

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

MINUTES

December 1, 2017

EDC Board Room

- Present:** Sam Bowen, Jim Ellingson, Roger Imdieke, Les Nelson and Kelly TerWisscha
- Excused:** Bob Carlson, Les Heitke and Ranae Rahn
- Absent:** Dean Steinwand
- Guest:** Cathy Baumgartner, Workforce Development Coordinator, Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services
- Staff:** Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Connie Schmoll, Business Development Specialist
- Secretarial:** Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants (LAA)

Chairperson Sam Bowen called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 a.m. and voiced his concern with a lack of quorums the past three meetings.

AGENDA—

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

MINUTES—As there was not a quorum in attendance, the September 1, October 6, and November 3, 2017 minutes were received, but not approved.

REPORTS/PROJECT UPDATES

Historic 313 on Fourth Street. Aaron Backman reported on the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota's recent presentation to the Willmar City Council regarding the renovation project. Backman shared Historic 313 financials and that he meets weekly with the proprietor on the progress of renovations. Spurs Restaurant may open by mid-December.

Midtown Plaza. Backman provided an update on the renovation progress and stated some tenants may move in soon.

Highway 23 Coalition. Backman reported there has been a substantial amount of progress in the last month. He distributed and reviewed the Interregional Corridor System (IRC) map showing the interregional corridor highways, supplemental freight routes and other trunk highways and regional trade centers (see attached). Available funding includes \$300M in bonds and \$100M in cash for FY 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 biennium. The funding will be split 50/50 between Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities area. On November 9th, Patrick Weidemann, Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) Director of Capital Projects in St. Paul, presented the Corridors of Commerce selection process to the Highway 23 Coalition Board of Directors. The Highway 23 Board of Directors held a special meeting on November 21st and the decision was made to submit two project applications: one for the north gap (Jodi Teich, Stearns County Engineer will take the lead) and one for the south gap (Mel Odens, Kandiyohi County Engineer, will take the lead). The Highway 23 Coalition Board of Directors will send representatives to two public open house presentations regarding Corridors of Commerce scoring criteria. The first open house was held on November 28th at the MnDOT, District 3 Headquarters in Baxter, and the second open house will be held on December 15th at the MnDOT, District 8 Headquarters in Willmar. Backman reported there are currently 62 committed members (counties, cities and organizations) of the Highway 23 Coalition. The website is live at www.highway23coalition.com or www.hwy23coalition.com. A 317A nonprofit application was submitted to the Secretary of State. The Coalition may also apply for a 501c(4).

Business Visits/Tours. Backman shared aerial photographs of the Mills Auto site, the new retail building near the Kandi Mall and the Glacial Ridge Hospitality Grand Stay Hotel and Convention Center project on the site of the Little Crow Country Club in Spicer. Backman highlighted other business visits/tours: 1) MNwest CEO Forum & Entrepreneur Summit in Fergus Falls; 2) University of Minnesota Showcase Event at the MinnWest Technology Campus; 3) AURI Food Showcase in Marshall; 4) 2017 Business Conference and Annual Chamber Meeting in the Twin Cities; 5) Kandiyohi County Sales Tax public hearing; and 6) he will attend the Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers quarterly meeting on December 4. Backman announced he is a member of the search committee for the new president of Ridgewater College.

[Roger Imdieke joined the meeting.]

MINUTES—Chair Bowen presented the September 1, October 6 and November 3, 2017 minutes.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Kelly TerWisscha, to approve the September 1, October 6 and November 3, 2017 minutes as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

[Connie Schmoll joined the meeting.]

Chair Bowen provided an update on the successful Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program held his fall. He reported a 100% pass rate. A meeting will be held with CLUES on December 7th to discuss next steps. It is a possibility that another training program other than healthcare will be added. Chair Bowen will send Backman a copy of the agenda.

Connie Schmoll reported she has been working to find a broadband partner to bring fiber to Kandiyohi County. She has contacted Alliance Communications and Hiawatha Broadband Communications is another option. Schmoll also explained the state Border-to-Border Grant process. Backman passed around a *West Central Tribune* article on the addition to West Central Steel, which was picked up nationally as well.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

West Central Job Fair Update. Backman provided an update on the two job fairs held in spring and fall at the Willmar Conference Center and shared concerns if some demographics are unable to attend, i.e., college students and diverse population due to time schedules. Backman contacted Doug Hanson of KDJS radio station if he would be open to alternating job fair locations; one at the Willmar Conference Center and one at Ridgewater College. Hanson expressed concerns over parking at Ridgewater College and it may be difficult to recruit businesses to attend the Ridgewater College location. Chair Bowen reported he reviewed the business surveys on a previous job fair and determined some businesses need to make changes to boost attendance. Chair Bowen hears from businesses on a regular basis that want a chance to present their company to students. Businesses need return on investment from their booth fees. Chair Bowen is open to holding one job fair at Ridgewater College and mentioned the successful Job Ag Fair held at Ridgewater College each year. Cathy Baumgartner shared Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services' (CMJTS) involvement in the job fairs each year. Backman suggested a meeting between the partners and Mr. Hanson. Chair Bowen will schedule a meeting. The next Job Fair is scheduled for March 20, 2018.

Experiential Learning Business Survey. Baumgartner, CMJTS Workforce Development Coordinator, discussed the Experiential Learning Business Survey and thanked the EDC for sending the survey to its contacts via Constant Contact. The survey was developed by CMJTS to identify ways in which businesses/organizations might be willing to offer workplace opportunities and opportunities for business representatives to present information about the various career pathways within their organizations. She is pleased with the response and conveyed the survey remains open.

