

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING
MINUTES
March 12, 2020
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Art Benson, Rollie Boll, Donna Boonstra, Les Heitke (via teleconference) and Kerry Johnson

Excused: Jesse Gislason, Connie Schmoll and Kelly TerWisscha

Ex Officio: Julie Asmus and Dave Ramstad

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director

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

Media: Shelby Lindrud, West Central Tribune

Vice President Kerry Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 11:06 a.m. and declared a quorum was present.

AGENDA—Donna Boonstra requested the following be removed from the Consent Agenda: 4a. payment of REDstar invoice, 4b. payment of WORKUP Invoice No. 00231 and 4c. payment of WORKUP Invoice No. 00254.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Boll, SECONDED BY Kerry Johnson, to approve the Agenda and revised Consent Agenda. MOTION CARRIED.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approve:
1. Minutes of February 13, 2020 meeting
 2. Financial reports as of February 29, 2020
 3. Addition of Tim Furr, Chief Information Officer of Ridgewater College, to the Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee
 4. Payment of \$34,000 to Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau as budgeted for annual Tourism Partnership Agreement
- Accept: Committee/Subcommittee Minutes
1. Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development 2/20/2020
 - a. Ag Industrial Hemp 2/10/2020
 2. Broadband and Advanced Technology 2/3/2020
 3. Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment 2/7/2020
 4. Marketing and Public Relations 1/27/2020
 5. Leisure Travel 2/3/2020

Items removed from Consent Agenda. Aaron Backman noted Invoice No. 00231 from WORKUP is for fourth quarter 2019 membership that was budgeted and Invoice No. 00254 is for the first half of 2020 pursuant to the amount budgeted for 2020. As to the REDstar invoice, Vice President Johnson questioned the goals noted on the invoice in comparison to the Marketing and Public Relations Committee's goals in its 2020 Marketing Plan. Backman noted those are two separate things and stated REDstar not only assists with marketing for the EDC's Marketing and Public Relations Committee, but the EDC's overall marketing and it has created printed materials for the Job Fair at the EDC's request. Backman also noted he is tracking expenses related to the Opportunity Zone marketing.

IT WAS MOVED BY Donna Boonstra, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to approve payment of the following bills:

1. REDstar Creative for \$2,397.18 from the Marketing and Public Relations Committee's budget;
2. WORKUP Invoice No. 00231 for \$1,350 as budgeted for 4th quarter 2019 membership; and
3. WORKUP Invoice No. 00254 for \$1,800 as budgeted for 1st half 2020 membership.

MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Strategic Planning Session. Backman reminded the board that survey responses for the planning session are due to the facilitator today. The planning session will be held March 26, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Kandiyohi Power Cooperative's Community Room.

NEW BUSINESS

Census Education for Diverse Communities. Backman informed the board that in January Zack Mahboub presented information to the Joint Powers Board for the United Somali Community of Willmar (USCW) to provide education on the 2020 Census to the county's diverse community. The Joint Powers Board unanimously approved the EDC contributing \$5,000 to the education and interpreting expenses. Attorney Brad Schmidt reviewed and approved the contract (see attached). USCW has started the education process using Somali/East African and Karen interpreters.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Boll, SECONDED BY Art Benson, to approve the Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission as fiscal agent for the Census Education for Diverse Communities, signing the Contract as presented and payment of \$5,000 to the United Somali Community of Willmar. MOTION CARRIED.

New Laptop and Docking Station and MS Office 2019 Software. Backman indicated he is in need of a new computer as his desktop is old having been purchased in December 2013. He intends to use a laptop as his main computer and provided a quote from Bennett Office Technologies for a laptop and docking station (see attached). The request is also to upgrade every office computer to MS Office 2019; they are currently using MS Office 2016 (see attached).

