

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)  
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**February 4, 2009**

**Heritage Bank Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Bev Dougherty, Ron Erpelding, Gary Geiger, Tom Lindemann, Les Nelson, Tracy Mullin, Bruce Peterson and Matt Schrupp

Excused: Diane Schulte

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Bev Dougherty called the meeting to order at approximately 10:33 a.m.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Ron Erpelding, SECONDED BY Tom Lindemann, to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2008 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY Bruce Peterson, SECONDED BY Matt Schrupp, to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2009 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**2009 GOALS**

**Business visitation.** Steve Renquist distributed a list of 20 businesses that he has visited since the last meeting and highlighted some of those visits (see copy attached to original minutes). Proposed ordinance changes are being suggested by the EDC to Kandiyohi County following the experiences of Meadow Star Dairy. Tom Lindemann reported R & D Safety just signed a lease for the FedEx building north of Willmar. Les Nelson reported the Economic Development Center of the University of Minnesota, Crookston, has contracted with Minnesota Regional Development Centers to conduct broadband surveys. Nelson must complete 20 broadband surveys in Kandiyohi County within three months and will arrange to do those in conjunction with the EDC's business visits.

**Continue dialogue luncheons with aviation, health services and technology industries.** Renquist reported luncheons will be set in the future. Bruce Peterson reported the City of Willmar has a hiring freeze and there is no current plan to hire an airport manager. Willmar Air Service was sold to one of its employees and the city may contract with them for certain services. The city is reactivating the Willmar Airport Commission. Renquist reported comparable cities were identified and a group will visit those airports and gather information. Renquist informed the committee there is a group that is trying to have only locally-grown foods

used in the county and not allow foods to be imported into the county. The EDC is trying to create an environment that when a local company expands, it do so in the county.

**BRE/R will organize and train three area communities in the skills of conducting their own business retention call program.** Renquist reported training sessions have begun in Atwater; programs have been started in New London and Spicer and Raymond has been visited.

**BRE/R will utilize skills and information learned to implement business recruitment programs in Willmar and at least one other Kandiyohi County city.** Renquist distributed a draft of the letter sent to businesses in Montevideo and Litchfield on Willmar Design Center letterhead and signed by its chair (see copy attached to original minutes). A similar letter is being done by Atwater seeking professionals, particularly, a physician to staff the city's clinic and an editor to resurrect the *Sunfish Gazette*.

**Work with Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee to assist its business retention, expansion and recruitment goals.** Renquist reported the Ag Committee recently held a planning session conducted by a facilitator. Renquist provided information on the opening of the Mid-Central Biosciences Center by the University of Minnesota on the MinnWest Technology Campus.

**Technology Advisory Committee.** Renquist reported the EDC is awarding 10 website grants and applications are being taken until February 27. The grants will pay 50% of the design cost up to a maximum of \$500. Web seminars will be held February 17 in cooperation with Ridgewater College.

[Ron Erpelding was excused from the meeting.]

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**2009 business reception.** Renquist will contact the businesses the EDC has surveyed and determine if they are interested in attending a reception to review the survey results.

**2009 committee chair.**

IT WAS MOVED BY Bruce Peterson, SECONDED BY Tracy Mullin, to cast a unanimous ballot for Bev Dougherty to serve as the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee chair for 2009. MOTION CARRIED.

**Quarterly meetings.** Following discussion,

IT WAS MOVED BY Gary Geiger, SECONDED BY Tracy Mullin, to hold the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee meetings on a quarterly basis at 10:30 a.m. on the first Wednesday in April, July, October and January. MOTION CARRIED.

Meetings will continue to be held at the Heritage Bank board room in Willmar.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Becker Market.** Dougherty reported the Becker Market is recruiting food producers for the market with the goal to hold the market year round.

## **REPORTS**

**Economic development projects.** Renquist distributed a list of current economic development projects on which the EDC is working (see copy attached to original minutes). The time line for the turkey research and development facility by the University of Minnesota is unknown at this time.

**Available property for lease.** Lindemann reported on available property for lease along Highways 12 and 71 in the Willmar area. Lindemann reported on potential lease agreements for the new industrial park. Area realtors are seeing commercial interest in the area.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:50 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular committee meeting is **10:30 a.m., Wednesday, April 1, 2009**, at the Heritage Bank board room, Willmar.