

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

January 23, 2023

The Handle Bar, Atwater and via Zoom Video Conference

Present: Jesse Gislason, Ann Winge Johnson, Emily Lien and Pam Rosenau

Excused: Donna Boonstra, Ben Carlson and Liz Dyrdal

Staff: Kelsey Olson, Marketing and Communications Specialist

Secretarial: Cathy Skindelien, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Emily Lien called the meeting to order at approximately 12:07 p.m.

AGENDA—Added to the agenda was the resignation of Donna Boonstra and financial and social media reviews. The revised agenda was approved.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Ann Winge Johnson, SECONDED BY Pam Rosenau, to approve the Minutes of the December 19, 2022 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS—

Election of Officers.

IT WAS MOVED BY Ann Winge Johnson, SECONDED BY Jesse Gislason, to elect Pam Rosenau as Chairperson of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Marketing and Public Relations Committee for 2023. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY Ann Winge Johnson, SECONDED BY Jesse Gislason, to elect Ben Carlson as Vice Chairman of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Marketing and Public Relations Committee for 2023. MOTION CARRIED.

Resignation of Liz Dyrdal and Donna Boonstra.

IT WAS MOVED BY Jesse Gislason, SECONDED BY Pam Rosenau, to accept with regrets the resignations of Donna Boonstra and Liz Dyrdal. MOTION CARRIED.

UPDATES—

Financial Review. Kelsey Olson presented the 2023 Marketing and Public Relations Committee budget (see attached). The largest anticipated expense, \$9370 for website design and maintenance, has been approved

by the EDC Joint Operations Board and Joint Powers Board. Redwood Valley Technical Solutions (RVTS) and VantagePoint Consulting were approved to provide services. New items added to the budget include \$600 for branding and \$1,200 for community events, which will encourage the EDC's active participation in community celebrations in Kandiyohi County. The subscription budget has increased due to the transition from Hootsuite to Sprout Social.

Social Media Review. Olson presented a 10-page social media report for September-December 2022. In comparison to May-August 2022, impressions were down 8.3% and engagements were down 18.6%, due to fewer project posts, construction posts and community events. There were 58 new likes and, overall, social media is displaying well. Impressions were up in late December and early January due to the Virtual Career Fair campaign. Olson plans to do a couple promotion posts for Spicer's Winterfest.

Swag: Folders and Pens. The following items have been ordered.

- Card holders, 500 ordered for a total of \$895.
- Pens, 1000 ordered for a total of \$1926.00.
- Folders, 500 ordered, for a total of \$1495.
- Car Magnets, 2 ordered, for a total of \$150.

Community Survey. The Community Survey has been delayed due to extra time being taken up for the Premier Virtual Career Fair. Olson is gathering township contact information and will send out the survey prior to the EDC planning session in March.

Virtual Career Fair. Olson reported the Virtual Career Fair held on January 18, 2023 had 49 registered businesses and 30 job seekers, slightly short of the goal of one person per business. There was 83% participation from registered attendees and 96% participation from businesses, resulting in 164 conversations and 897 messages. Top jobs during the event were customer service specialist, employment specialist, human services technicians and nurses. Top booths visited included Nova-Tech Engineering, Life-Science Innovations, Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Minnesota Department of Human Services and Employment Plus.

Suggestions for the next Virtual Career Fair include:

- Make the live event four hours long with the option to extend the timeframe.
- Boost the post at least a week prior to the event to spur interest.
- Remind participating businesses to do social media promotions
- Conduct a short survey asking businesses if they used the marketing material and got what they expected from the fair.
- Survey job seekers to find out if they were hired, and if not, what were the reasons.
- Require three types of advertising from partners that does not include social media and eblasts.
- Assess the use of print advertising and eliminate those that were ineffective.
- Have businesses publish pay scales for the job openings.
- Create a Facebook event.
- Provide early access to the event.
- Eliminate the resume requirement for job seekers.
- Show the benefits of the changes made for businesses who didn't feel it went well.

Workforce Support (upcoming childcare grant support needs). Olson reported her workforce support activities involve preparation for the upcoming childcare grant, including marketing materials, creation of documents to aid in the loan process and making connections in Kandiyohi County to identify those who would like to start a career in childcare.

DISCUSSION ITEMS—

Branding for Marketing Publications. Olson presented several EDC handouts and asked committee members to make final comments before printing. Olson highlighted areas that would be changed to ensure consistency in the title bar, fonts, icon size, and placement of contact and social media information.

Summer Event Schedule and MMP Meeting. Olson asked for volunteers to participate in two or three Kandiyohi County community events as part of the EDC’s community outreach initiative. Opportunities include the 4th of July parades in Spicer and Prinsburg, the Amazing Race in Raymond and the Kandiyohi County Fair. The EDC will be at Farmfest, sharing a booth with the Willmar Lakes Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. Olson will attend the Minnesota Marketing Partnership meeting on January 25, 2023, followed by the Economic Development Association of Minnesota Winter Conference on January 26-27, where Sarah Swedburg will receive the Emerging Young Professional of the Year award.

Training Recommendation. Olson asked the committee for ideas regarding training opportunities in 2023. Suggestions included:

- LinkedIn training, which can be customized for marketing, and also does training in Word and Excel
- Attend a Women in Marketing Conference
- Training from VantagePoint, which would be helpful for the website redesign
- Free training available at Appleton Regional Development Commission

Website Redesign Planning. Olson will announce that RVTS and VantagePoint Consulting will handle the EDC website redesign later this week, and requested feedback on how the committee wants to be involved during the 12-week process. It was decided the committee will be updated at the regular meetings and the rest will be handled via email. The subject line will read “Vote Needed” or Action Necessary” on items requiring a decision. The process will start with an audit of the current website to determine what is working and what is being used. Recommendations will be made based on the findings. The design will be presented prior to publishing and the committee will be involved in a proofreading meeting.

Committee members were asked to identify candidates for membership to replace Liz Dyrdal and Donna Boonstra at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:26 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, February 27, 2023** in-person at the Community Room, Heritage Bank and via ZOOM video conference.