IT WAS MOVED BY Art Benson, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to approve the quotes by Bennett Office Technologies to purchase an HP ZBook G5 mobile workstation at an estimated cost of \$825, HP UltraSlim Dock for Notebook at a cost of \$214 and MS Office 2019 software license for five computers at a cost of \$1,875 plus installation costs. MOTION CARRIED.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Willmar/Willmar Industrial Park. Dave Ramstad reported the City of Willmar is reviewing construction permits totaling a few million dollars and the proposed Renaissance Zone is being reviewed by the City Attorney. The first phase of the Renaissance Zone will be the shell and ordinances, including no sewer availability charges, no water availability charges, no charge for building permits and flexible parking rules for those who provide a zip car, bike parking and interior parking. The City is trying to create density and reduce congestion. Perpendicular parking is also being explored. The City is working on a heritage designation for three homes, which will be a mandatory designation for 90 days. A heritage designation for commercial buildings will be voluntary and include an incentive package. The heritage district, which is one block each side of Litchfield Avenue, will include a loose set of architectural standards that will be reviewed by the Planning Commission. The intent is to save some of the culture and heritage of downtown Willmar. The City has received a couple of land purchase requests and several owners have asked about the Renaissance Zone. A presentation on the Renaissance Zone was given to the State Director of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson's aide. Ramstad will be attending the SBA Summit on Opportunity Zones in Minneapolis the end of March to speak on the Renaissance Zone. He, Sarah Swedburg and Connie Schmoll attended the Minnesota Real Estate Journal Opportunity Zones Summit, which showed Willmar and the EDC are doing what should be done to market Willmar's Opportunity Zone. A hotel idea came up several times during the Summit and he has identified a few potential sites across from the hospital that could be connected by a skyway.

Backman reported he attended the SBA round table on the Renaissance Zone held at Heritage Bank, which was also attended by Mid-Minnesota Development Commission, Southwest Initiative Foundation and two local banks. The SBA was very interested in the Renaissance Zone being layered with the Opportunity Zone and will bring the information statewide. Ramstad stated it would be advantageous to have a Renaissance Zone with incentives created and adopted at the federal level with a boilerplate ordinance that could be used by local agencies. Backman reported the EDC was approached by a representative of a business that is considering Willmar for a large industrial project. He has provided the business with information three separate times; he has recommended 20 acres in the west part of 4th Addition in Willmar's Industrial Park. Ramstad stated Willmar Municipal Utilities has been a great partner in the Renaissance Zone and has offered a reduced fee for utility hookups and has an RFP for an environmental assessment to decommission and begin cleanup of its former site. The City has placed the site as tentatively being available.

Strategic Priority Areas.

Agricultural Innovation. Backman reported the Partners In Ag Innovation Conference secured a keynote speaker for July 30th. Rollie Boll reported he and members of the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee participated in a live broadcast of the 2020 Industrial Hemp

Conference from Vermont. Boll noted a couple of processing facilities are in bankruptcy so the subcommittee is doing its due diligence researching as to a possible local processing facility.

Broadband. Backman reported the Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee is holding educational meetings with Dovre, Mamre and St. Johns Townships. Donna Boonstra reported she, Mark Boeschen, Dave Sisser and Schmoll will provide residents with information on broadband in layman's terms. One meeting is tonight and others will be held in April. There is a concern that Dovre Township does not want to participate, which may cause Arvig to back out of the project. Backman stated Ridgewater College's president provided letters of support for the proposed project to the three townships. Today, Schmoll is attending Broadband Day at the Capitol where she will meet with Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. Schmoll just informed Backman there is modest attendance today in St. Paul, but the EDC has six representatives present. The group met with Rep. Rob Ecklund and Senator Rich Draheim, who authored the broadband bill. Nathan Zacharias is the lobbyist for the Minnesota Rural Broadband Coalition. This afternoon the group will attend legislative hearings.

Business Support. Backman stated the Retail Business Design Workshop alumni will hold a follow-up meeting April 1st at Amin Grocery. The community video has been finalized, was posted on the EDC's Facebook and was featured by the *West Central Tribune*. It will be placed on the EDC's website and shared with Kandiyohi County businesses.

Workforce Development. Backman reported the West Central Minnesota Job Fair will be held March 19, 2020 at Ridgewater College. Thirty-four employers have registered; the goal is to have 45-50 employers. The Job Fair draws employers from Hutchinson, Glencoe, Alexandria and southwest Minnesota.

