

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

January 20, 2017

EDC Board Room

Present: Sam Bowen, Jim Ellingson, Roger Imdieke and Les Nelson

Excused: Bob Carlson, Jean Marthaler and Ranae Rahn

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

Secretarial: Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 a.m.

AGENDA—Chair Nelson amended the agenda to add the election of a new Chair of the BRE/R Committee.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Jim Ellingson, to approve the amended agenda. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Jim Ellingson, to cast a unanimous ballot for Sam Bowen as chair of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

Chairperson Bowen led the remainder of the meeting.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Jim Ellingson, SECONDED BY Les Nelson, to approve the minutes of the November 18 and December 16, 2016 meetings as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

Business Visits/Tours. Connie Schmoll reported Aaron Backman has been working on possible funding assistance for improvements to the former Erickson Furniture building in downtown Willmar. Backman will also be meeting with diverse businesses in fulfillment of the Business Retention and Expansion grant received from Southwest Initiative Foundation. Schmoll has had two contacts in regard to the former Olson building located east of Atwater along Highway 12. Backman and Schmoll met with a Spicer area business that is seeking a new location and are working hard to

keep them in Kandiyohi County. The environmental assessment process is moving ahead with the Willmar Wye project. Schmoll reported 34 individuals recently attended training sessions for the Ag BRE Survey program—55 ag producers will be interviewed. Jim Molenaar, agriculture consultant at St. Cloud Technical College will analyze the data and create a report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2016-2017 Goals. Schmoll reviewed the revised 2017 BRE/R goals (see attached). The following comments were made in regard to certain goals.

Strategy 1.1 Business Retention and Expansion. Discussion was held regarding the broadband grant awarded to Kandiyohi County. Chair Bowen inquired how citizens can obtain information on how to sign up for the new fiber broadband. Schmoll stated two meetings have been held with local legislators regarding broadband issues. Roger Imdieke inquired if the project area could be expanded beyond the grant borders, if additional funds were available.

Strategy 2.2 Railroad. Imdieke gave an update on the at-grade crossing that has been opposed by the Federal Highway Administration for the Willmar Wye project.

Strategy 2.3 Highway 23. Imdieke provided an update from a recent Highway 23 Coalition meeting. It appears doubtful that a Transportation or Bonding Bill will be passed this legislative session. Schmoll mentioned it may be beneficial to hold a local transportation summit and suggested this committee host the summit working closely with the Highway 23 Coalition to invite the appropriate partners. Chair Bowen will contact Bob Mathiasen, chair of the Highway 23 Coalition, to invite him and members of the Highway 23 Coalition to the February 17, 2017 BRE/R Committee meeting.

Strategy 4.1 Economic development programs, including WAM-BC, downtown development and community development throughout Kandiyohi County. Schmoll shared information on the proposed Willmar downtown pedestrian study that could encourage walking and biking trails and signage in downtown Willmar. Chair Bowen inquired if workforce should be added to the committee's goals. Schmoll gave an update on the workforce needs of ERC. Schmoll reported factors to securing workforce include quality of life issues, such as broadband, housing and childcare. Chair Bowen asked what is Kandiyohi County doing differently to attract workforce compared to other cities and what kind of programs could be developed to help individuals increase their education and skills to qualify for higher paying positions? Schmoll will contact Kelly Asche at the Center for Small Towns as to what attracts and keeps workforce in a rural community. Imdieke feels Kandiyohi County could highlight its natural resources and mentioned a video of Kandiyohi County that is on the county's website. Schmoll will have a link to the video added to the EDC's website.

Committee membership. Committee members discussed membership on the committee. Schmoll will ask Backman to contact a couple of the current and potential members as to their commitment to the committee. Committee membership will be placed on the next agenda, as well.

NEW BUSINESS

BRE diverse business grant. Schmoll reiterated the EDC received a \$15,000 BRE grant to visit diverse businesses in the county. EDC staff will visit approximately 16 diverse businesses between December 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. The grant dollars will fund staff time to plan, conduct visits and create reports.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:52 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, February 17, 2017** in the EDC Board Room.



2017 Goals and Projects

Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE) Committee

Board Goal 1. Expansion of High-Speed Broadband in Rural Kandiyohi County

Strategy 1.1 Business Retention and Expansion

	Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	<p>The State of MN awarded Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) of Brainerd, a grant award of \$4.94 million. This will be matched with loan funds from Kandiyohi County in the amount of \$4.94 million. Construction in northern Kandiyohi County is planned to begin in spring of 2017. The EDC will facilitate efforts to market the broadband options to residents and businesses in the project area. A take-rate surpassing 45% is necessary to pay loans and provide a positive ROI for CTC.</p>	<p>Connie, Broadband Committee, Kandiyohi County</p>	<p>Throughout 2017 - 2018</p>	
B.	<p>Continued planning for broadband deployment in unserved areas of Kandiyohi County including legislative networking, securing stories and letters of support, adoption and utilization projects, securing private partnerships for the next stage of deployment, and securing public and private partnerships for funding.</p>	<p>Connie</p>	<p>Throughout 2017 - 2018</p>	
C.	<p>Submit a Phase II Border-to-Border Grant Application to Office of Broadband/DEED</p>	<p>Connie, Broadband Committee</p>	<p>October 2017</p>	

