

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

**MINUTES**

**January 5, 2018  
EDC Board Room**

- Present:** Sam Bowen, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke (teleconference), Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson and Dean Steinwand
- Excused:** Bob Carlson, Ranae Rahn and Kelly TerWisscha
- Guest:** Christiana Pflueger, M.A., Business Service Specialist, Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS)
- Staff:** Aaron Backman, Executive Director
- Secretarial:** Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants (LAA)

Chairperson Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 a.m. Self-introductions were conducted. Aaron Backman introduced Christina Pflueger, Business Service Specialist with CMJTS. Pflueger reported she works with Cathy Baumgartner and provided information on her work-based training coordinator position working with on-the job training funding (see attached) and grant and initiative funding throughout 11 counties in Minnesota. She also works closely with Chair Sam Bowen at Ridgewater College in customized training opportunities for clients.

**AGENDA**—The agenda was approved as emailed.

**MINUTES**—Chair Bowen presented the December 1, 2017 minutes.

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Nelson, SECONDED BY Roger Imdieke, to approve the December 1, 2017 minutes as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES**

**Midtown Plaza.** Backman reported some tenants have begun moving into Midtown Plaza. In addition to the grocery store, other tenants will include a clothing store, hair salon, fragrance store and a tailor shop. Several stores will be open for business by the end of January. Backman suggested holding the BRE/R Committee meeting at Midtown Plaza in the near future.

**15<sup>th</sup> Street Flats.** Backman gave an update of the 15<sup>th</sup> Street Flats affordable housing project where 47 multi-family rental units will be built behind Pizza Ranch. Tax credits have been approved and the plan review will go before the Willmar Planning Commission in January.

Jim Ellingson inquired on the progress of Spurs Restaurant. Backman stated the commons area is mostly complete and work slowly continues on the Spurs Restaurant. No date has been set for opening the restaurant. Backman reported on the Historic 313 financial statement as of December 13, 2017. There was a slight loss due to the costs of the build out.

**Highway 23 Coalition/Minnesota Senate Committee Presentation.** Backman reported there are a total of 67 members (including 42 businesses and at the 15 platinum level). Backman complimented Senator Andrew Lang for convincing the Senate Capital Investment Committee to conduct a capital projects visit in the Willmar area on Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> in the Student Center at Ridgewater College. The Committee will hear presentations from 1) The Highway 23 Coalition; 2) Ridgewater College representatives will present the HEAPR projects and 3) Mel Odens, Kandiyohi County Public Works Director will present on the Willmar Bridge Project. Following the presentations and lunch, the Committee will travel to Montevideo to hear a Veterans Home presentation. Backman will prepare a PowerPoint presentation and share quotes about the need to complete the two four-lane gaps. Businesses providing quotes so far are Coldspring, Jennie-O Turkey Store, Dooley's Petroleum, Rambow and Anderson Trucking in St. Cloud. Ellingson commented it may be beneficial to include a graphic showing traffic counts between Willmar and I-94. Chair Bowen inquired if assistance is needed from the BRE/R Committee for the presentation. Backman responded there will be other opportunities for the BRE/R Committee's assistance either in Willmar or St. Paul.

**Business Visits/Tours.** Backman shared interesting highlights of his trip to Peru in December.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**West Central Job Fair Update.** Chair Bowen reported a meeting was held approximately two or three weeks ago with a West Central Job Fair partners and Doug Hanson of KDJS to discuss the possibility of moving one of the job fairs to Ridgewater College in order to generate more enthusiasm and better attract students and job seekers. Mr. Hanson expressed concerns with the building and parking space and Chair Bowen assured him there is adequate space in the building as well as parking. Concern was expressed of job seekers finding Ridgewater College and signage from the parking lot to the job fair. Chair Bowen feels both these concerns can be addressed easily. Next steps: Mr. Hanson will develop a list of questions and concerns and another meeting will be scheduled to discuss the pros and cons. Chair Bowen shared that Mr. Hanson is contracted with the Willmar Conference Center for 2018 and asked the BRE/R members if planning should continue for a 2019 job fair or push for a job fair in 2018. Backman supports having a job fair at Ridgewater College that highlights healthcare and agricultural careers. Chair Bowen stated he hears from businesses on a regular basis to present their company information to students. Imdieke suggested pursuing a job fair at Ridgewater College, but honoring Doug Hanson's 2018 contract with Willmar

Conference Center. Les Heitke suggested contacting Ken Warner at Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce for their opinion on the location of the job fair. Chair Bowen will contact Ken Warner. **CMJTS Support Services Grant Proposal Update.** Christina Pflueger, Business Service Specialist with CMJTS, deals with on-the-job training and dislocated workers (see attached). She also meets with businesses to determine their employment needs. There is a focus on a wide range of career opportunities with a great need for healthcare and manufacturing employees. Pflueger stated CMJTS is a resource for businesses.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Community Integration Center (CIC).** Backman shared information on the CIC located at 201 5th Street in downtown Willmar. The CIC is a non-profit group formed by immigrants from east Africa to assist members of the Willmar community to learn more about each other. They assist immigrants with literacy issues and will offer English classes. Other plans include working with youth, advice on nutrition and health styles, finding jobs, etc. Bob Bonawitz, SCORE counselor at the EDC, has met with CIC representatives and is assisting as a SCORE counselor to the CIC.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:20 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., February 2, 2018**, in the EDC Board Room.



## ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

# OJT...Training that Works!

### On-the-Job Training (OJT) Benefits Business and New Employees

- New hires learn occupational skills and earn a wage at the same time.
- Business saves time and money.
- A win-win for business and jobseekers!

### Why Should You Partner with CMJTS' OJT Program?

- Your business is reimbursed for the cost of training a new employee—up to 50% of the new employee's wage for the length of the contract.
- You do the training and the employee does the learning. Your new hire learns skills unique to your business and industry.
- Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc. (CMJTS) refers candidates to you who have been professionally evaluated. You may also refer candidates to CMJTS for OJT eligibility.
- You make the hiring decision.
- CMJTS employment counselors are on call for consultation.

### OJT Guidelines

- Business provides the training and supervision for the new employee.
- OJT contracts can be written for:
  - Permanent, full-time jobs—at least 30 hours a week (seasonal or temporary jobs do not qualify for OJT contracts)
  - Permanent, part-time positions—at least 20 hours a week—if the new employee is 55 or older, has a disability, or meets certain other criteria
- Trainee must meet OJT eligibility requirements.
- Trainee will earn industry-recognized credential.
- OJT is approved by CMJTS before the employee starts the job.

Call or email now for more information

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 Business Service Specialist  
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*Upon request the information in this document can be made available in alternative formats for people with disabilities by calling 800-284-7425.*

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