Childcare. Backman reported the Spicer Early Learning Center opened December 31st. Schmoll has information on the Willmar Child Care Center in her report (see attached). The Kandiyohi County Rural Child Care Innovation Program is working on a document to show childcare career paths; is planning a provider appreciation event for May; is planning a conference for providers for September 11-12, 2020 and is pursuing a LYFT (Launch Your Future Today) grant.

Opportunity Zone Marketing. Backman stated Schmoll has information in her written report (see attached) on the Minnesota Real Estate Journal Opportunity Zones Summit she attended with Ramstad and Swedburg. Backman noted investors were encouraged to do their homework and work with attorneys and accountants. Backman stated a number of Community Foundations are working to engage investors. Some large projects have started on each coast. The board received a copy of the final Prospectus (see attached). Schmoll has shared the Prospectus with a number of individuals, including 17 site selectors and at the Opportunity Zones Summit. She will also bring it with to the Forum in Detroit, Michigan, if the event is held. Backman noted the final version of the Prospectus includes how Opportunity Zones work. Golden Shovel has completed its activities, but continues to market Willmar's Opportunity Zone. Backman stated the EDC is currently working with several development groups interested in projects. He anticipates holding a meeting with potential investors. Ramstad voiced his appreciation for the EDC's work with the City of Willmar on the Opportunity Zone and leading the creation of the Prospectus. Several developers have liked the Prospectus.

Business Visits and Meetings. Backman reported he and Schmoll have had a couple of visits with Bob Isaacson, Executive Director of the Minnesota Office of Business Finance, as to an expansion project for Simply Shrimp. Vice President Johnson announced Max's Grill & Tavern of Olivia signed a five-year lease with Little Crow Golf to operate the restaurant with an option to buy. They will take over on March 15th and be open year round. It was announced Johnny O'Neil's was sold; the name will be changed to O'Neil's of Spicer. Vice President Johnson also announced Subway in Spicer closed and will be changed to a Godfather's Express.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Business Retention Expansion/Recruitment. The Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment Committee will host the Southwest Business Development Network at Heritage Bank on March 20th where Schmoll and Neil Linscheid of University of Minnesota Extension will give a presentation on the Retail Business Design Workshops.

Leisure Travel. Backman reported the last meeting was held at the Ridgewater College Student Center followed by a tour of the campus. Art Benson reported the Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau board discussed upcoming events.

Other. Boonstra reported the Highway 23 Coalition will hold its annual meeting tomorrow at the Willmar Conference Center with a keynote by Joanna Jungels of Anderson Trucking Service Specialized and will give travel mugs to its members. Next week the Coalition will hold a legislative luncheon at the Capitol and will give ceramic mugs to guests. The Coalition is making plans to travel to Washington, D.C. In May.

NEXT MEETINGS—The EDC boards' planning session is **Thursday, March 26, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. to approximately 3:00 p.m.** at Kandiyohi Power Cooperative Community Room, Spicer; and the next regular board meeting is **11:00 a.m., Thursday, April 9, 2020** at the EDC office, Willmar.

ADJOURNMENT—

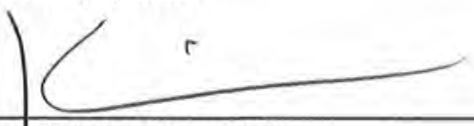
IT WAS MOVED BY Art Benson, SECONDED BY Donna Boonstra, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:12 p.m.



Art Benson, Secretary

APPROVED: 4/9/2020:



Kelly TerWisscha, President

Census Education Contract
between the Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development
Commission (EDC) and United Somali Community of Willmar (USCW)

Scope of the work:

Willmar is a diverse community in West Central Minnesota of approximately 20,000 with growing numbers of Latinos, Somali/East African and Karen populations. The percentage of Somali/East Africans has been steadily increasing since the last census in 2010. It is important for education, health care, human services, and other government functions that there is an accurate count of all communities in Kandiyohi County, especially for new Americans that have been historically undercounted.

Under this agreement, the Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar Economic Development Commission (EDC) will contract with United Somali Community of Willmar (USCW), a local education group, to reduce the 2020 U.S. Census undercount in Willmar with a particular focus on the East African and the Karen populations.

