

**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 6, 2007**  
**Heritage Bank Training Room, Willmar**

Present: Jim Ellingson, Ron Erpelding, Gary Geiger, Oliver Hagen, Tom Lindemann and Matt Schrupp

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director

Excused: Tracy Mullin, Diane Schulte and Jean Spaulding

Unexcused: Bev Dougherty, Les Nelson and Bruce Peterson

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

Chair Ron Erpelding, called the meeting to order at approximately 10:30 a.m.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Oliver Hagen, SECONDED BY Matt Schrupp, to approve the minutes of the May 2, 2007 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS—**

**Business Revisits.** Steve Renquist recommends three businesses be revisited per month and suggests the following be the first: Kandi Mall, Duinick Corporation and Accurpress. Renquist stated Kandi Mall is having some issues with a street to be installed by the city of Willmar behind the mall and some internal issues within the mall, with which the EDC could assist; Duinick Corporation is putting in a retail/business center and may also have issues relating to gravel, etc.; Accurpress is North America's top sheer press manufacturer, has expanded 3-4 times in South Dakota due to business issues in Willmar and Minnesota, and Renquist has spent time with their management but would like to go back with a couple BRE/R Committee members. **Renquist** will send an e-mail to committee members notifying them of the meetings scheduled asking for participation (no more than two committee members per visit). Renquist would like private companies in the area to know the EDC is a public voice for private business. **Renquist** will follow up with Ken Warner of the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce as to the willingness of BRE/R Committee members to assist with GROW Minnesota! visits. **Renquist** will have three more company possibilities for next month.

**Questions for revisits.** Renquist stated Tracy Mullin contacted him stating she had some unplanned business activities develop, was unable to work on the questions and needed extra time.

There was no other unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS—**

**Community Behavioral Health Hospital.** Renquist provided an update relating to the Willmar Community Behavioral Health Hospital. Kandiyohi County has taken over this project from the EDC.

The current site considered is near the Kandiyohi County Area Family YMCA. The city of Willmar has done the proper zoning, but the state now needs a conditional use permit for the site. Renquist stated this is the time when area residents are stepping forward stating they understand our community needs this facility, however, do not locate it in our backyard. This is the tenth of ten units the State of Minnesota has built in communities and all but three units were opposed by residents (three were in an industrial setting). A public hearing will be held July 2 with the Planning Commission at the Willmar Fire Department. **Renquist** will e-mail this committee names of the Planning Commission for possible contact relating to this project.

**Pelletizing Plant.** Renquist reported Earthtech is a company that makes renewable fuel pellets. A key point for a location is the company wants to ship by rail. Renquist showed several sites within Kandiyohi County and the company's preference was a site not originally shown by Renquist, but the company found by contacting Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway directly. BNSF's general manager told Earthtech about the current site and they had no plans to abandon that rail. Earthtech wanted access to city water and sewer; there is city water, but not city sewer. The property has been recently annexed into the city of Willmar for city sewer and has been zoned industrial since 1991. The company then needed to go to the Planning Commission a second time for a conditional use permit. The Planning Commission recommended the City Council deny the conditional use permit. The City Council met and according to the City's Charter, it cannot overturn the Planning Commission's recommendation, but can return it for reconsideration. Renquist hopes the Planning Commission will look at the issues from different perspectives and review new information.

**Other.** Discussion was held about the process the above two businesses went through and challenges with the conditional use permit process when the area is attempting to be pro business. Committee members questioned if it is possible to handle some zoning concerns through covenants for the "certain parks, i.e., industrial?" It was suggested this may be an area this committee could assist with changing or cleaning up the Willmar City Charter. Oliver Hagen suggested talking with George Hulstrand Sr. as he understands the City's Charter very well.

There was no other new business.

**TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE REPORT**—The next meeting of this task force will be June 15, 2007. Erpelding stated the Blandin Foundation *Get Broadband* program has completed the Kandiyohi County surveys. This task force is also working on a meeting to overlay which companies provide services where; the goal is to identify areas with out service and hopefully find ways to fill some of those gaps.

**Other.** Travel mugs were distributed to volunteers who were unable to attend the Volunteer Appreciation & Awards Reception.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**—June 28, 5:30 p.m., committee presentations to Joint Powers Board and Joint Operations Board for 2008 budget process, Holiday Inn/Willmar Conference Center.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:25 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—**The committee will not meet in July.** The next regular committee meeting is **10:30 a.m., Wednesday, August 1, 2007**, at the Heritage Bank Training Room, Willmar; this committee will not meet in July.