CMJTS Support Services Grant Proposal. Baumgartner reported on the Support Services Grant proposal. The goals of the project include increasing career training and workforce project participation for youth and adults (ages 14-24) in Kandiyohi County who are from low-income communities and communities of color (Somali). The program is also open to other diverse cultures. The program will help them access the labor market and learn how to apply for jobs. Baumgartner has met with Somali representatives, who feel it is important to focus on the younger generation. Baumgartner stated the grant is very competitive due to a large diverse population in Minnesota. She shared the outcome of the grant may be known sometime in December depending on the review process. Backman sent a letter of support for the grant. CMJTS is expected to also hire a navigator. Baumgartner may attend the February BRE/R Committee meeting to share an update.

NEW BUSINESS

THE NEW KEYS TO RETENTION AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT TRAINING. Schmoll gave an overview of the training she attended on November 14th at the Willmar Conference Center, sponsored by the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and given by Mike Henke. Attendees learned important tips on how to retain employees.

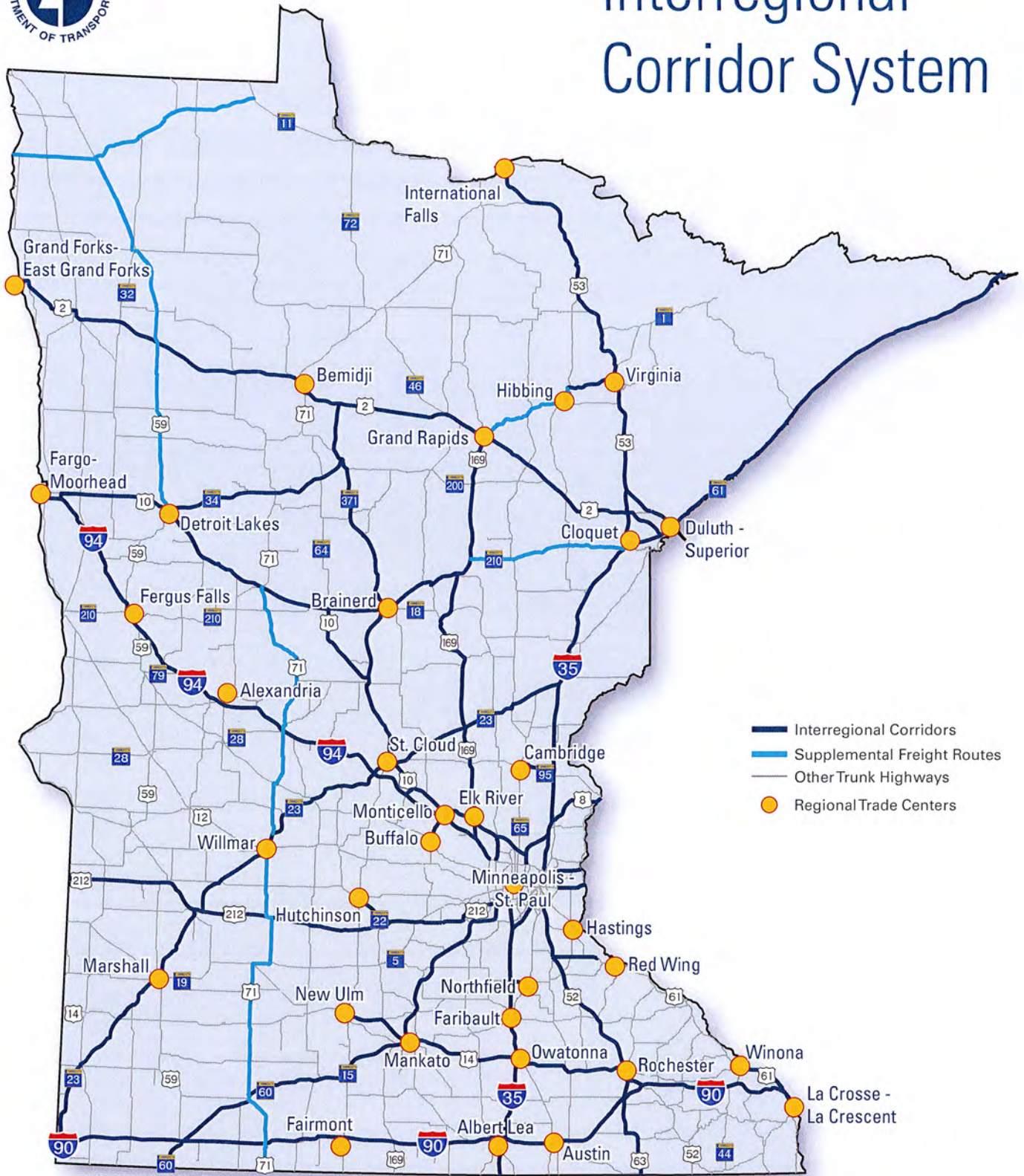
Other. Chair Bowen inquired if BRE/R Committee meetings should be extended by one-half hour to allow adequate time for agenda topics.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:22 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next regular committee meeting is **9:00 a.m., January 5, 2018** in the EDC Board Room.



Interregional Corridor System



- Interregional Corridors
- Supplemental Freight Routes
- Other Trunk Highways
- Regional Trade Centers