The contract goals are as follows:

- 1) To build upon the efforts of the U.S. Census Takers in Willmar
- 2) To identify gaps in the Willmar 2020 census promotion and to facilitate outreach to immigrant households and larger groups
- 3) To contact at least 400 Somali/East African households, to explain the importance of filling out census forms, and to interpret when necessary
- 4) To contact at least 75 Karen households, to explain the importance of filling out census forms, and to interpret when necessary.
- 5) To recruit at least 4 local members of the community that are bilingual in Somali, Karen, and other languages to meet and talk with diverse households in Willmar
- 6) To interpret and translate forms and documents as needed to ensure as great of an understanding by the East African and Karen populations

Grant Funds:

The EDC's Joint Powers Board has approved \$5,000 for the USCW project. In addition, the Southwest Initiative Foundation (SWIF), Willmar Area Community Foundation and Vision 2040 have each approved \$2,500 to support this effort. The EDC will act as the Fiscal Agent for the project and will provide a final report to both the Foundation and Vision 2040. USCW will provide a weekly summary of how many households have been contacted (in person and by phone) and how many group meetings have been held at Midtown Plaza or elsewhere. It is understood by all parties that USCW Census Educators are not considered federal Census Takers. It is further understood by all parties that USCW will hire contractors to fulfill the contract goals, and that USCW will be solely responsible for any related expenses, payroll and/or tax reporting actions that may be necessary.

Payment of Grant Funds:

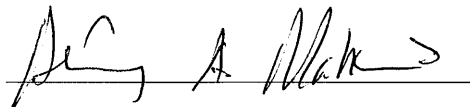
The payment of grant funds for the USCW Census Contract will be paid according to the following schedule:

- 1) \$5,000 will be paid by the EDC to the USCW upon the signing of this contract by both parties' representatives.
- 2) \$2,500 will be paid by the EDC when USCW has reached 50% of the target numbers for both the East African and Karen populations.
- 3) \$5,000 will be paid by the EDC at the end of the USCW Census Education process (currently estimated to be on April 30, 2020).

Termination:

All funding is contingent upon receiving funding from SWIF, the Willmar Area Community Foundation and Vision 2040. If the contract is not fulfilled as intended, the EDC may terminate this contract agreement, and the USCW will repay to the EDC any portion of the grant funding which is not used for the purposes specified herein.

On behalf of the United Somali Community of Willmar, I understand and agree to the foregoing terms and conditions of the EDC's contract and hereby certify my authority to execute this agreement on behalf of the USCW.



Authorized Official

USCW BOARD CHAIR

Title

FEB 14, 2020

Date

IN WITNESS WHEREOF Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar EDC has caused this contract agreement to be executed and intends to be bound thereby.

Aaron A. Backman

EDC Executive Director

Date

Confidential Quote

This quote contains confidential information and is the intellectual property of Bennett Office Technologies and should only be viewed by the client identified on the quote.

Proposed To	
Kandiyohi - Willmar EDC	
222 20th Street SE Willmar, MN 56201	
Phone	320-235-7370
Fax	320-231-2320

Account Team	
Account Advisor Mary Hagen	Technical Advisor Tom Jensen
Phone Number 320-214-3810	Phone Number 320-214-3851
email Address mhagen@bennettoffice.com	email Address tjensen@bennettoffice.com

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price
1	HP ZBook 14u G5 14" Mobile Workstation	\$825.00	\$825.00



- Core i5 i5-8250U Quad-core (4 Core) 1.60 GHz
- 8 GB RAM
- 256 GB SSD
- 14.1" 1920 x 1080
- AMD Radeon Pro WX3100 with 2 GB
- Webcam
- English Keyboard
- Bluetooth
- 10 Hour Battery Run Time
- Windows 10 Pro 64-bit
- 3 Yr Warranty

- Turbo Silver
- HDMI: USB 3.0 Ports: 2
- Network (RJ-45): Yes Number of Thunderbolt 3 Ports: 1

Availability may vary. Price dependent on availability.

