

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION/RECRUITMENT (BRE/R) COMMITTEE
MINUTES
July 6, 2018
EDC Board Room**

Present: Sam Bowen, Les Heitke, Les Nelson, Ranae Rahn and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Jim Ellingson, Roger Imdieke and Dean Steinwand

Guests: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director; Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist and Thor Figenskau, Summer Intern

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

Chair Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 a.m.

AGENDA—Chair Bowen presented the Agenda. Backman asked to add under New Business, the committee’s 2019 preliminary budget and Les Heitke asked to add under New Business, discussion on the Kandi Mall.

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Heitke, SECONDED BY Kelly TerWisscha, to approve the Agenda with the above additions. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Ranae Rahn, SECONDED BY Kelly TerWisscha to approve the June 1, 2018 Minutes as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Backman introduced Jennifer Mendoza, new CLUES Navigator, and Thor Figenskau, EDC’s summer intern followed by self-introductions.

REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Highway 23 Coalition. Backman provided an update. A Highway 23 pizza celebration was held on June 6th at Steve Rambow’s home on Green Lake. Approximately 49 Coalition members and guests attended. Backman noted the Highway 23 Coalition was recognized in the *St. Cloud Times*. Backman placed a half-page thank-you ad in the *West Central Tribune* and a third-page thank-you ad in the *St. Cloud Times*. At the June 27th Coalition Board of Director’s meeting, Patrick Weidemann, MnDOT Director of Capital Planning and Programming shared an interesting presentation entitled “Corridors of Commerce 2018 Summary and Its Future,” which included

information on the high and low points, the scoring system and the future of the Corridors of Commerce Program. Heitke felt it was an informative presentation. Backman highlighted a draft document distributed by MnDOT's, District 8, Susann Karnowski and Ryan Barney entitled, "Highway 23 "Gaps" Frequently Asked Questions." MnDOT, District 8, Willmar, will be the lead for both the north and south gap projects. The projects will be bid separately and depending on when the bonds are sold, the north project may begin first. David Turch of David Turch and Associates presented an overview of his company which is a large and active federal lobbying firm based in Washington, D.C., as well as internationally.

Business Visits/Tours. Backman reported on recent business visits and tours:

- Attended a Willmar City Council meeting on June 4th to speak about a housing project applying for state assistance;
- Attended meetings with WAM-BC regarding the transfer of its loan portfolio to EDC;
- Presented to the Willmar Rotary on June 10th;
- Attended a meet and greet for the new CEO at the Kandiyohi County Family YMCA;
- Presided at MAPCED quarterly meeting in Park Rapids on June 21st;
- Attended the Stearns County Board meeting to present Highway 23 Coalition membership information;
- Attended the Ag Professionals tour of Simply Shrimp, Lettuce Abound and Model Citizens Restaurant;
- Attended Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce mid-year meeting;
- Toured new building project at West Central Steel.

Backman mentioned Willmar's population has reached 20,000. Heitke reported Willmar will no longer be eligible to apply for USDA grants. A brief discussion was held regarding other opportunities.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Diverse CNA Update. Jennifer Mendoza shared an update on the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. Twelve students attended the second class in May with 10 graduating. Two students were unable to pass the written portion of the exam. Mendoza would like to sit in on classes in order to gain knowledge and hopefully tutor students who are unable to pass the class. Chair Bowen shared that CLUES will offer additional assistance to students to pass the exam; students have the opportunity to retake the exam three times before having to re-enroll in the class. Most graduates are employed at Carris Health-Rice Memorial Hospital and Bethesda with some at smaller healthcare facilities. CLUES is looking for cohorts for a third class to begin in October. Mendoza will reach out to low-income residents as to interest in attending the CNA program and would like to ask CLUES if a neighborhood picnic can be held.

Diverse Welding Update. The first class of 13 (12 males and one female) completed the course. Mendoza mentioned having someone in attendance in order to aide with language barriers. Chair Bowen commented the welding course is a 120-hour, 3-week program. The goal of the program is to prep students to attain AWS certification, which is a universal straight-forward certification.

Instructors were impressed with the quality of work by students. Once Mendoza receives the final test scores, she can assist with job placement. A second welding course may be scheduled and may be held in the evening. Chair Bowen shared there are three partners: Case IH, Central Minnesota Fabricating and Bobcat in Litchfield and reported they have been extremely helpful resources. Backman stated the EDC is supportive of the CLUES program and made an offer to put dollars/resources into the program (\$500/\$1,000), if expenses are not covered through CLUES or Ridgewater College. Chair Bowen said CLUES will continue to use Ridgewater College until an appropriate office location is secured in Willmar.

West Central Job Fair. Chair Bowen reported a meeting was held on June 5th to discuss a new location for the West Central Job Fair. It was decided the spring 2019 West Central Job Fair will be held at Ridgewater College. The fall 2018 job fair will remain at the Willmar Conference Center. Future meetings will be held with partners to continue planning for the new venue. Backman announced Cathy Baumgartner of Central Minnesota Jobs & Training, recently retired. Christiana Pflueger was hired as Baumgartner's replacement. Chair Bowen reported Eric Day will replace Baumgartner on the Governing Board.

NEW BUSINESS

[Connie Schmoll joined the meeting.]

2019 Budget. Backman distributed and reviewed the 2019 BRE/R Committee's preliminary budget (see attached). Committee members estimated 2019 budget line item amounts. Connie Schmoll recommended a line item for childcare and CLUES be added. Other line items discussed were Opportunity Zones and Diverse Business. Kelly TerWisscha commented the EDC marketing expenses for the Highway 23 Coalition should diminish and more expenses be handled by the Coalition. The BRE/R Committee concurred to add the following line items to the 2019 BRE/R preliminary budget: Workforce Development, Job Fair, CLUES, etc. for \$3,000 and childcare initiative for \$1,200, along with the other amounts proposed to line items.

Kandi Mall. Heitke expressed concern with businesses leaving the Kandi Mall. Backman shared many malls are struggling with the same issue. The committee discussed future uses of the mall as well as the upkeep of the building and parking lot. Backman stated the owners are responsible for taking the lead as to the future of the Kandi Mall.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:25 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., August 2, 2018**, at Midtown Plaza, 313 Litchfield Avenue SW, Willmar.

2019 EDC Proposed Budget for Business, Retention & Expansion (BRE/R Committee)

	Proposed 2019	As of 6/30/2018	2018 Annual Budget	2017 Annual Budget
Workforce Development (Job Fair, CLUES, etc.)	3,000			
Childcare Initiative	1,200			
Conferences/Seminars/Trainings	1,000	12	750	1000
SWIF/Other Grant Programs	5,000	0	6,500	15,000
Highway 23 Coalition				
Conferences/Seminars/Trainings	200	367.88		
General Administrative Services	2,000	2,336.82		
Marketing	0	51.48		
Meals/Meeting Refreshments	200	301.4		
Mileage/Travel	500	1,107.92		
Supplies	0	-36.74		
Other	100	0	3,000	
Total Highway 23 Coalition	3,000	4,128.78	3,000	
Supplies	200			200
Marketing	150	0	150	200
Meals/Meeting Refreshments	200	56.25	200	200
Mileage/Travel	700	274.97	700	700
Printing and Publishing	200		150	
Professional Services				
General Administrative	1,200	622.19	1,100	1,100
Professional Services - Other	500	0	300	500
Total Professional Services/Office	3,150	622.19	2,800	2,900
Total Business, Retention & Expansion	16,350	5,094.17	13,050	18,900