

**Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING
MINUTES
September 11, 2008
EDC Office, Willmar**

Present: Gordon Behm, Betty Bollig, Bev Dougherty, Ron Erpelding, Oliver Hagen and Duane Hultgren

Ex Officio Members: Richard Falk and Bruce Peterson

Excused: Milan Schmiesing

Staff: Steven Renquist, Executive Director and Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Media: Anne Polta, West Central Tribune

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

President Betty Bollig called the meeting to order at approximately 11:05 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Oliver Hagen, SECONDED BY Duane Hultgren, to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2008 board meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

TREASURER'S REPORT—Steve Renquist presented the financial report for period ending August 31, 2008 and reported 54% of the budget has been used to date.

IT WAS MOVED BY Ron Erpelding, SECONDED BY Gordon Behm, to approve the financial report for period ending August 31, 2008 as mailed or e-mailed, subject to audit. MOTION CARRIED.

Credits regarding lobbyist. Renquist reported there is nothing new to report and discussed whether a lobbyist will be retained and funded by the EDC in the future.

Bills. Renquist presented bills for payment.

IT WAS MOVED BY Ron Erpelding, SECONDED BY Oliver Hagen, to approve payment of the following bills: \$2,208.52 to Hansen Advertising, Inc. from budget line item 27-716-115-0120-6240; \$3,768.32 to Kitchen Fair, Inc. from budget line item 27-716-110-0000-6300; \$4,211.25 and \$4,132.50 to Red Star Creative from the budget line items noted on the two bills. MOTION CARRIED.

Office Relocation Expenses. Spaulding presented an updated report on the expenses for the new location (see copy attached to original minutes). **Spaulding** will include a date on future reports. Spaulding reported the outside signs should be coming soon.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Audit. Renquist reported Jim Ruff has been working to obtain the EDC's financial information from the City of Willmar staff to complete the 2007 audit.

Open house recap. Spaulding reported staff was pleased with the attendance at the open house and attendees had very positive comments about the EDC's new location. The board complimented staff on the open house. Renquist thanked the Willmar Arts Council for the art on loan and Richard Falk for lending some of his personal art.

Chamber Connection. Spaulding reported the EDC will host a Chamber Connection tomorrow at 7:30 a.m. and invited board members to attend.

Planning session facilitator. Renquist reported staff is considering a more traditional facilitator for this year's planning session rather than Randy Lasky. Facilitator suggestions included the University of Minnesota Extension Service; Steve Friedlein, the new human resources director at Christianson & Associates; Brad Rice; or Eric Vogel of the St. Cloud Minnesota Extension Service. Oliver Hagen recommended that if Lasky is used again, committee members be included in the planning session.

There was no other unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

Assistant Director. Renquist recommended Jean Spaulding be removed from the six-month probation status and be placed on permanent, full-time status, which includes conversion of her vacation to three weeks starting September 17, 2008 and receiving a two percent salary increase.

IT WAS MOVED BY Bev Dougherty, SECONDED BY Ron Erpelding, to place the Assistant Director on permanent, full-time status, increase her vacation to three weeks commencing from September 17, 2008 and receive a two percent salary increase.
MOTION CARRIED.

There was no other new business.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee. The Ag Committee did not meet in August. Duane Hultgren reported Wade Gustafson sent a letter inviting area residents to tour the Morris area September 22, 2008. Erpelding recommended board members attend the tour. Renquist reported two wind ventures are starting in the area. Two articles published in the Fall 2008 issue of *Global Corporate Xpansion*, "Renewable Energy Equals Manufactured Energy" and "Renewable Energy's Right Stuff" were shown to the board. The latter article contains local comments (see copy attached to the original minutes). Renquist reported the Ag Committee started an Anhydrous Ammonia subcommittee and reported on items on which the subcommittee is working. Erpelding and Gordon Behm provided information on local wind energy efforts.

Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE/R). Bev Dougherty reported the BRE/R Committee continues to market to new businesses to locate in downtown Willmar and visit local businesses. Spaulding reported the Technology Advisory Committee met and discussed the websites developed through the Blandin grant program. The committee will hold business training sessions in February 2009; a new cellular tower is being erected south of Sunburg; RFPs will be coming out from

the state regarding distance learning in regard to health care; and the committee will meet in October to work with Ridgewater College on business seminars.

Finance. Bruce Peterson reported the committee reviewed a request from FeedLogic Corporation. Spaulding provided information on FeedLogic's request.

IT WAS MOVED BY Oliver Hagen, SECONDED BY Duane Hultgren, to approve the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Finance Committee's recommendation to approve FeedLogic Corporation's request to make interest only payments on its loan for six months starting October 1, 2008. MOTION CARRIED.

Spaulding reported the committee will host a Finance Seminar November 6, 2008; brochures will be sent in the near future. The seminar is focused on finance professionals. Hussein Samatar and Adolpho Avilla are the luncheon speakers and will speak on emerging markets. Spaulding reported an Industrial Initiatives Loan may be presented next month.

Marketing and Public Relations. Spaulding reported the committee has been very busy working on a Virtual Job Fair, an ad for the MinnWest Technology Campus in the *Global Corporate Xpansion* magazine and on the International 2008 Bioenergy Days Conference (IBED). Next month the committee will focus on marketing done by other communities.

Tourism. Bollig reported on the number of permits issued by the county campgrounds this summer; 60 drivers participated in the New London to New Brighton Antique Car Run and approximately 30 drivers participated in the Glacial Ridge Trail Ford Model T tour.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS

Economic development activities. Peterson reported on the following for the city of Willmar: reimbursements of \$1.1 million for additional hangar space and infrastructure; West Central Steel is doing an expansion on Gorton Avenue; working on a comprehensive plan; approved housing projects; studying the foreclosure issue; working with EDC staff on a project in the central business district; working on the wastewater treatment plant project; UPS air service will begin on a trial basis in November and December 2008; and the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission will burn corn cobs with coal this winter. Renquist reported the EDC is supporting renewable energy projects; supporting the IBED conference with two of four tours stopping in Willmar; promoting the September 22 tour of the Morris area; working with a corporation to expand to this area; downtown parking ramp; awaiting an announcement from the University of Minnesota as to the MinnWest Technology Campus; and retaining state enterprise programs in Kandiyohi County.

Willmar Design Center (WDC). Dougherty reported applying for a transportation grant through MnDOT for the south side of the First Street bridge to Ella Avenue with a new trail to Robbins Island; in process of applying for a comprehensive DEED grant for \$1.4 million to rehabilitate commercial and housing in downtown Willmar; completed a downtown survey; Willmar Blend was a very successful event raising funds for downtown improvements; the Holiday celebration and parade is November 22;

Urbanize Restore invited the Elk River developer to visit Willmar; and the Becker Market is promoting locally-grown foods.

Other. The board discussed what the EDC can do to help Rice Memorial Hospital relative to the programs it is eliminating. The board directed **staff** to meet with Wayne Larson, Chair of the Rice Memorial Hospital board in this regard. Dougherty recommended extended stay lodging be located near downtown and Rice Memorial Hospital.

ANNOUNCEMENTS—Chamber Connection, Friday, September 12, 7:30 a.m.; board planning session Thursday, November 20, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Tree House of Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Oliver Hagen, SECONDED BY Duane Hultgren, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:35 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next board meeting is 11:00 a.m., Thursday, October 9, 2008, at the EDC office, 333 Litchfield Avenue SW, Suite 100, Willmar.

Bev Dougherty, Secretary

APPROVED 10/9/2008:

Betty Bollig, President