

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

MINUTES

September 3, 2008

Heritage Bank Board Room, Willmar

Present: Bev Dougherty, Jim Ellingson, Ron Erpelding, Gary Geiger, Tracy Mullin, Les Nelson, Matt Schrupp and Diane Schulte

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director

Excused: Oliver Hagen and Bruce Peterson

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

Chairperson Bev Dougherty called the meeting to order at approximately 10:35 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Ron Erpelding, SECONDED BY Les Nelson, to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2008 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

GOALS

Business visitation plan.

Expanded business visitation schedule. Renquist reported four more calls were made on local businesses. More than 20 businesses have been visited and more appointments are being made with a goal of 50 visits in 2008.

[Tracy Mullin joined the meeting.]

Renquist reported the EDC office has visited with Raymond and New London, but has not contacted a third community.

Health industry dialogue. This goal was completed with a health industry dialogue held on May 6, 2008.

Aviation dialogue for September. Renquist will be working on the aviation dialogue for this month.

Business recruitment plan.

Contact 20 prospective businesses to consider locating in downtown Willmar and assist where needed. Renquist reported approximately 30 businesses in Montevideo, Litchfield and Hutchinson were contacted relative to locating in downtown Willmar and gave an overview of the letter's contents. A meat market is considering the invitation.

Market to 30 high-tech prospective businesses about MinnWest Technology Campus opportunities. Renquist reported this goal has been completed and announced the EDC and MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC) are co-sponsors of the International 2008 Bioenergy Days conference, which will be held in Mankato September 28-October 2, 2008. As a sponsor, the EDC will make a presentation at the conference and host a day tour of the MWTC October 1. The EDC will make a presentation at the annual Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Conference September 25 with the theme of converting a local loss to a regional asset; Renquist will speak on the transition of the Willmar Regional Treatment Center to the MWTC.

Contact 10 potential aviation/airport businesses about new airport business opportunities. Renquist reported aviation businesses have been contacted without success to date. Additional recruitment ideas will be sought during the dialogue to be held this month.

Grow Minnesota! Renquist distributed the June 10, 2008 Grow Minnesota! meeting notes and list of Target Businesses showing visits completed and visits pending (see copies attached to original minutes). Grow Minnesota! includes this committees business visits in its total count. Renquist distributed a compilation of 14 businesses visited and Report on Visit tabulations of 21 businesses (see copies attached to original minutes), which the committee reviewed. The final tabulations of all visits will be reviewed in early 2009.

[Gary Geiger joined the meeting.]

The committee agreed to hold a reception to review final tabulations of all visits in early 2009 with invites to those businesses visited, businesses the committee tried to visit, Grow Minnesota! members, Willmar City Council and Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners.

IT WAS MOVED BY Ron Erpelding, SECONDED BY Tracy Mullin, to allocate up to \$700 to hold a reception in early 2009. MOTION CARRIED.

Assist Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee's BRE/R efforts. Ron Erpelding reported attending a conference on renewable energy; Whirlwind Energy is moving ahead with its project and openings are still available for investors and Lake Country Wind is looking at erecting 110 to 130 turbines and adding investors. Erpelding explained the difference between small and big wind production and discussed use of transmission lines and the law relative to Minnesota energy companies being required to produce 25% of their energy from green sources by 2025. The Ag Committee is working on producing anhydrous ammonia (NH₃) locally. A production energy tax credit will end December 30, 2008 and may be renewed. Renquist reported the EDC was instrumental in assisting a 6,000 cow dairy operation that will have a methane digester. The committee is sponsoring a tour of a dairy similar to the one being planned for this area and a wind tower in the Morris area on September 22. Renquist reported the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission is looking at using biomass versus coal and has mentioned using the local landfill. Matt Schrupp reported Jennie-O Foods separates its fryer oils and uses it for biodiesel through Central Bi-products.

Technology Advisory Committee. Renquist reported the task force completed its goals. Erpelding reported this committee was sent an e-mail showing the 20 businesses that received website grants. The Technology Advisory Committee meets this Friday.

Grow Minnesota!/BRE/R "State of the Kandiyohi County Economy" seminar. Renquist reported Cameron Macht provided a report in March that was printed in the *West Central Tribune* and this information has been provided to area groups. This information could be included in the business

reception to be held in early 2009. Gary Geiger reported his breakfast group met and discussed the impact of media on local businesses and that it is important to provide positive information to local media. Renquist reported the Community Marketing Coalition is looking at whether it should continue its efforts. Following discussion,

IT WAS MOVED BY Gary Geiger, SECONDED BY Diane Schulte, to send a letter from the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee to the Community Marketing Coalition recommending that it continue its efforts and recommend that it focus its attention on the economy of Kandiyohi County, including crime rates are down. MOTION CARRIED.

ANNOUNCEMENTS—EDC will hold an open house 4:00-6:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 9, 2008 and will host a Chamber Connection 7:30 a.m., Friday, September 12, 2008. Tracy Mullin reported she is holding a Lunch 'n Learn September 9 from 12:00-1:00 p.m. Erpelding announced Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center is holding its first annual Prairie Under the Stars featuring locally grown products for the meal. The Ride the Wave program being done by the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce has been successful.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:46 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **10:30 a.m., Wednesday, October 1, 2008**, at the Heritage Bank board room, Willmar.