

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 26, 2020
Via ZOOM Video Conference

Present: Donna Boonstra, Melissa Knott, Emily Lien, Pam Rosenau, Joanna Schrupp and Brittany VanDerBill

Excused: Jesse Gislason

Guest: Cheryl Glaeser, Achieve TFC

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

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chair Emily Lien called the meeting to order at approximately 12:03 p.m.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Melissa Knott, SECONDED BY Donna Boonstra, to approve the Minutes of the September 28, 2020 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Social Media Statistics. Aaron Backman presented the website statistics noting new users of 1,367 and a higher bounce rate of 70.03%. There was an increase in views on October 6, which is believed to be related to the newsletter sent the evening before. The top landing pages were the home page, business loan programs, news, broadband (newsletter article) and major employers. Backman noted the average duration of views for CARES Act funding lasted 2:28 minutes.

Backman provided the following Facebook statistics from September 25 to October 22: Page views 96 (▲4%), page likes 9 (▲80%), post reach 898 (▼70%) and post engagement 165 (▼75%). The top five posts were:

- internet speed test;
- Kandiyohi County Food Shelf free food distribution;
- Fall colors in Lost Valley;
- Highway 23 J turn at Highway 9 in New London; and
- Willmar Public Library pumpkin decorating contest.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Update Ag Flyer. Connie Schmoll reported the Ag Marketing and Event Planning Subcommittee reviewed the new layout for the Ag flyer, which was reformatted to look like the most recent flyer that was done. New statistics are being researched and a first draft will be reviewed by the Ag Committee at its November meeting.

Fall Newsletter. Backman reported the fall newsletter was emailed to 1,146 individuals on October 5, 2020. Articles included an update on the EDC's CARES Act assistance, Willmar Renaissance Zone, a summary of the broadband survey done in June and the poultry certification courses being done by Ridgewater College in partnership with the University of Minnesota. The email had a 45.7% open rate, 12% click rate and there were 4 unsubscribes.

Poultry Certification Courses. Schmoll reported the partners involved with the poultry certification courses will be meeting November 2nd and will look at how to promote the classes to prospective students across the upper Midwest. Schmoll requested the partners think of industry publications in which the courses could be promoted. This committee suggested the following marketing avenues:

- Paid ad on Facebook
- Work with Minnesota Colleges and State Universities
- News release to regional newspapers and magazines
- Minnesota Turkey Association magazine and social media
- Minnesota Chicken and Egg Association
- Farm Bureau and Farmers Union
- Feed groups, such as Minnesota Corn Growers Association (<https://www.mncorn.org/>), Minnesota Grain & Feed Association (<https://mgfa.org/>), Minnesota Farmers Union (<https://www.mfu.org/>), Minnesota Farmers' Market Association (<https://www.mfma.org/>) and Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (<https://www.sfa-mn.org/>)
- Cooperatives that provide feed for poultry
- Agriculture Utilization Research Institute
- Chair of the Poultry Department for the University of Minnesota

CPR Program Update. Backman reported on the number of businesses and nonprofits that have applied for the CARES Pandemic Relief (CPR) Grant Program. The deadline for nonprofit applications was Friday, October 23, 2020 and the deadline for business applications is October 29, 2020. Backman stated after \$2.5 million was depleted, Kandiyohi County sent another \$500,000, which Backman estimates will run out tomorrow. He has been advocating for additional funds from the City of Willmar. The EDC's Finance Committee has met 25 times in the last 30 weeks and will meet again tomorrow. The top types of businesses that have applied are barber shops/salons, restaurants/bars, service, retail and health (including 38 diverse businesses) with an average loss of 60%. Businesses from most cities in the county have applied. The nonprofit organizations have had an average loss of 38% and 75% have been from Willmar. After this week, the EDC's focus will be on receipt and review of documentation on how the recipients used the grant funds. During the grant process, Backman and Schmoll have learned about new businesses in the county.

[Chair VanDerBill was excused from the meeting.]

Schmoll noted that if the units of government do not spend their CARES Act funds, they must be returned to the state of Minnesota.

NEW BUSINESS—Schmoll reported Kandiyohi County is promoting that residents take the internet speed test on November 1 to coincide with daylight savings time. Lakeland Broadcasting is promoting the speed test and has included a contest—those who register and take the test through its website will be eligible for a \$100 gift card.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, November 23, 2020** via ZOOM video conference. Melissa Knott noted she will be unavailable for the November meeting.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:51 p.m.