

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

November 28, 2022

Heritage Bank, 310 First Street South, Willmar and via Zoom Video Conference

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

Excused: Donna Boonstra

Absent: Liz Dyrdaahl

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director and Kelsey Olson, Marketing and Communications Specialist

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

Chairperson Emily Lien called the meeting to order at approximately 12:01 p.m.

AGENDA—The agenda was approved as emailed.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Pam Rosenau, SECONDED BY Jesse Gislason, to approve the Minutes of the October 24, 2022 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS—

EDC Entry Reorganization. The reorganization of the entryway to the EDC was discussed. A drop box will be added under the EDC sign to the right of the entrance door. The acrylic brochure holders need replacement. A wooden display with partitions for 8 full page documents and 8 brochures was preferred by committee members. Aaron Backman will check with Roger Sowder, board member of the Elks Lodge, to ensure a display weighing 34 pounds can be safely hung on the wall.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

Swag: Pens, Folder, Card Holders. Olson reported the following items will be purchased:

- 1000 Rose gold pens from Rambow, cost - \$185.
- 500 EDC folders, cost - \$299.
- 600 Multi-use card cases, cost - \$179.

Olson plans to order a car magnet and is awaiting an estimate on a large size that will cover an entire car door.

Marketing Ads. Final copies of the English and Spanish versions of the Elevate and What We Do brochures have been printed. The Willmar Industrial Park brochure contains new language related to FedEx, but still needs an updated map. The styling guide has been finalized and is available to committee members upon request. A filing cabinet will be purchased to organize all marketing materials.

Updated logo. Olson reported members of the marketing class at Ridgewater College did an excellent job on the state of Minnesota logo. Matching the font and color according to the EDC styling guide remains an issue, and Ben Carlson offered his help in resolving it.

DISCUSSION ITEMS—

Premier Virtual Toolkit. Olson reported the Premier Virtual toolkit for job fair marketing is complete. Approximately 20 potential partners have been contacted. A virtual career fair will be held in January and another in the spring. The toolkit contains email templates for job seekers or businesses, social media posts, radio talking points, a newspaper ad, press release and a calendar of posts. Partners will receive training on the use of the toolkit and be asked to do a congratulatory post on social media to any business that signs up for the career fair. The cost will be \$350 for one-time participation or \$600 for two events. Partners will be able to schedule additional events for \$100 per event. Redwood and Renville Counties have agreed to participate. Other potential partners include Meeker County, Ridgewater College, and the cities of Benson and Clara City. Businesses participating in the career fair will be charged \$50, while the charge to nonprofits will be flexible. Partners will be asked to set goals for the number of businesses and job seekers participating, and identify three ways they will market and promote the event.

Community Outreach Questionnaire/Survey. Olson plans to send out a community outreach survey and requested suggestions on the setup of the survey, which will be sent to township and city councils in Kandiyohi County. Following are the suggestions:

- Ask what problems are seen in healthcare, childcare, etc.
- Ask what the EDC can provide for upcoming events
- Ask if they feel supported and represented by the EDC
- Have them rank their top five issues (broadband, childcare, etc)
- Tailor the questions to each community, ask about their specific problems and which are more important
- Follow up on the survey, provide possible solutions
- Include a What We Do brochure with each survey
- Include a link to the EDC website
- Use Survey Monkey
- Send a test survey to committee members to ensure the fields are working properly

Website Request for Proposal (RFP) Review. RFPs were sent to four website design companies. Responses were received from 8bitstudio, E*Tap and Redwood Valley Technical Services (RVTS), while Studio 544 declined participation. The responses were reviewed and ranked by EDC staff, who recommended RVTS (see attached). After discussion the committee agreed with the recommendation.

IT WAS MOVED BY Pam Rosenau, SECONDED BY Ann Winge Johnson, that the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's Marketing and Public Relations Committee recommend Redwood Valley Technical Services be hired to update the website in 2023 at a one-time cost of up to \$14,500. The cost includes a custom mock-up design, with

one minor change allowed. The charge for major changes will be \$100 per hour. MOTION CARRIED.

