

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING
MINUTES
February 8, 2007
EDC Office, Willmar**

Present: Betty Bollig, Bev Dougherty, Duane Hultgren, Larry Knutson and Milan Schmiesing
Ex Officio: Richard Falk and Bruce Peterson
Excused: Ron Erpelding and Oliver Hagen
Staff: Steven Renquist, Executive Director and Kathy Schwantes, Assistant Director
Media: Bev Ahlquist, KDJS/K-95/KRVY Radio and Anne Polta, West Central Tribune
Secretarial: Jodie Heuring, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

President Betty Bollig called the meeting to order at approximately 11:10 a.m. Bollig welcomed and thanked Richard Falk for agreeing to be the new liaison between the EDC and the EDCOB.

[The agenda was taken out of order.]

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Reappointment of Erpelding, Hultgren and Hagen. Steve Renquist reported Oliver Hagen and Duane Hultgren were reappointed to the EDCOB by the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners at its annual meeting and ratified by the EDC at its annual meeting. Renquist reported Ron Erpelding has agreed to reappointment and the request for reappointment was referred to the Willmar City Council and ratified by the EDC at its annual meeting.

[Duane Hultgren joined the meeting.]

Assignment of Board Members to Standing Committees. Renquist reported Oliver Hagen has volunteered to serve on the Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE/R) Committee.

Community Behavioral Health Hospital (CBHH). Renquist reported the last official step for Kandiyohi County to assume the CBHH project from the EDC has occurred. Renquist reported the County was very appreciative of the work done by the EDC on the project. The EDC will continue to assist in the site selection process and other roles as requested. It is anticipated a ground breaking will be held in the spring of 2007.

There was no other unfinished business.

[The agenda order was resumed.]

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Larry Knutson, SECONDED BY Bev Dougherty, to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2007 meeting as mailed and e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

TREASURER'S REPORT—Treasurer Larry Knutson commented on the financial reports for periods ending December 31, 2006 and January 31, 2007. Renquist stated there are several items that do not appear yet on the 2006 expenditures, i.e., \$15,000 match to obtain the Blandin Foundation "Get Broadband" grant (\$5,000 from BRE/R and \$10,000 from Ag) and approximately \$26,000 for the Ag contract position. It should also be noted that \$30,000 budgeted for Willmar Area Multicultural Market (WAMM) in 2006 is set aside for grant matching. Renquist stated that based on the 2007 budget and if all planned items happen, part of the 2006 reserve fund will be used to fulfill the 2007 budget. Board members asked about the reserve funds and where they appear on the balance statement; this was tabled until the arrival of Milan Schmiesing.

IT WAS MOVED BY Larry Knutson, SECONDED BY Duane Hultgren, to approve the financial report for periods ending December 31, 2006 and January 31, 2007 as presented, subject to audit and further discussion with Milan Schmiesing about the line item titled "cash." MOTION CARRIED.

BILLS—Kathy Schwantes presented bills for payment.

IT WAS MOVED BY Larry Knutson, SECONDED BY Bev Dougherty, to approve payment of the following bills:

\$560 to Lakeside Press for ½ page ad in 2007 Willmar Lakes Area Visitors Guide;
\$950 to place a 1/6 page full color ad in *Minnesota Biking Guide* published by *Minnesota Monthly* from the Tourism Committee's budget; and
\$2,075 to construct and install a new billboard on west Highway 12 from the Tourism Committee's budget.

MOTION CARRIED.

Schwantes reported receipt of \$2,000 of royalties for the 2007 issue of the Visitors Guide.

[Milan Schmiesing joined the meeting.]

TREASURER'S REPORT (CONTINUED)—Milan Schmiesing provided a brief explanation of the cash shown on the balance statement indicating it includes all available operating cash. The funds balance listed at the bottom of the balance statement includes unreserved-designated funds, which includes funds unspent in previous years. It was suggested that budget planning include the funds carried forward for internal use only and not be reflected in the balance statement.

NEW BUSINESS

Recognize Outgoing President Milan Schmiesing. Bollig presented Schmiesing with a plaque on behalf of the EDCOB for serving as president of the Joint Operations Board in 2006. The board extended its appreciation to Schmiesing.

Committee Member Additions and Removals.

IT WAS MOVED BY Duane Hultgren, SECONDED BY Milan Schmiesing, to remove Teri Beyer from the Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE/R) Technology Task Force, add Bill Fenske to the BRE/R Technology Task Force, add Tracy Mullin, Matt Schrup and Jim Ellingson to the BRE/R Committee, add Beth Fischer to the Tourism Committee and remove Brent Iserman from the Finance Committee.
MOTION CARRIED.

Participation in BIO International Convention. Renquist presented information on the 2007 BIO International Convention to be held May 6-9, 2007 in Boston. Renquist stated that last year the

EDC participated with Southwest Minnesota Initiative and it paid the booth fee. The City of Worthington has been working on biotechnology a little longer than this area and they shared with Renquist that their attendance at this convention has been instrumental in attracting biotechnology companies to Worthington. The booth fee is \$10,000. The City of Worthington offered this community to share in a booth and also contacted a third party. It is anticipated the shared booth-related expenses would be approximately \$3,500. Renquist believes it would be approximately \$5,000 total expense to participate in this convention, which includes one EDC representative attending. Renquist inquired as to the interest of a local company sharing a portion of the \$3,500; however, the company decided to send a representative to work the floor and does not wish to participate in the booth. Duane Hultgren stated if there is an opportunity to keep momentum and the process moving forward to fill the MinnWest Technology Campus, the EDC should take advantage of it. Discussion was held about the budget and whether this would be a priority from the convention budget. There was some concern expressed that it may be advantageous to have two people there; one at the booth and one who could work the floor.

