

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE
TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE
MINUTES
October 19, 2007
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Dean Bouta, Don McGrath, Jim Millard, Charlie Oakes, Jeff Roiland and Jean Spaulding

Excused: Ron Erpelding, Bill Fenske and Dave Sisser

Guest: Nicole Franzwa, First Marketing Group

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director and Kathy Schwantes, Assistant Director

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

Executive Director, Steve Renquist, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 a.m.

[Agenda was taken out of order]

Coordinator. Renquist introduced Nicole Franzwa of First Marketing Group. Discussion was held about the contract between the EDC and First Marketing Group (see copy attached to original minutes). Franzwa stated she would like to have the last sentence of paragraph number 4 to say "Furthermore, it is expected that Contractor shall be able to solicit EDC clients when not representing the EDC." Renquist explained the intent was to hire just a person and not a company to be a coordinator, but when First Marketing Group approached the EDC it seemed like a good opportunity for both companies.

{Jean Spaulding joined the meeting}

IT WAS MOVED BY Dean Bouta, SECONDED BY Jeff Roiland, to approve the contract between the Economic Development Commission and First Marketing Group with the correction to the last sentence of paragraph 4 corrected to read "Furthermore, it is expected that Contractor shall be able to solicit EDC clients when not representing the EDC." MOTION CARRIED.

Self introductions were made by the Technology Task Force to Franzwa. Franzwa introduced herself and First Marketing Group to the task force. Renquist stated First Marketing Group agreed to work for the task force for a lower rate than what the company would normally charge. Renquist distributed the Coordinator Get Broadband Program Goals (see copy attached to the original minutes) drafted by Jean Spaulding, Ron Erpelding and himself after the last meeting.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Charlie Oakes, SECONDED BY Dean Bouta, to approve the minutes of the September 21 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Names for business resources for speakers at seminars. Spaulding distributed a copy of an e-mail she received from Julie Redepenning for a Lunch 'N Learn series Montevideo is putting on for the *Get Broadband* program (see copy attached to the original minutes). Spaulding stated Sam Richter, president of the James J. Hill Reference Library, was one of the presenters and suggested the task force look into acquiring him for one of its seminars. The task force seminars are for companies to learn why expanding broadband and internet use and web advertising would increase their businesses. Dean Bouta suggested seminars for small businesses to have a combination of a) other small businesses to share about starting a web site and how it has helped their businesses and b) providers to share how to start the web site. Spaulding suggested providers could set up a display at the seminars rather than being there as a presenter. Don McGrath suggested a speaker with knowledge of the terminology to present at the seminars. McGrath stated he knows of a person who does all his sales and marketing on the internet. Names were suggested by the task force for possible speakers at the seminars. Jim Millard suggested having a list of providers to hand out after the meeting rather than having providers there. If you have someone showing how to create a website you will have a lot of people disconnecting at the seminars. Spaulding stated the task force needs to create the idea of why a business needs a website. The **task force** will submit suggested names to Franzwa for seminar speakers. Spaulding suggested a seminar format of three sessions like the Montevideo one.

The second goal is to help businesses that have websites to do more e-commerce. Renquist suggested it should be a different seminar. It was suggested both types of seminars could use the same speaker to keep the speaker all day; a developing website seminar could be held in the morning and an e-commerce website seminar in the afternoon. Charlie Oakes stated there are companies that use a website for marketing and recruiting their businesses and do not have a physical product to sell. **Franzwa** was asked to complete a list of names for speakers with names that were given to her by the task force along with her own list and have it completed by the next meeting. The task force will need to decide the goals and timing of when to have the seminars. The Holiday Inn/Willmar Conference Center, MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC) and the Willmar Public Library are suggested places to hold seminars. The task force will have to decide if it will be a one day event or two separate days; one day for businesses with websites and another day for businesses without websites. Bouta suggested a panel for a seminar like the Quality Council did, where one person did an overview and then a person from the panel did a five minute talk and opened it up for questions. The task force wants to make sure it is not biased to any web provider. Web developers would invest a half day for each seminar as they should be around for after their seminar to sell their services. Millard suggested providers could have their information out for the whole conference or seminar. The task force will decide on what the charge for the seminars will be based on the cost for providing a seminar and the amount of money the *Get Broadband* grant will pay. If people are expected to pay, they might have more of a commitment to being at the seminars. The task force has a website grant for businesses to develop a website. A draft of the website grant application was distributed (see copy attached to original minutes).

Recommendations for the business and residential educational programs. Libraries, colleges, senior centers and more public locations would be ideal to complete some of the residential goals. Franzwa stated she has a list of who does residential activities; Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) works a lot with seniors on how to use it. MMDC uses facilities like the senior center, library, county offices and schools for training locations. MMDC has programs that teach how to get onto the world wide web. Franzwa stated Skylark Mall has what looks like a computer lab in it and she has researched the area and found the Skylark Mall location to have a lot of senior citizen traffic with senior citizens commenting the Skylark Mall has easy parking and is on one floor. Franzwa suggested if the Skylark Mall location is a computer lab it could be the location to work with senior

citizens as they are already there and would be a good use of the task force's time. Millard suggested **Franzwa** talk with the head librarian at the Willmar Public Library as the computers are busy all the time at the library. When the task force determines what it would like for seminars **Franzwa** will work with the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee to implement what the task force needs and wants and to retain continuity of materials. Spaulding stated the task force wants to benefit residents of Kandiyohi County and not just Willmar.

Meeting with Bonnema Surveys, Inc. Renquist reported he met with Bonnema Surveys, Inc. and it is waiting for further instruction from the task force. Millard suggested having two separate maps, one for cell phone coverage and the other for broadband coverage. The task force was in agreement that the cell phone component should be a separate goal from the *Get Broadband* grant. Spaulding stated the goal is to find the holes in coverage. It would be good for someone coming to the community to be able to see coverage maps of broadband and cell phones. **Franzwa** will ask for service provider maps for broadband and cell phone coverage. Maps will also be provided at the seminars. Renquist stated the task force will need a definite definition of broadband. **Franzwa** will meet with service providers and report at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS—

Blandin Broadband Conference. The Blandin Broadband Conference is November 7-8, Millard and Franzwa plan to attend.

Meeting time. The task force would like to meet at a later time than 7:00 a.m. The task force will meet at 7:30 a.m. November 16. A suggested time for the December meeting was 7:30 a.m. Thursday, December 6, 2007, depending on how far Franzwa is with completing her tasks at the November meeting.

REPORTS—

MWTC. Renquist stated MWTC has state-of-the-art technology. MWTC will be a leader of any technology that comes into Kandiyohi County. Renquist suggested the task force market the MWTC as state-of-the-art technology. Renquist reported 15% of the campus is now filled, which is exciting news about the future of the campus and what it will mean for the company. Renquist reported on other companies interested in locating their business at the campus.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **7:30 a.m., Friday, November 16, 2007**, at the EDC Office.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, meeting was adjourned at 8:20 a.m.