December meeting date. Due to the Christmas holiday, the next EDC Marketing Committee meeting will be held on December 19 at noon at the Heritage Bank Community Room.

UPDATES—

Press Release for TED Grant. Backman reported the EDC was awarded a Transportation Economic Development Grant through the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Although the original funding request was for \$570,000, with \$380,000 in matching funds from the City of Willmar paid out of proceeds from the sale of land to Nexyst 360, the grant award was \$900,000. The funds will be used for turning and acceleration lanes on State Highway 40. A press release is pending approval by Nexyst 360.

Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) Partnership: Olson will meet with the CVB regarding the Passport Club. A year-long commitment to this program will cost \$6000. Olson's goal is to ensure the program will reach greater Kandiyohi County. The EDC, in conjunction with the CVB, has a booth reserved for FarmFest.

Willmar Chamber Remote Ambassador. Olson will act as a remote ambassador for the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, covering northeast Kandiyohi County.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **12 noon, Monday, December 19, 2022** in-person at the Community Room, Heritage Bank, Willmar and via ZOOM video conference.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:17 p.m.

TO: Marketing and Public Relations Committee

FROM: Kelsey Olson, Marketing and Communications Specialist

DATE: 11.28.2022

RE: Website Re-Design Request for Proposals Recommendation

By November 9th we had received 3 out of our 4 RFPs. Studio 544 declined the RFP due to its available capacity.

I had meetings with 8bitstudio and Redwood Valley Technical Solutions. I did not have a conversation with e*tap.

All companies could deliver the product we requested; a website that can be easily navigated targets our audiences follows EDC branding and provides post-site creation support while staying within our timeline and budget parameters and including the EDC in the creation of the site along the way.

	8bitstudio	E*Tap	Redwood Valley Technical Solutions
Cost Estimate	\$38,500 - \$63,000	\$15,240 - \$17,410	\$10,750 (+)
Timeline	Start by Feb. 2023	14 week completion	Average of 12 weeks
Other costs	\$1,400 / month maintenance fee \$75 - \$250 / month care plan \$175 / hour support	~\$30+ / month hosting fees \$80 / hour support \$85 / hour writing	\$90 / month maintainance fee \$330 / year hosting and domain name ~\$80 / support Optional Marketing Roadmap with VantagePoint Marketing for \$2,000
Ability to Audit	Somewhat	X	X *sent an attachment with current list of pages*
Branding Assistance	Somewhat	No	X *optional*
Post Creation Care	X	Somewhat	X *currently doing it

It is with this review and comparison that EDC staff, including Executive Director, Aaron Backman, and Business Development Manager, Sarah Swedburg, recommend hiring Redwood Valley Technical Solutions for the creation of a new website. Its specificity in detailing how processes would occur, the EDC's involvement and expectations, and their ability to support after the site has been created provides the most thorough option for the EDC.

Kelsey Olson
Marketing and Communication Specialist

Request for Proposals Scoring Guidelines for Website Re-Design

November 2022

The intent of this document is to help guide the decision on who is the best fit for the website re-design and if the company has the capability to meet our needs and addressed them as requested in the RFP.

Company: _____

Total Estimated Cost: _____

Completion Timeline (if given): _____

I. General Overview

Does the proposal recognize these needs as listed in the RFP?

This website needs a redesign so it can meet the following:

- A modern look with an eye-catching landing page
- Easy-to-navigate tabs that cater to specific audiences
- A site that guides the viewer to be able to identify what they are looking for and how to find that information in limited page clicks
- Assistance auditing the current site for the relevance of each page
- Assistance updating outdated information on each page
- Involvement with the EDC in decision-making and design process
- Continued support

II. Background Information & Statement of Work

Does the proposal address the following items? In summary, does the company address a clear plan for the re-design which includes:

- Current site evaluation/audit
- Addressing EDC's brand consistency
- Identified work phases of the project and the EDC's involvement in each

The hired company would be expected to assist the EDC in developing a plan and timeline to complete a website redesign. First, the expertise of the RFP responder would be applied to evaluating the EDC's brand consistency and marketing tools. Second, the proposal would include an audit of the current site, what information is most relevant, and how to provide easy access to delivering the information audiences are seeking.