IT WAS MOVED BY Milan Schmiesing, SECONDED BY Duane Hultgren, to approve participation in the BIO International Convention in Boston to be held May 6-9, 2007, at one-third of the booth cost and to send one representative to the convention.
MOTION CARRIED.

Participation in University of St. Thomas Mini Master of Medical Technology Management.

Renquist stated the University of St. Thomas provides short intense instruction to increase individual's capacity in one area. There is a program in medical technology management scheduled for every Thursday evening from February 15, 2007 through April 26, 2007.

IT WAS MOVED BY Duane Hultgren, SECONDED BY Milan Schmiesing, to approve the expenditure for a staff member of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission to attend the Mini Master of Medical Technology Management at the University of St. Thomas. MOTION CARRIED.

Other. Schmiesing informed the board of information he learned from acquaintances in Stevens County relating to wind energy and the C-bed program. **Renquist** will look into this program.

There was no other new business.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agribusiness/Renewable Energy Development (Ag). Hultgren provided a brief background of some of the goals, a contract position to assist with those goals and shortcomings of the Ag Committee. Hultgren stated his comments are not directed at any specific individual. Hultgren believes agriculture is a major part of this county's economy. There has been a loss of farmer participation in the Ag Committee over the years and it has become more Ag business participation. Suggestions and proposals to work with the rest of the structure may be needed. Renquist stated the Big Wind Subcommittee is trying to form its own entity. Schmiesing suggested focusing on achievable short-term goals, concentrating on those and measuring the results. Prioritization may be needed as to what is most ideally suited for this area.

BRE/R. Renquist reported the BRE/R Technology Task Force received a Blandin Foundation "Get Broadband" grant and will be conducting an inventory of connectivity and communicative capacity for Kandiyohi County. Renquist believes from that inventory will come recommendations as to how to address specific geographic areas of Kandiyohi County that have unmet broadband needs.

Finance. No report.

Marketing and Public Relations. Schwantes provided a brief recap of the recent committee meeting minutes. Bollig stated there will be 15-17 signs made for buildings with tourist information.

Tourism. Jodie Heuring circulated a copy of *Explore Southern Minnesota* stating the cover is Green Lake and this area is the first story featured. Bollig stated Alan Carlson, chair of the Tourism Committee does a great job.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES—Bruce Peterson reported it is hoped the preliminary plat of the first phase of the industrial park will be delivered this week; some preliminary work may be done in the park this year and work on the environmental assessment worksheet for the park; there has been more activity at the new airport than planned and space for more aircraft at the site is being built; work continues on the waste water treatment project; next week Peterson will be in Washington, DC lobbying for continued funding; hope to know this week if the Kandi Mall property owners agree to the design for Fifth Street SE so the connection can be made to 19th Avenue this year. Bollig asked about a housing task force she learned about; Peterson stated it was suggested during a planning meeting that a task force be convened to review the current ordinances relating to neighborhood issues; Peterson believes the Mayor will appoint a task force to examine current ordinances and determine whether additions may be needed to improve neighborhood conditions.

Renquist reported work continues with the Veterans Homes Board; a small metro area company, an air compressor manufacturer, selected Touchstone Industrial Business Park; working on the business park on the east side of Willmar and filling the former coupon redemption center in Lake Lillian; will be implementing BRE/R training program in which Renquist, Schwantes and Jean Spaulding have participated; the BRE/R Committee will make 30 calls in addition to those set by Grow Minnesota; continues to assist with renewable fuels pelletization company, which plans to move forward in Kandiyohi County.

MINNWEST TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS—Renquist stated the Washington company plans to initiate operations March 1. Schwantes stated the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee and members from the campus will hold a strategic planning session February 26 regarding the campus and brainstorm on marketing done, what is successful, who is the target market, etc. Schwantes invited board member participation.

WILLMAR DESIGN CENTER—Bev Dougherty reported the Willmar Design Center had its planning session January 26 with Renquist as facilitator. The committee structure was reviewed and changes made; the Visioneer distributed at the last EDCOB meeting is the focus; and fund raising will be done in 2007. A group from the Willmar Design Center visited the St. Paul Design Center and received information on how it has moved forward. The St. Paul Design Center invited Willmar to attend its festivities in May.

Other. Renquist stated he will be on a family vacation during the next board meeting. Consensus was to change the March 8 meeting to March 15. **Renquist and LAA** will check to see if the change of meeting needs to be published.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ▶ The February 7, 10 p.m., KARE 11 news had a program on diversity in Willmar.
- ▶ February 10 WCCO's Out 'n About with RJ Fritz will feature Mr. B Chocolatier and the Mikkelson Boat Museum.

- ▶ February 22 the EDC, in conjunction with Ridgewater College, KDJS and the WorkForce Center will host a business expo and job fair.
- ▶ February 23 the Sixth Annual Strategic Animal Ag Conference will be held at the Willmar Conference Center.
- ▶ March 3 and 4 the Diamond Edge Figure Skating Club will hold its annual show featuring Olympic Champion Oksana Baiul.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next board meeting is **11:00 a.m., Thursday, March 15, 2007**, at the EDC office, Willmar.

Bev Dougherty, Secretary

APPROVED 3/___/07:

Betty Bollig, President