

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
March 6, 2008
EDC Office, Willmar

Present: Dean Bouta, Charles Oakes and Jean Spaulding
Guest: Nicole Franzwa
Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director
Excused: Ron Erpelding, Jim Millard and Jeff Tengwall
Secretarial: Allison McGeary, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 7:20 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dean Bouta, SECONDED BY Charles Oakes, to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2008 meeting as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Mapping service area. Spaulding stated a link to the map was e-mailed to the task force for review and comments about the map were distributed (see copy attached to original minutes). The next step is to contact Bonnema Surveys, Inc. Dean Bouta suggested satellite providers not be shown and add "satellite is available countywide" as a statement at the bottom and all boxes be unchecked when first viewing the map to allow visitors to check which ones they want to view. Steve Renquist stated he is happy on the progress and suspects the EDCOB will have no problem with accepting an annual budget to update the map and suggested LAA do the minor updates to the map and Bonnema Surveys, Inc. do the technology updates. Nicole Franzwa stated Bonnema Surveys, Inc.'s price range for updates is \$500 to \$1,000 depending on if they collect the information from service providers. Spaulding stated the Blandin Foundation program will be done in May. Whether to have Bonnema Surveys, Inc. or LAA gather updated service provider information and how often it would be gathered was discussed. Renquist stated the task force should not have to pay for updates Bonnema Surveys, Inc. is already doing as the Kandiyohi County Surveyor, like roads. Franzwa stated changes to the map could be soon, due to Verizon towers going up in the southeast corner of Kandiyohi County. Franzwa received an e-mail from Ann Treacy of the Blandin Foundation stating Verizon has budgeted \$96 million for upgrades and was interested in where Verizon was building its towers in Kandiyohi County. Renquist suggested checking with Kandiyohi County Zoning on the new towers. Spaulding stated Frontier is not on the map and it does business in Kandiyohi, Lake Lillian and Prinsburg. Bouta stated Frontier is able to send a map of its coverage. **Bouta** will resend Franzwa the Frontier contact name provided earlier. Franzwa stated Bonnema Surveys, Inc. was going to contact Clear Wire for mapping information. **Spaulding** will contact Jeff Tengwall to get contact information for Verizon, so its changes can be included. Spaulding stated all changes will be given to Bonnema Surveys, Inc.

Get Broadband residential goals. Spaulding stated the residential sessions are in session two. Franzwa stated LeAnn Freeman's students reported the first session went well and will be submitting information to be paid. Franzwa stated Alan Millard taught two classes for the March session at the Washington Learning Center due to events that came up for the scheduled teachers. Franzwa stated Freeman offered to do one-on-one classes on more specific items with those who attended a class at the Willmar Senior Citizens Center. The information will be included in the Community Education Recreation booklet. Bouta suggested Alan Millard teach the remaining classes for consistency. Spaulding reported New London has had all levels of learning abilities from attendees. Discussion was held on how New London and Willmar conduct their classes. Spaulding reported the trouble most attendees have is double clicking the mouse. Charles Oakes suggested teaching attendees how to play solitaire, because it will teach them how to drag and drop, click once and double click. Renquist suggested the residential classes not end, but continue through a group in the community. Spaulding stated the task force took the same program the Willmar Senior Citizens Center was doing and just advertised it. Franzwa stated in a conversation at the beginning of the program Freeman said the Willmar Senior Citizens Center has the materials, but does not know how to advertise the program to get the results. Suggestions to host future classes are community education offices, senior citizen centers or Ridgewater College. Spaulding stated community education will likely not advertise outside its booklets, because if it were to run ads for one program it would have to run ads for all its programs. Spaulding suggested the task force get feedback from community education departments in Willmar and New London and contact Lake Lillian and Raymond to see how the communities would feel about turning over these classes to them and make a recommendation at the next meeting.

Franzwa distributed estimates from Creative Concepts, Hansen Advertising and Print Masters for window clings (see copies attached to original minutes). Franzwa stated she did not find a company to make the task force's suggested minimum order of 100 window clings and most wanted a minimum order of 500. Franzwa stated 36 businesses offer internet to the public in Kandiyohi County and would need the window clings. The business and residential classes have an excess revenue than what was projected in the budget and the excess revenue can be used to pay for the extra cost of ordering 250 window clings instead of 100.