Lastly, the hired company would work with the EDC through each phase, providing the opportunity for evaluation along the way.

Post-redesign the company would be expected to provide technical support and solutions as well as provide the necessary updates for the website software and technicalities.

III. Website Goals

Does the proposal identify the EDC's goals as listed below for the website? These are summarized below:

- Target specific EDC audiences
 - Information easily organized (articles, loan information, updates, etc)
 - Website as an interactive tool
 - Ability to 'contact us' or collect requests from audience members
 - Act as a promotional and recruitment tool for the county
 - Other goals identified or proposed within the proposal
-
- Different audience members: site selectors, developers, entrepreneurs, small businesses, and community members will be able to easily navigate to the pages that are designed for them.
 - Information will be easily located based on the type of information that could include: Kandiyohi County statistics, real estate availability via LOIS, loan and grant information, broadband updates, relevant committee and board minutes, past newsletters, success stories, development updates, community notices and information, etc.
 - The website will be an interactive tool between the EDC and prospective businesses.
 - The website will assist in generating leads through request fields.
 - The website will promote successful businesses and industries in Kandiyohi County.
 - The website will serve as a recruitment tool for prospective businesses and individuals.

VI. Scope of Services

- Does the proposal address the following?
- Audit the current pages for
 - Who is visiting the site and how are they using it?
 - Is the information on the site relevant?
 - How do visitors arrive on the page?
- Does the EDC have consistent branding and marketing used in the site and throughout their work?
- Do the proposed project processes and timeline include: a learning phase, planning phase, development phase, review phase, testing phase, evaluation phase, launch phase, and continued support phase?
- Does post-site development support include hosting, website safety precautions, and technical support?

A. Audit of Current Site

The EDC would like the support of the hired company to audit the relevancy of the current pages to answer the questions: Is this page used? How and by whom might this page be used? Is the information accurate? How can visitors land on this page? And to ensure these questions support the website's goals.

The hired company would then work with the EDC to create an outline of relevant information and how it is accessed.

B. Branding and Marketing Evaluation

The hired company would work with the EDC to ensure that the EDC's branding and marketing messages are thematic throughout the site to align with EDC marketing materials, messages and work.

This would also include learning about the EDC's different audiences and the information they are looking for. This information would be used to create a clean, concise, and simple-to-navigate site.

C. Organization of Work & Services

The hired company will communicate with the EDC the scope of the work and timeline.

Services would include: a learning phase, planning phase, development phase, review phase, testing phase, evaluation phase, launch phase, and continued support phase.

D. Technical Services

The creator will handle all technical aspects, including website hosting, browser platform considerations, platform requirements, coding language, etc. They will ensure that the site meets search engine criteria for maximum optimization and visualizations. They will also ensure that ADA requirements are met with the ability to have the site translated into other languages being a plus.

D. Post Services

The hired company will continue to provide support for the EDC website, including any security and software updates. The hired company will provide a quick response to questions and situations that may arise with the website when contacted by the EDC.

VII. Proposal Contents

Does the proposal include all the requested?

- A. A written statement that reflects the need and desired outcomes for an update for the Kandiyohi County & City of Willmar EDC.
- B. A description of the website design process and detailed timeline, including an overall estimated amount of time and cost from the start of the project to the launch of the new website.
- C. Description of how each phase of the project will be completed
- D. Detailed description of how site analytics will or can be collected to review the accuracy of the site meeting goals created by the EDC for the new site.
- E. Description of post-redesign services, including estimates for site assistance, updates, and who is hosting the site.
- F. References to past sites built and clients.