Please note this is a product only quote. Technician is billed at the technician hourly rate.

Thank you for choosing Bennett! We look forward to serving you. Contact Mary 320-214-3810 or Tom 320-214-3838 for questions or ordering.

Confidential Quote

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Proposed To	
Kandiyohi - Willmar EDC	
222 20th Street SE Willmar, MN 56201	
Phone	320-235-7370
Fax	320-231-2320

Account Team	
Account Advisor Mary Hagen	Technical Advisor Tom Jensen
Phone Number 320-214-3810	Phone Number 320-214-3851
email Address mhagen@bennettoffice.com	email Address tjensen@bennettoffice.com

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price
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DOCKING STATION:

1	HP UltraSlim Dock for Notebook - Proprietary Interface - 4 x USB Ports - 4 x USB 3.0 - Network (RJ-45) - VGA - DisplayPort - Audio Line In - Audio Line Out - Docking	\$214.00	\$214.00
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Availability may vary. Price dependent on availability.

Please note this is a product only quote. Technician is billed at the technician hourly rate.

Thank you for choosing Bennett! We look forward to serving you. Contact Mary 320-214-3810 or Tom 320-214-3838 for questions or ordering.

SubTotal	\$214.00
Tax	\$0.00
Total	\$214.00



312 24th Ave SW, PO Box 979, Willmar, MN 56201

Date Mar 5, 2020 Number BOTQ17475

Confidential Quote

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Proposed To	
Kandiyohi - Willmar EDC	
222 20th Street SE Willmar, MN 56201	
Phone	320-235-7370
Fax	320-231-2320

Account Team	
Account Advisor Mary Hagen	Technical Advisor Tom Jensen
Phone Number 320-214-3810	Phone Number 320-214-3851
email Address mhagen@bennettoffice.com	email Address tjensen@bennettoffice.com

Qty	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price
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GOV OFFICE:

5	MS Office 2019 Standard Gov	\$375.00	\$1,875.00
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Includes Word, Excel, Outlook, Powerpoint, & Publisher

Availability may vary. Price dependent on availability.

Please note this is a product only quote. Technician is billed at the technician hourly rate.

Thank you for choosing Bennett! We look forward to serving you. Contact Mary 320-214-3810 or Tom 320-214-3838 for questions or ordering.

SubTotal	\$1,875.00
Tax	\$0.00
Total	\$1,875.00



**Joint Operations Board Meeting
Connie Schmoll Report
March 12, 2020**

Childcare

The Spicer Early Learning Center opened on December 23rd and is now providing childcare services. With an extra room for the first year, specifically for infants, they are helping reduce the County's greatest need which is additional spaces for infants.

The Willmar Child Care Center has made a final payment for construction costs. It is currently awaiting final inspections. Willmar Child Care Center's potential staff continues to access trainings provided by United Community Action Partnership (UCAP). CPR classes will be held in April. UCAP is using BlueCross BlueShield funds and some Language Access Funds to provide this assistance. Several RCCIP participants have been offering support and will continue to do so as time and funds allow.

The Kandiyohi County Rural Childcare Innovation Program core leadership team is working on a document to show career paths for childcare and early childhood education as a means of enticing students to the field. A conference for providers is planned for September 11th and 12th in Spicer and titled, "Thriving in a Changing World." A *Launch Your Future Today* (LYFT) grant planning meeting has been set for March 17, 2020. Willmar High School and NL/S High School administrators are planning to attend. A provider appreciation event will be in May. Fifteen Ridgewater College students have shown interest in Early Childhood Classes at the Willmar Campus.

Broadband

Broadband and Advanced Technology Committee members have scheduled educational seminars for residents of Dovre, Mamre and St. Johns Townships all taking place between March 12th and April 7th. The townships are planning a way to poll their constituents to make the final determination as to proceeding with an application for state Border-to-Border funds and a fiber build, if a grant is awarded.

Agriculture Innovation

The EDC's Agriculture Subcommittee for Event Planning and Marketing has secured a keynote speaker and story tellers for the July 30, 2020 Partners in Ag Innovation Workshop in conjunction with MinnWest Technology Campus. The seminar on estate transfer and succession planning for ag producers on March 24th has been advertised and promoted. Sign-ups are currently in place.



