

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

MINUTES

November 1, 2019
EDC Board Room, Willmar

Present: Samantha Crow, Jim Ellingson, Les Heitke, Les Nelson, Ranae Rahn, Dean Steinwand and Kelly TerWisscha

Excused: Sam Bowen, Roger Imdieke and Dan Tempel

Guest: Jennifer Mendoza, CLUES Navigator (via teleconference)

Staff: Aaron Backman Executive Director

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

Vice Chairperson Les Nelson called the meeting to order at approximately 9:03 a.m.

AGENDA—Vice Chair Nelson presented the agenda. Les Heitke asked to add two items under New Business, Kandi Entertainment Center and Wilmar 2020. Aaron Backman asked to add under New Business a tour and diverse business discussion with the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund Board

IT WAS MOVED BY Jim Ellingson, SECONDED BY Kelly TerWisscha, to approve the Agenda as amended. MOTION CARRIED.

MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED BY Les Heitke, SECONDED BY Jim Ellingson to approve the Minutes of the October 4, 2019 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

EDC PLANNING SESSION GOALS

Kandiyohi County/Community Video. Backman reported Connie Schmoll informed him changes are being made to the video by Mr. Norling.

Bring Them Back Home Initiative (BTBH). Ranae Rahn attended a meeting with Samantha Crow, Kelly TerWisscha and Kathy Schwantes on October 16th. Bob Haines was unable to attend. Rahn reviewed the EDC's files containing minutes and newspaper articles etc. on the Bring Them Back

Home (BTBH) Campaign done during 1999-2003 and re-started a few years later through 2006. Kathy Schwantes and Bob Haines led the group. Schwantes provided information regarding the initiative. Rahn stated one priority of the revitalized initiative is to have an ongoing push to encourage people to move back to the community. TerWisscha stated if the initiative is restarted it must have longevity and if it is structured properly upfront it may be able to keep going. Rahn reported the BTBH initiative was a task force under the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee with partners from the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, school district, Ridgewater College, WorkForce Center and other entities. Marketing efforts included newspaper inserts highlighting both employers and people who had come back to the community, radio advertising and ads in various periodicals. They published a newsletter entitled *Closer to Home* and conducted Homer Get-Togethers made up of alumni who returned to the area and those who desired to return. Rahn reported the goal is to attempt to replicate the initiative and be positive, modern and expedient through the use of social media marketing efforts to reduce costs. A technical person is needed to help with advertising efforts. Discussion was held regarding funding; Backman inquired if there was a budget for the former initiative. Rahn thought funding was through the EDC Marketing and Public Relations Committee. Rahn suggested forming a task force with representatives from the Chamber, NeXt, city of Willmar, commercial clubs, high school reunion committees. Other task force suggestions included West Central Realty Association, Ridgewater College Foundation and high schools. Ellingson inquired if other communities have formed such a task force. TerWisscha commented a leadership group is needed and suggested contacting a Human Resources group; Backman stated the EDC does have a list of local Human Resources Directors.

Next steps include forming a task force (core group) to develop a plan. Heitke inquired if the EDC could provide some funding. Backman shared he is open to providing financial support. Rahn also shared the *West Central Tribune* is interested in having the initiative renewed. Heitke commented Willmar will celebrate its 150th Anniversary in 2020 and suggested the BTBH task force be involved in planning an event as it may draw many former residents of Willmar.

BUSINESS SUPPORT OBJECTIVES.

Banker/Account Meeting on November 7th. Backman contacted Dean Steinwand regarding a contact from the Kandiyohi County Bankers Association and was referred to Scott Wahl of Concorde Bank. Wahl informed Backman the next meeting will be held at Noon, Thursday, November 7th at The Oaks. Backman and Connie Schmoll will attend and present information on the EDC loan programs, etc. Vice Chair Nelson plans to attend and will bring brochures for attendees.

