

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

**MINUTES**

**March 17, 2016**

**Christianson & Associates, PLLP, Willmar**

Present: Arvind Auluck-Wilson, Rollie Boll, Kevin Halvorson, Larry Konsterlie, Kim Larson, Dustin Kotrba, Dan Lippert and Dan Tepfer

Excused: Larry Konsterlie and Bruce Reuss

Absent: Rollie Boll, John Duevel and Donnell Williamson

Guest: Lyn Zeppelin, Vice President/Business Banker (Commercial Ag Lender), United Prairie Bank, Spicer

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist

Chair Ian Graue called the meeting to order at approximately 7:35 a.m. The agenda was approved as presented.

Self-introductions were conducted. Aaron Backman, Executive Director shared his background and work experience.

**MINUTES**

IT WAS MOVED BY Kevin Halvorson, SECONDED BY Jon Folkedahl, to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2016 meeting as presented. MOTION CARRIED.

**REPORTS**

**Ag Investment Subcommittee.** Subcommittee Chair Dan Tepfer reported that 157 letters were mailed to potential investors on March 1, 2016. To date, approximately 35 letters have been returned. Next steps include compiling the responses. Schmoll and Tepfer met and concurred if the number of potential investors is less than expected, personal calls will be made to determine their intentions and what they would like to see come out of a larger group meeting. Schmoll shared information about a recent presentation by Hill Capital Corporation, a company founded by people who share the vision of creating a pool of capital. Their funds would support small businesses and entrepreneurs. Hill Capital may be another opportunity for investors in the community. Another presentation will be held in St. Cloud on April 26. Committee members interested in attending should contact Schmoll.

**Ag BRE Survey Subcommittee.** Schmoll reported the Ag BRE Survey Subcommittee met on February 25, 2016 and decided instead of a large-group meeting, two smaller focus groups will be scheduled: one on March 28 and one on March 29. Agenda topics will include: 1) should an Ag survey be conducted; and 2) what would be the benefit and goals of the survey. Schmoll commented it has been 11 years since the last Ag survey. The subcommittee will meet Friday, March 18, 2016 to finalize plans for the upcoming focus groups.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Membership attendance, committee size and composition.** As decided at the February 18, 2016 meeting, further discussion was held on the membership attendance (see attached), size and composition of the Ag Committee including structure, quorum, importance of the Ag Committee and its issues. Quorum discussion included: 1) reduce the membership to seven in order to reduce the quorum; 2) quorum issue is not that critical; review committee guidelines once a year; 3) it is more important to have committee members; 4) is it possible to have a quorum of six and have additional committee members? Schmoll commented she would check the EDC policy/guidelines. Backman shared some businesses set 15% of a committee for a quorum. Schmoll stated the process to recruit new members is working well and if members have suggestions that would bring more diversity to the committee to please contact her. The EDC policy and quorum issues will be placed on the April 20, 2016 Ag Committee agenda. Backman stated the Ag Committee is important and conveyed if the committee was dealing with a larger budget, the group may need more formal structure. Tepfer inquired how/where the Ag Committee's discussion/minutes are shared. Ag issues are carried forward to the board. Kim Larson commented Ag Committee issues have also gone to the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners for discussion/action. Schmoll shared the minutes are shared with the Joint Operations Board and posted on the EDC website.

IT WAS MOVED BY Arvind Auluck-Wilson, SECONDED BY Dan Tepfer, to appoint Aaron Backman as a voting member of the Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) Committee. MOTION CARRIED.

**2016 Ag goals.** Discussion was held of the 2016 Ag goals (see attached). At the February 18, 2016 meeting the following 2016 achievable and measurable objectives were developed:

### **Develop achievable and measurable objectives in the following:**

1. Establish an Ag investor group
2. Bring projects to the investor group for consideration
3. Conduct the Ag Producers' Survey and decide on issues for response
4. Support development of additional sources and uses for area food products
5. Support and conduct Ag education/develop a public relations strategy (still needed and a response to the past Ag Producers' BRE Survey)

6. Continue building relationships with and assist ag interest groups, such as the Minnesota Dairy Association, Corn Growers, etc., with promoting production agriculture and reducing barriers to ag development
7. Continue to monitor and promote Kandiyohi County's involvement in the Minnesota Turkey Research and Development Facility and Minnesota Dairy Training, Research and Consumer Education Facility

The overall 2015 goal will remain for 2016: Target activities that leverage Kandiyohi County's assets in agriculture, with a special emphasis on Ag business, manufacturing, bioscience, technology, energy and research. Larson suggested reviewing objectives to determine what the Ag Committee could do to improve the public image of agriculture.