Opportunity Zones

I attended the Minnesota Real Estate Journal (MREJ) Summit on Opportunity Zones (OZ) on March 5th along with David Ramstad and Sarah Swedburg of Willmar Planning. This is the third summit on OZ that has been put on by MREJ. The first had more than 500 participants. The March 5th Summit included information on what is currently happening throughout the nation and some cautions and encouragement. “Do your homework” and “invest in assistance by attorneys and/or accountants with experience” was stated several times. It was reported that Community Foundations across the nation are working to engage local investors. Investors get involved for reasons other than just tax savings, including wanting to make a community impact and seeking a good return on the funds invested. It was mentioned frequently that program incentives did not end at the end of 2019, there is still a significant payoff for investors with a 10% reduction in capital gains taxes. There was also the reminder that taxes do need to be paid after December 2026 and investors need to keep that in mind. Deals made and projects planned include multi-family housing, condos and hotels. Larger development started on the west and east coasts and is now moving to the Midwest. It is expected that current OZ projects will be followed up with retail and service projects in the same communities. A medical office or facility may follow as well and would be a key component of moving forward in the OZs. Funds need to be created and projects need agreements in 2020 to get full advantage. Promoting local OZs now is a good plan. Many communities are behind in doing so.

I have shared the Willmar Opportunity Zone Prospectus with 23 people, including site selectors from 17 different companies, business consultants and representatives of USDA Rural Development. Some of the companies included are CBRE, JLL, Colliers, Deloitte, Cushman and Wakefield, Evans Group, Atlas Insight, Dean Foote Consultants and others. I also handed some out at the MREJ Summit. The Prospectus will be a great resource to take to the Area Development Forum in Detroit on March 30 to April 1.

Meetings and Events

1. Poultry Research and Training Facility meeting
2. Childcare Core Leadership Team
3. Willmar City Planning Meetings
4. Chamber of Commerce Grow Minnesota Team Meeting and Visioning
5. Neil Linscheid planning for March SWBDN meeting in Willmar – Retail Business Design Program
6. Update meetings with Compass Consultants and Arvig
7. Highway 23 Legislative Committee meeting
8. Ag Innovation Workshop planning
9. Live online participation in Vermont Industrial Hemp Conference
10. MN Real Estate Journal OZ Summit
11. Broadband meetings with townships, Dovre, Mamre, St. Johns and Arctander
12. Planning meetings for broadband education for township constituents
13. Broadband Day on the Hill



Business Visits

1. Simply Shrimp tours with DEED's rep. Bob Isaacson
2. Simply Shrimp and West Central Steel tours with staff of Sen. Tina Smith's Office
3. Model Citizen business planning
4. Bargains & Blessings business planning
5. Business planning with high school student, Nuredin
6. Bahatti GI Clinic Planning



Joint Operations Board Meeting

Aaron Backman Report

March 12, 2020

Marketing Effort for Willmar Opportunity Zone

Since mid-January the EDC has previously distributed approximately 50 copies of the Willmar OZ Prospectus. Last week we had the final version printed by Speedy Print (75 copies) that are now being distributed in hard copy and digitally to developers, site selectors, potential investors, etc. Even though Golden Shovel has completed their activities relative to the contract, it continues to highlight the Willmar prospectus to its contacts and on social media.

The EDC is currently working with several development groups interested in projects that would be located in the Willmar OZ. On Monday of this week I participated in the third meeting with the group interested in a multi-family housing project on the northeast side of the zone along Hwy 12. Further discussion was held regarding site layouts, number of units, parking configurations, and phasing. Yesterday I participated in the second meeting with the group interested in a commercial project on the northeast side of the zone also along Hwy 12. If both of these projects moved ahead, it would change the look of this arterial entrance into downtown Willmar.

The EDC anticipates that in the second quarter we will pull together an initial OZ Fund Investor meeting with the idea of creating a local/regional OZ fund that will have local and outside investors.

