

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE
TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE
MINUTES
February 16, 2007
EDC, Willmar

Present: Dean Bouta, Ron Erpelding, Bill Jagow, Don McGrath, Jim Millard, Ron Nelson, Charles Oakes, Jean Spaulding and Jeff Tengwall

Excused: Mike Nitchals and Steve Renquist

Secretarial: Jodie Heuring and Jennifer Ebert, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Vice Chair Ron Erpelding called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 a.m. Erpelding shared Renquist's health concerns and indicated Erpelding and Spaulding will be leading more on the *Get Broadband* Blandin grant.

[Don McGrath and Ron Nelson joined the meeting.]

MINUTES— By consensus, minutes of the January 19, 2007 meeting were approved with the correction of Jeff Tengwall to Jeff Roiland as the seconding party in the motion to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2006 meeting.

[Jean Spaulding joined the meeting.]

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Get Broadband Update. Chair Jean Spaulding indicated the *Get Broadband* grant will be the main focus of this and future meetings.

[Charles Oakes joined the meeting.]

Spaulding believes both commercial and residential should be surveyed. The task force reviewed the proposed survey (see copy attached to the original minutes) and was asked to keep in mind items it should include, i.e., not only broadband, but other telecommunication services. Jodie Heuring reported for Steve Renquist that Marnie Werner provided a survey example and all task force members are invited to attend a meeting with Bill Coleman at the EDC office Wednesday, February 21, at 10:00 a.m. Discussion was held about the survey questions. It is important to ask clear questions about service availability. It was suggested to have a few questions on the survey at the Willmar Ag Show in March. **Erpelding** will work with EDC staff on the survey for the Ag Show. Spaulding stated other providers or vendors will be invited to the meeting with Coleman.

2007 Goals. Erpelding suggested the task force highlight goals it wishes to accomplish through the *Get Broadband* program. Jim Millard volunteered to assist Erpelding and Spaulding with the leadership of this task force. **LAA** will draft a proposed email on behalf of Spaulding, Erpelding and Millard alerting Werner and Coleman of the task force's goals and asking for their guidance in accomplishing them, paying special attention to goals 1 and 3.

If the survey will be performed by the Tech North Prep Center in Ely, this task force highly recommends the individuals surveyed be informed at the beginning of the call that they are being contacted on behalf of the EDC. People may be more likely to speak with a person calling on behalf of the EDC versus an unknown company from a distant location. The survey will be benchmarked for what broadband use is before going through the program and after to learn how the program impacted use. It is important that a large enough sampling of the Kandiyohi County population (commercial and residential) is surveyed to provide meaningful results. A decision has not been made on how to utilize the survey results. Task force members inquired whether the EDC will be allowed to provide input as to the people surveyed, i.e., registered voters by township. The specific use of the \$30,000 grant has not yet been determined and a budget will need to be drafted.

The following questions were raised:

- Are there no services because there are no people or are there no people because there are no services?
- Will stakeholders show concern on providing these services to all areas of Kandiyohi County?
- Will it be possible for the survey to break down the percentage of city and suburban responses?
- Relating to 1d—Do you have a survey form that allows businesses to compare what services are there?

It may be necessary to find other stakeholders that may be able to assist in making it profitable so carriers can afford to provide services. It was the task force's consensus to continue discussions on easements, etc., but retain the focus of *Get Broadband*. Dean Bouta, Don McGrath, Jim Millard, Ron Nelson, Charles Oakes, Jean Spaulding and Jeff Tengwall indicated they plan to attend the meeting with Bill Coleman. **Bouta** will e-mail Bill from Qwest to inform him of the meeting and **Spaulding** will contact other providers.

There was no other unfinished business and there was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Charles Oakes, SECONDED BY Jim Millard, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:55 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular task force meeting is **7:00 a.m., Friday, March 16, 2007**, at the EDC office.