

**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
September 21, 2007
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Dean Bouta, Ron Erpelding, Charlie Oakes, Jeff Roiland, Jean Spaulding and Jeff Tengwall

Excused: Bill Fenske, Don McGrath, Jim Millard and Dave Sisser

Staff: Steve Renquist, Executive Director

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

Task Force chairperson, Jean Spaulding, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:15 a.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dean Bouta, SECONDED BY Charlie Oakes, to approve the minutes of the July 20, August 2 and August 17, 2007 meetings as mailed or e-mailed. MOTION CARRIED.

[Agenda was taken out of order.]

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Get Broadband grants. Spaulding gave a review of the August 2, 2007 meeting and stated minutes were sent previously (see copy attached to original minutes).

Coordinator. The task force needs someone with good organizational skills and will keep the task force on track with its goals. The coordinator position will be part-time for six to nine months. It is believed the best candidate comes from word of mouth. Steve Renquist stated he had a couple of suggested names that he contacted and they did not seem interested. The cost for the coordinator will be roughly \$5,000. Spaulding stated the task force should determine what the coordinator's exact goals and objectives before considering the pay rate for a coordinator. Renquist stated the coordinator will have access to LAA for administrative support. It is suggested to establish goals for the coordinator for month one, month two, etc. Goals and objectives for the Blandin *Get Broadband* program were distributed for review (see copy attached to original minutes). The coordinator does not have to be technology savvy as the task force will be hiring other industries to teach the technology aspect. The coordinator will not be doing any web developing or much marketing as the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee will be helping with that. The coordinator will be doing a lot of the leg work for the task force. The coordinator could work anywhere from 5 to 30 hours per week, depending on what is coming up or needs to be done. Renquist stated the EDC could make a desk, phone and computer available for use for the coordinator. Spaulding stated the task force can give the coordinator a list of internet providers or web developers to start contacting right away. The task force gave Renquist some names for the position. Spaulding asked task force members to provide any

names of possible coordinator candidates to Renquist. Some potential names were given to **Renquist** to contact.

IT WAS MOVED BY Charlie Oakes, SECONDED BY Dean Bouta, to have Jean Spaulding, Ron Erpelding and Steve Renquist establish goals for the coordinator to follow. MOTION CARRIED.

Renquist will hire the coordinator and the task force will go with the person whom Renquist deems as the best person for the position. The task force will pay the coordinator \$30 per hour with no fringe benefits totaling \$9,000 based on 40 hours per month, with \$5,000 coming from the *Get Broadband* grant and the remainder of \$4,000 from the EDC budget. Spaulding stated the task force will need the coordinator to do the work from the EDC office work station and provide the task force with a weekly work synopsis to be able to justify the hourly rate. **Spaulding, Ron Erpelding and Renquist** will meet after this meeting to compile goals and objectives for the coordinator to follow. **All task force members** with names for the coordinator position will give them to Renquist today. **Renquist** will contact the individuals suggested. If the task force does not find a coordinator from the names suggested, the task force will then put an ad in the newspaper for the position.

IT WAS MOVED BY Ron Erpelding, SECONDED BY Dean Bouta, to give the Executive Director the authority to hire at his discretion a part-time coordinator at the rate of \$30 per hour with no benefits or tenure. MOTION CARRIED.

Charlie Oakes stated the task force will need to know what abilities the applicant has such as organizational skills or other characteristics. Spaulding suggested the task force contact their suggested names for the coordinator position first to let them know **Renquist** will be contacting them regarding the coordinator position.

EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee suggestions. Renquist stated the task force will be making suggestions to the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee members on what the task force needs it to do. Renquist stated a future meeting will be held with the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee.

Names for business resources for speakers at seminars. The seminars are to be business focused seminars. Speakers will talk about education on what the businesses could and should be doing with broadband support. The task force will have a grant for businesses to create a new website or existing business to upgrade their website matching 50% of the cost up to \$500 being the task force's maximum contribution. Renquist stated it would cost around \$1,000 to create a basic web site. If the task force gives out all 20 grants to businesses, it will be a total of \$10,000 from the *Get Broadband* grant. The providers would have to be on board with us to do the web developments. Spaulding suggested doing a panel type of seminar or having different vendors in the room. Oakes suggested having a half hour of what and why followed by demonstrations. Dean Bouta stated seminars should be about what businesses need to look at and how to establish a web site. Jeff Tengwall suggested the task force have an application for the businesses to fill out for the task force to review. Bouta stated the task force needs to make sure seminars are educational and not web developers advertising for business. Tengwall stated the seminars need to have testimonies from businesses with web sites on why a new business should have them. Bouta suggested a seminar like the Quality Council breakfast, as it was very successful. Oakes stated web sites are not always about selling a tangible product but can be your business image or services. The task force will need to work on who are going to be the providers and the dates for seminars. Renquist went through the business component goals and objectives with the task force (see copy attached to original minutes). The next step for businesses with current web sites that have just pictures of what they sell and do not collect money or ship the product is to upgrade to be able to collect the money and ship the product. Spaulding suggested a seminar on e-marketing, getting business to the next level for marketing their

business and should be explained by a web developer. The task force will need to do advertising for the seminars. Tengwall suggested having seminars at the same time to save on money, by having a room of businesses with web sites that need to be improved and another room for businesses who want to create new web sites. Oakes suggested the task force find free space to use like the library or schools.

[Jeff Tengwall was excused from the meeting]

The task force needs to think about how it wants to do the seminars; i.e., a one day event; a technology day at a technology campus and partner with vendors to put on a half day seminar; having businesses apply for the grants. The seminar provider will need guidance from the task force.

REPORTS—

MinnWest Technology Campus. Renquist reported the Southwest Initiative Foundation is doing a documentary on the campus.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **7:00 a.m., Friday, October 19, 2007**, at the EDC Office.

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