Census Education Initiative with United Somali Community of Willmar

At the January 23rd Joint Powers Board meeting Zack Mahboub, representing United Somali Community of Willmar (USCW), a local education group, presented an initiative that is designed to educate and encourage new immigrants to fill out the census forms so that Kandiyohi County has as accurate count as possible for the 2020 census. The EDC's Joint Powers Board unanimously approved providing \$5,000 toward this census education effort. A contract between USCW and the EDC for \$12,500 has been developed, with matching grant funds of \$2,500 each from the Southwest Initiative Foundation, Willmar Area Community Foundation, and Vision 2040 to support this effort. The contract has been reviewed and is viewed as satisfactory by Brad Schmidt, the EDC's attorney.

Under the contract, at least four local members of the community that are bilingual in Somali, Karen, and other languages will meet and talk with diverse households in Willmar. USCW will contact at least 400 Somali/East African households and at least 75 Karen households. USCW will submit biweekly progress reports to the EDC. The EDC would reimburse USCW in the following manner: \$5,000 paid upon the signing the contract, \$2,500 upon USCW reaching 50% of the target numbers for both East African and Karen populations, and \$5,000 at the end of the USCW Census Education process, currently estimated to be at the end of April. In the interest of time, USCW has already begun

its education activities. It opened a temporary office on the second floor of Midtown Plaza on February 15th. USCW has hired six Somali and two Karen individuals as contractors. It is in the process of finalizing a Willmar map that will assign specific areas to the individual census educators. Two larger meetings were held on February 22nd and 29th with 60 East Africans at each to introduce the census. On February 29th and March 2nd meetings were held with the Karen and Somali contractors and the project coordinator.

Business Meetings (February 13th – March 12th)

1. Participated in conference call w/Bob Isaacson, Director of Business Finance, DEED, and Connie re Simply Shrimp, etc. (2/14/20)
2. Participated in Willmar Area Job Fair partner planning meetings at Ridgewater College (2/14 and 3/5/20)
3. Participated in Poultry Education meeting w/Dr. Tim Johnson & Kathy Schwantes at MCROC (2/18/20)
4. Participated in Hwy 23 Coalition Board of Directors Mtg. at Dooley's Petroleum (2/19/20)
5. Participated in SBA Roundtable Meeting w/Bryan McDonald, State Director, SBA, and reps for SBDC, SWIF, MMDC, City, local banks, etc. re Willmar Renaissance Zone (2/19/20)
6. Submitted site and utility info to New Mexico rep of prospect for industrial project in Willmar Industrial Park
7. Participated in Open Mic Program at KWLM (2/21/20)
8. Participated in EDC Marketing & PR Committee Mtg. at WORKUP (2/24/20)
9. Presented Willmar OZ info to Vision 2040 Housing Subcommittee (2/24/20)
10. Participated in Bi-weekly Mtgs w/Willmar Planning & Zone (2/25 & 3/10/20)
11. Chaired MAPCED Quarterly Meeting at AMC Legislative Conference in St. Paul (2/26/20)
12. Mtg. w/Beth Fischer, CVB re marketing activities, etc. (3/4/20)
13. Presented to Vision 2040 Leadership Group participants (3/5/20)
14. Attended SW ATP Meeting at MnDOT District 8 Conference Room (3/6/20)
15. Participated in Vision 2040 Housing Subcommittee Meeting (3/9/20)
16. Various meetings in preparation for Hwy 23 Coalition Annual Meeting on 3/13/20

Business Visits

1. Meeting w/Jenrry Diaz re proposed business Valladares Drywall in Willmar
2. Meeting & tour of community w/Chaska developer interested in housing project in Willmar
3. Meeting prospective medical device company in Minneapolis w/Scott Marquardt, SWIF
4. Meeting w/Bob Isaacson, Dir. of Bus. Finance, DEED, and Connie re Simply Shrimp in Willmar
5. Participated in CVB Leisure Travel Committee Mtg & Tour of Ridgewater College
6. Meeting w/rep of health-related business in Willmar
7. Discussions with owner of Spurs Restaurant
8. Discussion w/potential restaurant in Willmar
9. Meeting w/potential Microenterprise Loan prospect for new business