

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE
MINUTES
June 4, 2008
Heritage Bank Training Room, Willmar**

Present: Bev Dougherty, Ron Erpelding, Gary Geiger, Tracy Mullin and Matt Schrupp

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director; Jean Spaulding Assistant Director

Excused: Jim Ellingson, Oliver Hagen, Bruce Peterson and Diane Schulte

Secretarial: Allison McGeary, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chair Bev Dougherty called the meeting to order at approximately 10:43 a.m.

MINUTES—

Quorum was not met to approve minutes of May 7, 2008.

GOALS

Business visitation plan. Steve Renquist asked committee members to suggest companies for the BRE/R visits that were visited by Grow Minnesota! two or more years ago. Renquist stated LAA recently started using the EDC computer remotely, which made it difficult for them to schedule visits without seeing his calendar before. Renquist stated the EDC will be moving within the next 60 days to its new office location.

{Tracy Mullin joined the meeting.}

Renquist distributed the Company Profile and Report on Visit tabulations (see copy attached to original minutes). Renquist stated confidentiality is required on all visits done by this committee. Renquist reported on issues being resolved from previous visits. Committee members were asked to review the tabulations when they have time. Renquist suggested this committee or an outside source look at trends annually in Kandiyohi County and the city of Willmar based on tabulations. Tracy Mullin stated a trend she sees is businesses viewing government as unfriendly towards businesses at local and state levels. Renquist stated since this committee is more active it has forced Grow Minnesota! to double its list for visits.

Expanded business visitation schedule. Renquist reported Atwater is ready to work with this committee but not Grow Minnesota! yet. A meeting was held for Kandiyohi County businesses to explain what Grow Minnesota! is; about 70 businesses, mostly located in Willmar, attended. Mullin suggested finding a way to work with towns in Kandiyohi County outside of Willmar. Gary Geiger stated the goal is to have the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC) and the EDC be countywide organizations, which progress has been shown over the past years. Renquist suggested the EDC and the WLACC work together to resolve some of the issues. Discussion was held on how other Kandiyohi County communities feel about Grow Minnesota! being involved in their communities. Matt Schrupp reported on a Grow Minnesota! visit that went well in Atwater. Renquist stated Atwater has no formal business group that meets. Discussion was held on the Atwater Economic Development

Authority and suggestions for Grow Minnesota! to hold a meeting with Atwater businesses. Discussion was held on whom to invite from other communities in Kandiyohi County to be a part of Grow Minnesota! and/or this committee.

Health dialogue. Renquist reported one suggestion from the dialogue was to have a business in Willmar that creates and installs equipment to make vehicles handicapped accessible.

Airport. Renquist reported follow up is being done on contacts given by Bruce Jaeger. Renquist stated Minneapolis and St. Paul are looking for an off site cargo storage facility, but Willmar is too small and he is working with St. Cloud to have Willmar become a satellite airport for it.

Business recruitment plan.

Contact 20 prospective businesses to consider locating in downtown Willmar and assist where needed. Dougherty stated a Downtown Recruitment Committee (DRC) was formed with downtown business owners, the Willmar Design Center (WDC) and Renquist being members. Dougherty reported letters were mailed to prospective businesses in communities outside of Kandiyohi County and calls will be made to these businesses next week. Renquist stated the DRC plans to have shops that are complimentary to the current box stores, for example, specialty shops, kitchen stores, multicultural businesses and restaurants, which would make the current Willmar downtown businesses do better. Renquist stated the DRC may attract a business that may decide to locate outside downtown Willmar, but in Kandiyohi County.

Market to 30 high-tech prospective businesses about MinnWest Technology Campus opportunities. Mullin and Jim Ellingson are gathering names for prospective businesses. Mullin reported the 30 high-tech businesses have been narrowed to 9 businesses, which the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee had Ridgewater College marketing students to research information and they provided folders with information on each company. **Mullin and Ellingson** will give a report on information found and marketing suggestions at the next BRE/R Committee meeting. Jean Spaulding asked Mullin to also provide a report for the Marketing and Public Relations Committee. **Mullin and Ellingson** will work with the Marketing and Public Relations Committee on marketing ideas and strategies. Spaulding reported the Marketing and Public Relations Committee is researching aggressive communities on how they market their communities and will report findings at its June meeting and then plan the next step needed to prepare for the EDC's marketing plan for 2009. **Spaulding** will share the information the Marketing and Public Relations Committee finds with the BRE/R Committee.

Contact 10 potential aviation/airport businesses about new airport business opportunities. Renquist reported a few businesses have been contacted. **Renquist** will continue contacting businesses through the summer months and provide a report at the September meeting.

Assist Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee's BRE/R efforts. Renquist stated the Ag Committee would like to have the BRE/R Committee call on agriculture businesses.

Technology Task Force. Spaulding reported the task force came up with a proposal for the BRE/R Committee. Renquist distributed and went through the PowerPoint presentation for the budget planning session (see copy attached to original minutes). Committee members suggested corrections to the PowerPoint presentation. Ron Erpelding reported the task force is launching its online coverage

map on June 30, 2008. Spaulding reported the task force is waiting for Frontier to provide its information and were given a deadline of June 17, 2008 or they would pay the added cost of Bonnema Surveys, Inc. hourly rate add the information. Spaulding went through the Technology Task Force slides. Spaulding stated current funds for website grants will be paid by July 31, 2008. Spaulding reported the function of the coordinator, hired this year, will be done through Ridgewater College for the task force's future seminars. The task force would provide presenters for the seminars. Spaulding stated the task force is suggesting it receive \$3,500 from the \$11,000 BRE/R budget. Erpelding suggested the task force dollar amount not be shown in the slide as it is taking on a roll of an advisory committee and would have to go to the BRE/R committee with a request for funding when needed. Spaulding stated the presentation will be made the EDC Joint Powers and Operating board at 5:30 p.m., June 18, 2008 at the MWTC commons area.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2009 goals. Renquist suggested using the 2008 goals as a starting place. Erpelding suggested adding a statement that the committee is only half way through this year and is making goals to be completed for a year and half from now while still completing the 2008 goals to all budget PowerPoint presentations. Renquist explained why the budget process is done in advance. Renquist reported for the third consecutive year the EDC requested budget will stay the same. It is the consensus of the members present to approve the PowerPoint presentation and create 2009 goals at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

E-mail votes. Geiger suggested the EDC amend its bylaws to include accepting votes for all boards and committees by e-mail, which would make it easier when quorums are not met at meetings or meetings could be held online.

BRE/R visit gift. Renquist stated the gift will be the travel mug with candy and a visitor guide for all BRE/R visits. Spaulding reported the Marketing and Public Relations Committee researched other options, but the BRE/R Committee decided to continue using the travel mug. The Marketing and Public Relations Committee will be making the logo bigger on the next order of travel mugs.

Other. Dougherty reported with the EDC office staying downtown it will create a pod of nonprofit organizations. The WDC is working on a grant from the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) and will be working with a DEED representative this month and possibly partnering with the EDC. The grant is for store fronts and housing in the downtown area.

ANNOUNCEMENT—Joint committee 2009 budget presentations to the EDC boards, **5:30 p.m., June 18** at MinnWest Commons meeting room, MinnWest Technology Campus, Willmar.

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, July 2, 2008**, at the Heritage Bank training room, Willmar.