

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 17, 2017
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Jim Ellingson, Jean Marthaler, Les Nelson, Dean Steinwand and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Sam Bowen, Robert Carlson, Les Heitke and Roger Imdieke

Guests: Donna Boonstra and Bob Mathiasen

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:00 a.m. followed by self introductions.

AGENDA—

IT WAS MOVED BY Jim Ellingson, SECONDED BY Jean Marthaler, to approve the Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Highway 23 Transportation. Bob Mathiasen stated last year, Rep. Dave Baker included funds in the bonding bill for Highway 23 and Mathiasen testified for the bonding bill, but it did not get done by the end of the session and the bonding bill did not pass. Mathiasen was the area's spokesperson during a 2016 trip to Washington D.C. by 13-15 local people that was focused on transportation. The group made very good contacts and met with staff of both Minnesota senators; U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson and U.S. Rep. Tom Emmer; and representatives of the Federal Transportation Alliance and Federal Highway Administration. Donna Boonstra also attended the trip and stated following their meetings, a letter was signed by U.S. Rep. Peterson and U.S. Rep. Emmer and presented to MnDOT, but Commissioner Zelle responded negatively. The local Highway 23 Coalition has continued to meet and there is excitement and motivation to continue their work. The gap from New London to Paynesville is ready for construction, if it is funded—\$50 to \$60 million is needed to complete the construction. Completing the Highway 23 gaps are not on the Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) 20-year plan. Federal interest seems to be fading and federal funds are going to the coasts. Mathiasen stated the greatest demand for federal freight dollars is for truck parking because of the restrictions on driving time. Highway 23 is designated a critical freight corridor, but it is not multi-modal. If Highway 23 was made a major corridor from Duluth to Sioux Falls, it would be a multi-modal highway. To keep the interest level in the forefront, the Coalition has tentatively planned a Transportation Summit for Friday, April 7, 2017 at O'Neil's Event Center in Spicer. An invitation list was developed at their last meeting and includes area legislators and MnDOT Commissioner Charles Zelle. They would like Commissioner Zelle to fly into Paynesville and drive to Spicer on Highway 23. The Summit will include speakers and a Q&A with Commissioner Zelle. Connie Schmoll offered the assistance of the EDC for the Highway 23 project as it is a goal of the EDC boards. Once the Summit and Commissioner Zelle are

confirmed, marketing will begin. Mathiasen stated the EDC's assistance in getting the right people to attend would help as they would like the room full. Aaron Backman has committed the EDC to creating a brochure and invitation and this committee can help with marketing the Summit. The Coalition is meeting again the second week of March and will know at that time if they need more assistance.

[Mathiasen was excused from the meeting.]

REPORTS

Business Visits/Tours. Schmoll reported a broadband meeting was held with Senator Lang, who is an advocate on the state level. Consolidated Telecommunications Company (CTC) was awarded the largest state broadband grant for the northern part of Kandiyohi County. The EDC's Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee will continue to pursue additional grants. Broadband Day on the Hill will be held March 15 and committee representatives will meet with Rep. Baker. Backman has been involved with the Willmar Airport Master Plan, which is also looking at extending broadband. Backman and Schmoll attended Senator Klobuchar's Farm Bill tour which had approximately 80 people in attendance. Ag programs appear to be working well—there was a lot of information on broadband and precision agriculture. Schmoll and Backman toured West Central Bait that is now raising shrimp. Dean Steinwand stated there are five commercial shrimp farms in Minnesota. The EDC's Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee is interested in touring West Central Bait so if anyone on this committee is also interested, they should let Schmoll know. Schmoll and Backman met with Deb Geister of Navigator Consulting, a bank security firm, and toured Geistwerks, a manufacturer of teardrop campers, owned by Mike Geister. Backman visited the new Anytime Fitness location and gave a presentation at Ehlers Public Finance Seminar. Schmoll and Backman visited with Bremer Bank about new market tax credits it received for housing. Schmoll visited with Magnum Trucking on a potential location in the Willmar Industrial Park. A business is looking at a lot near FedEx and Chappell Central. Schmoll is working with TimeWorn and the City of Atwater on expansion. There has been no response in regard to the offer made on Mills' downtown location. ERC continues to recruit staff with a goal of 60—it currently has 35. Jean Marthaler asked if there is a contingency plan to keep employees in the county in disaster-type situations, such as when workers left the community due to the Avian flu.

BRE Grant for Diverse Businesses. Backman has started visiting businesses under the diverse BRE grant received from Southwest Initiative Foundation. The EDC will visit at least 16 diverse businesses. Backman is working with the owner of Mid-Town Market (former Erickson building) in downtown Willmar.

Ag Producers BRE Survey. Schmoll reported 33 volunteers are visiting 56 Ag producers for the Ag BRE survey. All producers are different, however, some of their needs are the same. Jim Ellingson reported it has been very interesting to assist with the Ag BRE surveys. Schmoll stated the Ag producers have been very open with their answers and want to tell their stories. The last Ag survey was done in 2005 and two-thirds of the questions on this year's survey are the same to see comparative data. Jim Molenaar was engaged to analyze the data and prepare a report, which will be presented at workshops on April 5, 2017.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

2017 Goals. The committee reviewed the 2017 Goals and the progress to date (see attached). Schmoll has received many calls and emails from individuals wanting to know if they are in the broadband project area. A public comment period is going on now for the railroad Wye project and it would be good to make comments, especially about the need for an at-grade crossing at First Avenue. A public meeting will be held February 23, 2017 at 5:00 p.m. More realtors are contacting the EDC about commercial sites available in the community. Les Nelson noted Chair Sam Bowen requested a focus on future workforce and human capital and suggested that be added to the goals. Schmoll will email the committee the information she received from the Center for Small Cities as to workforce. Workforce will be put on next month's agenda for Bowen to discuss his ideas. The Brain Gain report encourages youth to leave after graduation and communities to recruit them back as adults. It was noted housing and daycare are also issues.

Committee Membership. New members to the committee are Dean Steinwand, who is ultimately replacing Marthaler after the March meeting, and Les Heitke and Kelly TerWisscha, who represent the EDC's Joint Operations Board. Donna Boonstra, as president of the Joint Operations Board, may also attend occasionally as her schedule allows, but is not a committee member.

NEW BUSINESS—

Election of Vice Chairperson.

IT WAS MOVED, SECONDED AND CARRIED to elect Les Nelson as vice chairperson of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee.

Other. Schmoll gave an update on GROW Minnesota, which is looking for more executives to assist with business visits.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, March 17, 2017**, at the EDC Office, Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Jim Ellingson, SECONDED BY Jean Marthaler, to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:51 a.m.



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.