Ridgewater College CDL Program Update. Backman provided an update of the Ridgewater College CDL fundraising program. The EDC Joint Operations Board approved supporting the effort at the Bronze membership level at \$2,500, which was also approved by the EDC Joint Powers Board. The goal is to raise \$200,000 through private/public donations for two CDL simulators (\$90,000/each). Currently, approximately \$30,000 has been raised. Ridgewater College will also provide approximately \$50,000. Backman stated Sam Bowen of Ridgewater College has applied for grants and if no grants are allocated, the program will move forward to purchase at least one CDL simulator. Heitke reported he promoted Ridgewater College CDL fundraising program at today's Chamber Connection and asked if Dooley's Petroleum had been contacted. Backman will check with Jason Duinick and Sam Bowen. Backman shared the CDL fundraising effort is on the EDC website.

NEW BUSINESS

Greater Minnesota Housing Fund Board. Backman reported he attended the Greater Minnesota Housing Fund Board meeting at Little Crow Resort in Spicer yesterday. A bus tour was held of the New London, Spicer and Willmar areas. In Willmar, the group visited 15th Street Flats. Backman shared 38 of 47 units are occupied with full occupancy expected in November. There were 160 applicants; however, 100 were not accepted due to a higher income. The bus tour also included MinnWest Technology Campus on the north end of Willmar and other housing facilities. A panel discussion with diverse businesses owners was held at Midtown Plaza in downtown Willmar. A dinner was held at the Little Crow Resort with opportunities to visit with various representatives of the Board.

Kandi Entertainment Center. Heike asked if there is an update for the Kandi Entertainment Center. Backman reported he is not aware of plans to renovate the building nor an interested buyer. TerWisscha stated he has not heard of any interest in the building and felt it may be demolished sometime in the future. Backman will contact the Pattison family to inquire of any interest in refurbishing the building.

2020. Heitke reported the City of Willmar will celebrate its 150th Anniversary in 2020 and shared the events that took place during the city's 125th anniversary. He shared Mayor Calvin will bring the idea of a 150th Anniversary celebration to the Willmar City Council in the near future.

Other. Ellingson inquired if there is an update on Kwik Trip in downtown Willmar. Backman will check into it. Heitke inquired about the discussion of Backman reducing the amount of time he spends on the Highway 23 Coalition duties. Backman shared a meeting will be held soon with the EDC Executive Board members and the Highway 23 Coalition officers, Backman and Schmoll.

ADJOURNMENT—

IT WAS MOVED BY Kelly TerWisscha, SECONDED BY Jim Ellingson to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:10 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., Friday, December 6, 2019**, at the EDC Office, Willmar.

EDC Action Planning Worksheet

BUSINESS SUPPORT



Priority Area	Business Support
Priority Summary	Supporting existing businesses through access to information and awareness of the EDC's services.
Project Coordinator: (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Dan Tempel, Boker/Owner, Glacial Ridge Realty
Phone/Email:	320-403-5404

Strategic Priority (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	EDC works to build relationships with area business, with a key intent to inform them of available resources through the EDC, better understand their challenges/needs, and help them share their successes.	
Mission Connection (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC catalyzes economic growth by supporting area businesses so that they can prosper, innovate and be competitive.	
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives	Resources Needed
	1. Engage in focused one-on-one visits with existing businesses to inform of resources and streamline complications/challenges they may have	TBD
	2. Develop a business support group of “like-minded businesses” and/or “emerging entrepreneurs”; consider the 1 Million Cup model; specific mention of support for businesses started within past 5 years and those in the retail sector	TBD
	3. Invite bankers/accountants to a gathering to learn of EDC resources and share business needs	TBD
	4. Develop a “community” marketing campaign to distribute EDC offerings broadly in the area	Center of influencers; marketing plan
Expected Outcomes: The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?	Businesses owners are able to streamline operations or resolve barriers they may have and learn from each other’s successes and challenges. Our communities know and understand how the EDC can help businesses.	

Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

NAME	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Jesse Gislason	Business support	jessegislason@gmail.com	320.295.6938
Melissa Knott	Marketing	mknott@christiansoncpa.com	320.212.9505
Fernando Alvarado	City Government/ Business support	falvarado@willmarmn.gov	320.235.2577

As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDC Marketing Committee • EDC Staff 	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too many businesses are not aware of what the EDC has to offer • Need to break down into smart goals; specific action steps
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down barriers with other groups • Programs like SCORE, One Million Cups • Mentoring/coaching arrangements 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate time/capacity • Insufficient financial resources

OTHER NOTES: Two remaining task in notes that did not fit neatly into this strategy could possibly be brought to the Marketing Committee:

- 1) Doing research and gathering data/demographics needed to market to restaurants and national retail so that they are drawn to Kandiyohi County
- 2) Being strategic in collaborating to promote the quality of life in Kandiyohi; mentions of Greg Harp/Photos, PWELC as resources; mention of “Bring Them Home” campaign that was also added to the Workforce Strategy

EDC Action Planning Worksheet

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Priority Area	Workforce Development
Priority Summary	Help build a skilled workforce that meets the needs of the local economy in order to grow and support businesses.
Project Coordinator: (A person of interest/ champion to help EDC Staff)	Sam Bowen, Dean of Customized Training, Ridgewater College
Phone/Email:	320-905-2269

Strategic Priority (Stated as a goal with measurable results, not just effort)	Building a base of support and implementing innovative strategies that expand opportunities for building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of our local economy and helps businesses grow.	
Mission Connection (How this goal aligns with the mission of the EDC)	EDC would be a catalyst, providing leadership for workforce growth which increases potential for prosperity, international competitiveness and enhanced quality of life.	
Objectives How might we address this goal? (i.e. What actions/milestones might be pursued?) What resources may be needed? S – Specific M – Measurable A – Attainable R – Relevant T – Timebound	Potential Objectives	Resources Needed
	1. Establish a Workforce Development Committee to focus on specific initiatives.	People and approval
	2. Promote Ridgewater College, working with partners to improve enrollment and student success.	Planning, Details, Funding
	3. Continue to expand diverse workforce training programs like Diverse CNA/Welding	Funding, Support, Partners
	4. Establish a Teacher of Color pipeline program	TBD
OTHER NOTES	Insights from planning session (some could be tasks under the above objectives)... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring similar industries together (focus groups by industry sector) to discuss workforce needs and explore additional employer-driven initiatives such as MAP that might be supported/started • Video highlighting businesses of Kandiyohi County and the workforce skills/needs; Host on EDC website and promote via social media • Develop a “Bring Them Back Campaign” – positive messaging of opportunities in the area; telling the stories of why they should want to return 	

<p>Expected Outcomes:</p> <p>The impact we seek: What will be different as a result of our efforts?</p>	<p>These efforts will help grow and support businesses by addressing a major need in our regional economy – skilled workers. We will develop and implement innovative recruiting and training strategies that will set our region apart as a workforce development leader.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill enhancement of potential labor market • Higher levels of people gaining greater employment • People entering pathways that lead them to career with greater earning potential • Helping to fulfill local job market needs
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Who are the people who may be interested in supporting/working together on this goal?

NAME	Skills/Resources	Email	Phone
Eric Day – CMJTS	Funding/People	eday@cmjts.org	320.241.1747
Sam Bowen – Ridgewater	Customized Training	sam.bowen@ridgewater.edu	320.222.5206
Dayna Latham – Ridgewater	Customized Training	dayna.latham@ridgewater.edu	320.894.5169
Craig Johnson – President, Ridgewater College	Leadership; Administration	craig.johnson@ridgewater.edu	320-222-5202
Jason Duinck – Duinck Inc.	Bus. Develop., Legislative	jasond@duinck.com	320.212.9330

As you move further along, identify the key strengths, challenges, opportunities and threats for achieving this goal...

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ridgewater College • Kandiyohi County labor force growing faster than the region • Immigration/New Diverse Populations • Short-term growth of HS class sizes • Diverse economic landscape 	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tight labor market (.7 person available for each job vacancy) • Language barriers – comprehension and fluency • Labor market participation rates less than state average for some populations • Skills gap
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immigrant workforce • Growth of labor force participation rate for some populations • Seniors/Retirees opportunities for additional careers/skills 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automation, technology and robotics may eliminate some jobs and increase skills sets needed for new jobs • State/National policy decisions • Cultural norms related to Higher Ed/Post-Secondary • Lack of diversity in immigrant careers; lack of aspirations for different careers