IT WAS MOVED BY Dean Bouta, SECONDED BY Charles Oakes, to order 250 window clings at the cost of \$410.00 from Print Masters of Willmar. MOTION CARRIED.

Franzwa was instructed to order the window clings.

Get Broadband business goals. Spaulding stated recaps at the last meeting did not have all the surveys compiled and the completed compilations were e-mailed out with the meeting notice (see copies attached to original minutes). Spaulding stated the compiled surveys help determine how good the seminars were. Spaulding stated the surveys will be able to help the task force do an evaluation when it does the final wrap up in May. Renquist suggested Ridgewater College, Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC) or the EDC separately or as partners do another business seminar. Spaulding shared an e-mail from Jim Millard with his comments on the seminars (see copy attached to original minutes). Discussion was held on what was good and what could be improved at the seminars. Bouta stated he was given a copy of slides used by Minnesota Technologies, for its seminar. Renquist stated Minnesota Technologies has downsized and the program may not be available, but could be a possible resource. Spaulding stated the task force will evaluate its experience and make a recommendation to the Blandin Foundation. Franzwa stated items were sent to the Blandin Foundation in January and she recently sent an e-mail on what the task force has done in Kandiyohi County. Franzwa stated a blog about Kandiyohi County is on the Blandin Foundation *Get Broadband* website. Franzwa stated she received a call from Ann Hickens of the League of Minnesota Cities. the state is considering a proposal to create a providers map for the state of Minnesota. Hickens is concerned with the bid being considered and wanted to know the company the task for force used to create its maps. Franzwa stated the state received a proposal from a nationwide

company and Senator Al Juhnke is taking the proposal to the legislature. **Renquist** will follow up with Hickens and Juhnke regarding information they would like from the task force.

Grant applications. Spaulding stated Ann Polta with the *West Central Tribune* would like to do a followup article on the grant recipients to see how the recipients progressed. Spaulding stated she received an inquiry on a status of an application, which the EDC had not received due to a fax machine problem. Spaulding stated the grant application committee reviewed 21 applications and felt all the applicants had an idea on what they want to do. The grant application committee recommended all 21 applications be awarded the grant. Spaulding stated after the grant application committee met an application was withdrawn by an applicant leaving 20 approved applications.

IT WAS MOVED BY Charles Oakes, SECONDED BY Dean Bouta, to approve the website grant application for Whitcomb Bros. Service, Crane Service Inc. MOTION CARRIED.

Spaulding stated followup letters were sent to the 20 applicants telling them they were given a grant and the task force will need information from their chosen website designer. Spaulding reported two applicants have sent back the information requested. Spaulding stated the task force has a list of website designers (see copy attached to original minutes). Discussion was held on why a qualified web designer should do a company's website. Spaulding stated the task force will need to be careful not to critique the websites. The task force agreed the companies will solicit for their own website designer and provide the references requested, even if the designer is on the task force's list. The task force agreed the two applicants who have submitted their website designers information can move forward and **LAA** will send out a letter informing them.

There was no other unfinished business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Election of new chairperson. Renquist stated Spaulding will be the EDC's Assistant Director and the EDC staff liaison to the task force. Spaulding stated a new chairperson will need to be chosen. Bouta suggested Jim Millard. Renquist stated he spoke with Jim Millard in the past and he seemed interested in the position of chairperson.

IT WAS MOVED BY Charles Oakes, SECONDED BY Dean Bouta, to elect Jim Millard as the Technology Task Force chairperson. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS—

MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC). Renquist reported a turkey research lab will be located at the MWTC and will require state-of-the-art turkey barns within five miles of Willmar. The MWTC has offered to donate one of its cottages and match a \$2 million grant for St. Cloud State University and University of Minnesota. The MWTC is close to finishing a small methane digester conversion, which fits in with the Agribusiness/Renewable Energy Development Committee.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT—Appreciation & Awards Reception is 5:30 p.m., March 25, 2008 at the Holiday Inn/Willmar Conference Center.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular task force meeting is **7:30-9:00 a.m., Thursday, April 3, 2008**, at the EDC office, Willmar.