

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (AG) COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

January 19, 2017

Christensen, PLLP, Willmar

Present: Rollie Boll, Ian Graue, Kevin Halvorson, Dustin Kotrba, Kim Larson, Keith Poier and Dan Tepfer

Excused: Arvind Auluck Wilson, Larry Konsterlie, Dan Lippert and Bruce Reuss

Absent: John Duevel and Jon Folkedahl

Guest: Carolyn Lange, West Central Tribune

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

Secretarial: Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Dan Tepfer called the meeting to order at 7:35 a.m.

AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Boll, SECONDED BY Kevin Halvorson, to approve the agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Boll, SECONDED BY Kevin Halvorson, to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2016 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

West Central Angel Fund I. The West Central Angel Fund I leaders held two meetings last week and informed Connie Schmoll the legal documents are in place; however, they are awaiting review by an attorney. Officers will be elected at an organizational meeting. Schmoll reported there are three start-up businesses waiting to make presentations to the Fund; one of which will tour the MinnWest Technology Campus as a possible location.

Ag Producers' Survey Subcommittee. Chair Tepfer announced two training sessions were held on January 11 and 13, 2017 at Christianson, PLLP and included the survey process, survey tool and a video. There are 34 survey volunteers and 3 alternates. The survey forms were mailed to participants and interview calls will begin as early as today. Recommendations of ag producers to interview came from

Kandiyohi County Township Boards. The surveys are expected to be completed by February 24, 2017 and analysis of the data will be complete by the end of March. Two workshops are scheduled for April 5, 2017 (12 p.m. and 4 p.m.) to review and analyze the final data and determine projects. The Ag Survey Subcommittee will meet February 6 to plan the workshops. Ian Graue complimented Schmoll, Kim Karson, Dan Lippert and Rollie Boll for their work in driving the Ag Producers' Survey. Kim Larson will participate in Open Mic today to discuss the Ag Producers' Survey.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2017 Ag Committee Goals. The committee reviewed the 2017 goals developed in 2016:

Group A

3. Support and conduct Ag education, including developing a public relations strategy.
 - Jean Geselius will attend the February 16, 2017 meeting and report on marketing suggestions given by the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee.
 - Chair Tepfer suggested a subcommittee be formed to work on agriculture-related public relations.

Add a goal 3c. Support and conduct a public image campaign of agriculture in the region.

- Kim Larson stated it is important to share information from the Ag Producers' Survey with the public.
- Chair Tepfer suggested the Ag Committee share outcomes and strategies from the Ag Producers' Survey at the 2018 Corn and Soybean Banquet. Chair Tepfer also recommended inviting Chad Willis of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association to a future committee meeting.
- Chair Tepfer informed the committee that Bushmills will be expanding. Schmoll commented the EDC has offered support in this effort. Larson feels the Ag Committee should comment on the MPCA public comment site regarding Bushmills expansion and its excellent track record in Kandiyohi County.

As to goal 4, Schmoll shared Kandiyohi County was awarded \$4.94 million toward deployment of broadband projects in northwest Kandiyohi County. Of the 149 businesses identified in the project area, 117 are farm operations.

Group B—No further activity to date. Schmoll suggested the committee tour the Turkey Research Lab at the Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center at a future date.

Schmoll will create a draft of the 2017 goals and present them to the committee at its February 16, 2017 meeting for review. Schmoll encouraged committee members to send her any goal ideas that may come up following this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Community happenings in agriculture/renewable energy. Schmoll suggested the Ag Committee consider staffing a booth at the Willmar Ag Show on March 13-14, 2017 at the Willmar Civic Center. The cost for a booth is \$255. Committee members noted staffing the booth is a concern as the time

commitment would be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Boll suggested partnering with the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce's (WLACC) Agri-Business Committee. Schmoll will contact Deb Zinda-Hanson in this regard. Chair Tepfer commented if the WLACC Agri-Business Committee declines participation, that this committee still have a booth. Schmoll shared the EDC has a large three-panel Ag display and can also provide information on the Ag Producers' Survey.

IT WAS MOVED BY Kim Larson, SECONDED BY Kevin Halvorson, to have a booth at the Willmar Ag Show March 13-14, 2017 and attempt to partner with the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce's Agri-Business Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

Schmoll will contact Lyle Lange to reserve a booth. Schmoll will bring a sign-up sheet to the February 16, 2017 committee meeting.

Schmoll shared former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, is now the CEO of the U.S. Dairy Export Council. Schmoll will attend the Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership planning session in Granite Falls today. Staff of U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar and Minnesota agriculture leaders will embark on a Farm Bill tour to gather input from Minnesotans on ways to strengthen the 2018 Farm Bill. A local tour is set for 8:30 a.m., Tuesday, January 24, 2017 at the Community Room in the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building. Chair Tepfer and Schmoll plan to attend and invited all Ag Committee members. Schmoll will be on a panel at the AURI's New Uses Innovation Forum March 22 at the Crowne Plaza in Plymouth. Schmoll will also be attending the 2017 Wisconsin Cheese Industry Conference April 12 and 13 in Madison, Wisconsin. Schmoll noted several interesting Ag articles appeared in the *West Central Tribune* recently and suggested this committee could submit articles in the future. Chair Tepfer shared the Midwest Farm Energy Conference will be held June 13-14 at the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris. The conference focuses on showcasing renewable energy and energy efficient technologies in agriculture. Tepfer will provide more information as the date approaches.

Value-added agriculture projects. Schmoll shared information on West Central Bait located in New London, which is now raising shrimp and walleye. Schmoll and Aaron Backman will visit the business on January 24 and will invite the owner to give a presentation to the Ag Committee on March 16, 2017.

ADJOURNMENT—

IT WAS MOVED BY Ian Graue, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to adjourn the meeting. MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:10 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular meeting is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, February 16, 2017**, at Christianson, PLLP, Willmar.