**Board Goal 2. Transportation Infrastructure—Improve, Maintain and Expand
Kandiyohi County’s Transportation Infrastructure through Increased Collaboration**

Strategy 2.1 Willmar Municipal Airport

Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Support efforts of the city of Willmar to market the airport to existing and prospective businesses within the city/region	Aaron	Throughout /2017	
B.	Participate in Airport Master Plan Committee and assist with goals and objectives.	Aaron	Throughout 2017	
C.	Examine opportunities to create linkages that might expand the utilization of the airport	Aaron	Throughout 2017	

Strategy 2.2 Railroad

Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Assist efforts of BNSF, city of Willmar and Kandiyohi County on all funding opportunities through the TIGER federal grant program, MnDOT and DEED for construction of a rail bypass west of Willmar	Aaron	Throughout 2017	EDC participates in weekly conference calls for the Railroad Wye Project. Attend public engagement sessions for project, including at the Willmar Library.
B.	Coordinate with BNSF, city of Willmar and Kandiyohi County a design build for a rail-serviced Industrial Park loop for land west of the expanded Willmar Industrial Park	Aaron	Ongoing	In July 2016, developed another version of the Willmar Rail Park and provided it to the Willmar Wye partners.
C.	Coordinate with BNSF marketing outreach to rail-serviced customers that are in need of expanded building development opportunities with the Willmar Industrial Park	Aaron	Ongoing	

Strategy 2.3 Highway 23

Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Engage Highway 23 Coalition and Willmar Chamber of Commerce to hold a Transportation Summit in Willmar to promote with MnDOT the development of passing lanes along Highway 23 corridor from Willmar to I-90 and completion of planned 4-lane along Highway 23 between New London, Paynesville and Richmond	Aaron	2017	Ongoing discussions with Ken Warner, Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, regarding and Highway 23 Coalition Transportation Summit.

Board Goal 3. Industrial Park Development

**Strategy 3.1 Mapping of Industrial Development Within
Kandiyohi County for Infrastructure and Services**

Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A. Complete shovel-ready process for Willmar's Industrial Park 4 th Addition and portion of unplatted area. Invite site selectors to visit Kandiyohi County.	Aaron Bruce Peterson	July 2016	Application submitted to DEED 6/7/2016. John Rhodes, DEED Consultant, visited on 6/15/2016. On 6/30/2016 notified 181-acre site approved by DEED. Completed flyer for Willmar Industrial Park on 10/27/2016. Invited 10 site selectors from around the country to visit Willmar. On November 15 and 16, 2016, Deane Foote, site selector from Arizona, visited Willmar and toured the Industrial Park.
B. Assist other cities in county to map industrial properties and/or consider shovel-ready process	Aaron	Ongoing	
C. Contact service providers (utilities, broadband, telcos) for cooperative mapping programs for Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar	Connie		
D. Work with countywide community officials and real estate professionals to create and maintain a compilation of available commercial and industrial property	Connie	Ongoing	
E. Update Community Profile information in searchable database on EDC website. Ensure that Location One Information Services (LOIS) is current on EDC website	Connie	June 2017	Entered all available platted sites for Industrial Park into LOIS database.

Board Goal 4. Expand Funding Options for Businesses in Kandiyohi County

Strategy 4.1 Economic development programs, including WAM-BC, downtown development and community development throughout Kandiyohi County

Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A. Attend WAM-BC board meetings as liaison to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Aaron	Ongoing	
B. Encourage co-location of WAM-BC with EDC, utilizing vacant office of former EDC Assistant Director	Aaron	March 2017	During Fall of 2016, ongoing discussions with WAM-BC Board members, EDC Joint Operations Board and Elks Board officers. At the January 2017 EDC Operations Board approved the sublease.
C. Provide outreach to city councils within county to promote collaboration and EDC programs and services	Connie	Throughout 2016/2017	Attended Atwater EDA meeting 10/2016. Currently working on locating a site for business that may expand in city of Atwater within next two-three years. 10/2016 worked with New London Mayor and EDA members to accommodate visit with Sen. Franken Field Rep., Carson Ouellette.

D.	Initiate Diverse BRE Program	Aaron and Connie	June 2017	In November 2016, discussions held with Scott Marquardt, SWIF, regarding \$15,000 grant to EDC on program to assist minority business owners.
Board Goal 6. Create, Recruit, Retain and Expand Businesses in Kandiyohi County				
Strategy 6.1 Business Retention and Expansion				
Objectives/Actions		Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update/Comments
A.	Complete step 2, analyze data and create reports from 2014 Kandiyohi County Business Visitation program	Connie, Visitation Program Participants	June 2017	Completed in 2015
B.	Initiate and move forward step 3, projects to respond to identified issues from the 2014 Kandiyohi County Business Visitation Program	Connie, Visitation Program Participants	Throughout 2016/2017	Completed in 2015
C.	Provide follow-up to individual businesses with expressed needs from 2014 visitation program	BRE Program Directors and Coordinators	April 2017	Completed in 2015
D.	Introduce BRE program to cities in Kandiyohi County that were not part of 2014 programs and implement BRE visitation programs in at least three of the cities. (Willmar, Spicer, New London and Atwater completed and a few businesses in Raymond and Pennock)	Connie		Completed New London in 2015 and Atwater in 2016. The Atwater EDA will conduct follow-up to implement a city-wide marketing program. BRE survey program planned for agriculture producers throughout the county during February of 2017.