



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

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
WITC - Hayward
January 11, 2017

1. Meeting called to order at 10:05 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.
2. **Roll Call/Introductions:** Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County (ITV), Jenice Meyer (for Renee Wachter) – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group- ITV), John Will – Representing Education (WITC), John Richards – Representing Burnett County, David Minor – Representing Douglas County (ITV), Dale Kupczyk – Representing Economic Development Organizations (ITV), Becky Haase – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge), Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County (ITV)

Members Absent: Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Ken Maki – Representing Sawyer County, Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking), Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Brent McFarland – Tribal Representative

Others: Thomas Michels – Department of Workforce Development, Jim Miller – Outreach Representative – Congressman Duffy, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest Administrator

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County

3. **Approval of November 9th, 2016 Meeting Minutes**
A motion to approve the November 9th, 2016 meeting minutes was made by John W.; a second was made by Scottie S. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Administrator's Report**
Crystal R. included her report for October, November, and December of 2016 in the packet and highlighted a few of the key items during the meeting such as the 2016 update to the [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#) (CEDS). She also made note of her attendance at the Governor's Northern Economic Development Summit in Minocqua where she was able to spend time with WEDC staff and discuss Visions Northwest projects and potential proposals. Another key task was working with the WEDC Regional Account Manager and underwriters to submit the Capacity Building Grant Application for the Northwest Wisconsin Flood Resiliency Study for \$50,000 which was awarded in January.
5. **Wood Industry Group Collaborative - Update**
Crystal R. brought the board up to speed on the current status of the Wood Industry Group (WIG). Since the last Visions Northwest meeting in November, WIG members met with [Grow North](#) (our counterpart to the East) region to discuss further collaboration on projects, etc. During the first meeting between the two regional efforts, discussions revolved around potential for more timber to be cut and landowner education on sustainable forest management. Other ideas that surfaced during the meeting were training and education of economic development professionals and elected officials on the wood industry and a focus on getting more state legislators aware and involved. The next collaborative meeting will take place on 2-2-17 in Minocqua. A main goal will be to clearly define a purpose and leave with a firm idea on a project(s).

Kelly K. elaborated on a training session that he and Dale K. attended that was organized by the Wisconsin Wood Marketing Team. The session had a focus of training economic development professionals on retention of existing business and recognizing potential weaknesses during site visits with sawmills. Dale K. added that one of the main

things expressed was stabilizing the industry – in the case of loggers, workload can change day to day and certain rules and regulations can create challenges. He explained that it would be beneficial to bring in legislators in to train and expose them to Northwest Wisconsin operations.

John R. asked if the wood collaborative had a focus on more raw material or value added and Kelly K. explained that the focus is neither one of the other – the focus is the big picture and utilizing whatever resources we can to support the industry.

6. 2017 RiSE Sessions –Executive/Planning Committee Recommendations

Crystal R. reviewed the information sheet that was distributed to members in the meeting packet. She explained that it contained the recommendations that had been made by the planning committee during their meeting on January 5th, 2017. The sheet included the “what/when/where/how” details regarding the upcoming 2017 sessions for discussion with the board. The focus this year will be young professionals, talent and attraction in NW Wisconsin. The format will be a two hour breakfast session with a short presentation, a panel discussion between young professionals, and finally a facilitated discussion with participants. Three tentative locations were discussed between the months of April, May, and June. Crystal R. will continue to work with the planning committee to confirm locations, caterers, facilitators, and make decisions regarding the panel members for each location. The planning committee will reconvene for final decisions at the end of February and the invitations to register will be distributed to potential participants shortly thereafter.

Thomas M. with DWD mentioned a few studies that he found related to talent and attraction in rural communities such as a study done by Cornell University called, [How Can Firms Located in Rural Areas Better Position Themselves to Attract and Retain Millennial Talent?](#)

Jenice M. with UW-Superior mentioned that if there is a data need regarding attraction and retention of young professionals in NW Wisconsin that there is an upper-class social course that can provide assistance with surveys. The course starts in January and the data could be available as soon as November.

Potential sponsorships were discussed. Becky H. stated that is likely that Enbridge will be able to cover some of the food-related costs. John W. also offered that WITC could be a potential sponsor of the sessions.

7. Around the Table – Other Business

Crystal R. gave a brief update on the current Capacity Building Project relating the infrastructure in the region. The extension was granted through June 2017. The project will be completed and a presentation will be given at a meeting after the study and map server are completed.

Scottie S. shared information regarding the upcoming “[Business on Stage](#)” event coming up on January 24th. He also mentioned that the April Business on Stage will have a young professional focus to align with the State of Wisconsin’s Young Professional week.

John W. updated the board on a Lac Courte Oreilles-WITC partnership in offering a construction essentials certification and a potential for offering a CDL program also at LCO. WITC was also recognized as a military friendly school. HE also noted that their two northernmost campuses of Ashland and Superior have increased enrollment despite numbers declining in other areas.

8. Confirm Next Meeting Date

The next Visions Northwest meeting will take place on March 8th, 2017 at 10AM at WITC Hayward.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:19AM was made by John R.; with a second by Becky H.