



Visions Northwest Regional Economic Development Group
A Division of the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
WITC - Hayward, WI
January 13, 2016 – 10:00 AM

1. Meeting called to order at 10:08 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.
2. **Roll Call:** Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, David Minor (ITV) – Representing Douglas County, Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Ken Maki – Representing Sawyer County, Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Dale Heikkinen (ITV) – Representing Price County, Andy Albarado (ITV) – Representing Rusk County, Renee Watcher – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group), Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB (ITV), Teresa Stein – Representing Washburn County, Dale Kupczyk – Representing Economic Development Organizations (ITV)

Members Absent: Brent McFarland – Tribal Representative,

Others: Tim Weber – WEDC, Marie Steenlage - WEDC, Sheldon Johnson - NWRPC Staff, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest Administrator

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Burnett County, Taylor County

3. **Approval of November 11, 2015 Meeting Minutes**
A motion to approve the November 11, 2015 meeting minutes was made by Mike Bebeau., a second was made by Scottie Sandstrom. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Visions Northwest Administrator's Report**
Crystal gave a brief update to the group on some of the activities she has been involved in over the past quarter serving as the Visions Northwest Administrator. Her report was included in the meeting packet for review. Crystal updated the members on vacancy recruitment and voiced that there has been a struggle in the preliminary effort to fill those seats.

Kelly Klein noted that the group should do introductions considering a new member, Teresa Stein from Washburn County, had joined the board. After brief introductions, Teresa shared some information about herself and what brought her to her new role as Executive Director of the Washburn County Economic Development Corporation. We look forward to having Teresa as a member of Visions Northwest!
5. **Capacity Building Grant Update**
Crystal shared a copy of the award letter written to the Wisconsin Business Innovation Corporation (WBIC) dba Visions Northwest Regional Economic Development Group for the Capacity Building Grant of \$50,000. The grant will help finance a \$60,000 (\$10,000 NWRPC match) to conduct an inventory and evaluation of the public utility and infrastructure of the ten counties and five Native American Tribes in Northwest Wisconsin. Visions Northwest, NWRPC, and WEDC will work together in the coming weeks to form an agreement and contract. Once a contract is executed, work can begin on the project. Mike Bebeau mentioned that a press release should be published. Crystal will work with WEDC marketing staff to ensure the funding award and project are highlighted in an upcoming press release.
6. **Quarterly Beacon E-Newsletter Feedback and Ideas for Future Editions**
Crystal asked for feedback on the first edition of the newsletter and explained that some of the "bugs" from the first edition had been worked out. The next edition of the newsletter will go out to recipients/stakeholders around the 10th of March, 2016. After hearing suggestions made by members, the next edition will highlight the grant

award, upcoming regional economic development breakfast sessions, and the new website. Overall the feedback from the initial newsletter was positive.

7. Website Update

Crystal updated the group on the new website design. Preliminary work she has put into it was included in the meeting packet. She explained that this design is being done on a free online service called Wix and would potentially include some ads for Wix on the site. This should not interfere with the overall look or feel of the site. Crystal emphasized that the initial site will be the foundation to a work in progress. Feedback on the site design was good overall. Some suggestions were made regarding links to the counties and municipalities with them also linking their sites back to the Visions site. As Crystal continues work on the site, she will update the group and reach out for input.

8. Regional Summit Discussion

Crystal handed out a "Who/What/When/Where/Why/How" on a proposed format of "Regional Economic Development Sessions". These sessions would be "breakfast meetings" and would occur on three separate dates and at three different locations: Ashland, Siren, and Phillips. The first portion of the meeting would be informational with presentations given by staff from the Department of Workforce Development and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce pending availability. The second portion would include a facilitated discussion with the format yet to be determined. Crystal explained that these sessions align with the WEDC contract requiring that Visions Northwest "assume the role of convener, facilitator, and partner for all economic development entities in the region." After further discussion between the members, it was decided that the invitation list would include: chambers of commerce, local and county economic development officials, local business associations, and county board members from the 10 county region. Mike Bebeau recommended that a survey should also be provided for attendees after the session to allow for feedback. Geri Dresen suggested that a two hour format would probably not be sufficient to allow for "networking" to occur between attendees. Kelly Klein noted that one of the goals of these sessions is to keep them short and concise and to the point. Crystal will work with the facilities to confirm that there is an overlap of an hour after the meeting to allow for stakeholders to network after the meeting. It was also discussed that a "Resource Guide" would be made available for attendees that would include all of the information about economic development contacts throughout the region and state. Mike Bebeau mentioned that perhaps a "flash drive" containing the resource guide could also be shared with stakeholders. The Executive Committee members and Mari Kay-Nabozny as the NWWIB partner will convene at a later date to decide on the facilitated discussion portion of the sessions as well as the resource guide format and contents.

A motion to approve the breakfast session format was made by Mike Bebeau, a second was made by Renee Wachter. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Other/Confirm Next Meeting Date

Scottie Sandstrom sent around a flyer about an upcoming Business on Stage: "State Business Development Resources: What You Should Know" event at the Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland on January 26, 2016.

Sheldon Johnson informed the group that there are hearings scheduled on Senate Bill 515 to provide \$9,000,000 to WEDC to in turn give to Regional EDC's as a revolving loan fund. As it is now, the Bill requires a 1:1 match of funds. As more information becomes available, the board will be notified. A link to the current Senate Bill will be forwarded onto the members.

The next meeting of the Visions Northwest Board was confirmed for Wednesday, March 9th, 2016 – 10AM @ WITC Hayward.

10. Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 AM by Ken Maki, second by Scottie Sandstrom.