The EDC's Boards will conduct a Strategic Planning Session in April 2016. Prior to the session, Backman and Schmoll will meet to review and revise the 2016 Ag Committee's objectives. Technology issues will be added. The 2016 draft goals will be presented to the Ag Committee for review/approval at the April 21, 2016 meeting.

Backman shared there are challenges in the agriculture industry (volatility in the energy markets, decreased value of farm land, etc.) which create a ripple effect in the industry. He feels there are opportunities, i.e., diversification and biologics. He suggested thinking in terms of seed capital and what new areas/trends are available. Backman is a proponent of collaboration and the need to be creative. Farmers need access to data technology. Are there opportunities/collaboration for involvement at the MinnWest Technology Campus? Possibly staff a booth at the upcoming Animal Science Conference on September 20, 2016. Perhaps a public relations handout could be created for this venue and others, that contains the purpose of the Ag Committee and what they support and include research on a project/issue.

**Revisit proposal from EcoEngineers.** Schmoll briefly reviewed the purpose of the proposal and stated it is an unsolicited proposal and something the EDC would not pursue at this time. Auluck-Wilson commented there are unrecognized resources (bi-products) available in the area and inquired if a resource survey could be conducted. The committee concurred this issue will be placed on the Ag Committee agenda for April 21, 2016.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Schmoll reiterated the 2016 Animal Science Conference will be held at the MinnWest Technology Campus on September 20, 2016 and stated the EDC has supported the conference with a monetary donation.

IT WAS MOVED BY Arvind Auluck-Wilson, SECONDED BY Dan Lippert, to recommend the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC) Joint Operations Board sponsor the 2016 Animal Science Conference with a suggested donation up to \$2,000 and the EDC Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee staff a booth at the conference. MOTION CARRIED.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular meeting is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, April 20, 2016**, at Christianson & Associates, PLLP, Willmar.

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (AG) COMMITTEE 2015 ATTENDANCE**

Name		1/15	2/19	3/19	4/16	6/18	7/16	8/20	9/17	11/19	12/17
1.	Auluck-Wilson, Arvind	X	X	X	E	E	X	X	E	X	X
2.	Boll, Rollie*	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
3.	Duevel, John	X	E	E		E	E	E	E		
4.	Folkedahl, Jon			X	E	E			E		X
5.	Graue, Ian (Chair)	X	X	X	X	X	E	X	E	X	X
6.	Halvorson, Kevin (Vice Chair)	X	X		X	X	X	E	E		X
7.	Konsterlie, Larry				E	X	E	E	X	X	
8.	Kotrba, Dustin				X	X	X	X	X	E	X
9.	Lippert, Dan	E	E		E	X	X	X	X		X
10.	Nelson, Wally							E	RESIGNED		
11.	Poier, Keith	X	X		E	E	X	E	E		X
12.	Reuss, Bruce	E		V	X	E	X	X	E	X	X
13.	Tepfer, Dan		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
14.	Williamson, Donnell		Guest	X	E	X		E	E		X
<b>EDC STAFF</b>											
15.	Schmoll, Connie Business Development Specialist (committee voted her in as a voting member)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	X
	Renquist, Steve Executive Director	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Committee meets at 7:30 a.m. on the third Thursday of the month at Christianson & Associates, Willmar, except it does not meet in May or October.

\*indicates EDC Joint Operations Board member

X = attended

V = vacation

E = called or emailed they would be absent

15 members/quorum = 8

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT(AG) COMMITTEE 2014 ATTENDANCE											
Name	1/16 cancelled	2/20	3/20	4/17	6/19	7/17	8/21	9/18	11/20	12/17	
1.	Auluck-Wilson, Arvind	/	X	X	E	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.	Boll, Rollie*	/	X		X	X	E	X	X		X
3.	Duevel, John	/		E							E
4.	Folkedahl, Jon	/	X	X	X	X	X	X	E	E	
5.	Graue, Ian	/	X	X	X	X	E	E	X	X	X
6.	Halvorson, Kevin	/	X	E	X	X	X		X	X	X
7.	Kacher, Linda*	/	/	/	/	/	/	X			
8.	Konsterlie, Larry	/	X	X	X	X	E			X	E
9.	Lippert, Dan	/	X		E	X	V	X	X		X
10.	Tim Miller	/				X		X	X	X	
11.	Nelson, Wally	/	X	E	X	X	X	X			E
12.	Poier, Keith	/		X	E	E	X	E	E	E	E
13.	Reuss, Bruce (Chair)	/	X	E	X	E	X	X	X	X	X
14.	Soderholm, John	/	/	/	/	/	/	/			X
15.	Tepfer, Dan	/		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<b>EDC STAFF</b>											
	Schmoll, Connie Business Development Specialist	/			X	X	X	X	E	X	X
	Renquist, Steve Executive Director	/	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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14 members/quorum = 8



