  + Paid expense of $9.00 for donuts (paid cash to Mike Bugenske)
* Project Evaluation Committee: Mike Bugenske
  + Nothing new to report
* Health and Family Committee: Bob Beres
  + Nothing new to report
* Scholarship Committee: Bart Hellmuth / Tim Lutes / Russ Kauffman
  + Nothing new to report
* Next meeting set-up:
  + Dave Wilson and Larry Fields volunteered

Old Business:

* There will need to be a committee formed in July to handle the Election of President and Vice President and possibly a review of the By-Laws
* It was also mentioned that maybe a new committee should be formed to do a Membership Drive starting early next year.

New Business:

* None

Announcements:

* Wednesday 1/15/25 Breakfast at the Route 65 Diner
* Thursday 2/6/25 Monthly meeting at 9:00 am at the PIHA clubhouse. Hunter Nostrant, president of the My Michigan Medical Center, will update us on new projects and programs at the Medical Center
* Wednesday 2/19/25 Breakfast at the Route 65 Diner at 9am
* There are Presque Isle Community Men’s Club coffee mugs available for sale – see Mike Bugenske to get these limited-edition mugs.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45am by President Mike Bugenske