## 2015 Strategic Plan

Approved by EDC Joint Operations Board 1/8/2015

The EDC's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth of the greater Kandiyohi area.

### 2015 Goal

To advance our mission, the EDC has one comprehensive and overarching goal for 2015:  
**Increase business retention, expansion, creation and recruitment in Kandiyohi County.**

Objective 1. Develop, invest in and support programs and activities that increase business development			
Strategy 1.1. Target activities that leverage our assets in agriculture, with a special emphasis on ag-business manufacturing, bioscience, technology, energy and research			
Objectives/Actions	Responsibility	Target Date	Status/Update
Identify 2-3 opportunities in cluster development	Jean, SWIF & Deloitte Consulting	Second half of year	Expansion of turkey industry facility at WWTF
Assessment of emerging opportunities in agri-centric industries through continued participation on The West Central Ag Sales and Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Committees, and inviting presentations by ag-related advocacy groups such as Corn Growers, Soybean Growers, Minnesota Milk, Minnesota Pork Producers, etc., to keep abreast of industry needs that could be met in Kandiyohi County.	Ag/RE Committee	Through-out the year	Participated in WCASC Ag Show; WLACC Ag Committee. Presenters at Ag meetings: MN Milk, Clean Energy, Ethanol industry, PACE program, and private industry renewable energy project presentations.
Seek positive ROI predictive renewable energy projects through participation at Community Venture Network meetings and promotions in Kandiyohi County	EDC staff	Through-out the year	Invited company from CVN to visit with Ag Committee.  Geronimo Energy solar panel project, EOS presentation
Determine cooperative or separate angel/venture capital fund for agri-based projects by first creating an Ag/Ag Bio Science Investment Group for Kandiyohi County; securing at least three angel investors to join a planning committee, and moving through the planning process to implementation	Ag Investment Group Subcommittee	First half of the year	In progress. Survey development, survey to be mailed in 2016.  Subcommittee continues to meet.



Support the development of additional sources and uses for area food products	Ag/RE Committee	On-going	Food Hub Historic 313 Loan Burmese - Asian Family Grocery Loan
Prioritize and target resources toward the recruitment, retention, and expansion of primary and secondary businesses in value added agriculture and agbioscience	Ag/RE Committee	On-going	Invested in recruitment
Assist ag interest groups such as MN Dairy Association, Corn Growers, etc., with promoting production agriculture & reducing barriers to ag development	Ag/RE Committee	On-going	2005 Research report goal
Continue development of Minnesota Turkey Research and Development facility	Ag/RE Committee	During 2015	Inquiry/Contacts made
Additional movement to state designation as a Renewable Resource Development Zone	Ag/RE Committee	On-going	Attended -meeting in SW MN and promoting PACE Program to Kandiyohi County
Work with area partners to create a Bioscience Zone	Ag/RE Committee	On-going	
<b>Strategy 4.2. Development of a comprehensive written marketing plan for the EDC</b>			
<b>Objectives/Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Status/Update</b>
Produce written materials that promote the area for ag-business and ag-manufacturing opportunities to include in EDC marketing materials	Ag/RE Committee	On-going	Secured persons to assist from Ag Committee; attended session on blogging. New website



**Review of 2015 Ag goals and recommendations for 2016 goals.** In order to make recommendations for 2016 Ag Committee goals, Schmoll reviewed the 2015 goals and asked for feedback about continuing, changing or deleting goals and adding new goals. The following decisions were made:

**Maintain overall goal from 2015:** Target activities that leverage our assets in agriculture, with a special emphasis on ag business, manufacturing, bioscience, technology, energy and research.

**Develop achievable and measurable objectives in the following:**

1. Establish an Ag investment group
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