



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

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
Northwest CEP, Inc. – Ashland, WI
May 12, 2016

1. Meeting called to order at 11:00 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.

Roll Call: Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, John Richards – Representing Burnett County, Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Teresa Stein – Representing Washburn County, Dale Kupczyk – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking), Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Jerry Hembd – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group)

Members Absent: David Minor – Representing Douglas County, Brent McFarland – Tribal Representative, Ken Maki – Representing Sawyer County, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County, Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County, Becky Haase – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge)

Others: Marie Steenlage - WEDC, Barb LaMue – WEDC, Mike Bailey – Wisconsin Innovation Network, Sheldon Johnson – NWRPC, Jason Laumann – NWRPC, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest Administrator

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County

*****Break from agenda for table discussion with Secretary Ray Allen from the Department of Workforce Development.*

2. **Approval of March 9, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the March 9, 2016 meeting minutes was made by Scottie Sandstrom; a second was made by Geri Dresen. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **RIsE Session Update**

Crystal updated the group on the first two RIsE Sessions and mentioned the great turnout in Ashland that most members were able to participate in prior to the meeting. Siren's results and feedback from the surveys was included in the packet. The results from Siren's event included the priorities in regards to economic development, education and workforce as well as the ideas and recommendations generated by participants. She explained that it will be insightful once all of the data is collected to see the trends/common themes being generated throughout the three locations in the region. These results will be shared with all three entities as well as all participants and will help guide us as we go forward in planning efforts and projects/funding opportunities. Once the comprehensive data is compiled it will be available for download on our website at www.visionsnorthwest.org.

4. **NRRI Tour Overview, Wood Products Initiative Discussion and Proposal for Funding**

Crystal briefed board members on the great tour given by the staff at the [Natural Resource Research Institute](http://www.naturalresourceinstitute.org) on 3/31/16 in Duluth. It was interesting and beneficial to members to learn how the research is being applied to the real world and business and industry sector. We met with Eric Singaas, Initiative Director for the Wood Utilization and Bio-economy group as well as the Don Fosnacht, Associate Director over the lunch hour and there seemed to be heavy interest in working with WEDC/Visions Northwest on potential collaboration moving forward. A follow-up conference call between Eric Singaas, Dani Jones (WEDC), Marie Steenlage (WEDC), Kelly Klein and Crystal Rohde was arranged and took place on 4/22/16 to discuss possibilities for collaboration and a potential funding opportunity. The application to the [UW Center for Cooperatives](http://www.uw.edu/centerforcooperatives) to access up to \$5,000 to fund development of an informal collaboration of regional stakeholders on a wood products initiative was included in the packet for members to view. Crystal will be informed if the application to access these funds was successful by May 20th, 2016. If awarded, these funds would be available for use in fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017). Visions

Northwest does intend to pursue the development of this collaboration toward this initiative regardless of this funding opportunity. Discussions have also began with the State Wood Energy Team (SWET) as well. It was mentioned that an additional potential collaborator could be Butch Johnson with Johnson Timber Company.

5. Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Update – Barb LaMue

Barb explained that the \$50,000 base funding for the nine regions was included in the preliminary budget again for FY17. There are also additional funds available for talent opportunities such as a familiarization tour as well as additional marketing dollars available. She also explained that the [Capacity Building Grants](#) will be available in FY17 at the same amount of up to \$50,000 per award. When a question was posed about the CAP grants being available to local partners as well as the regions, Barb explained that they do accept applications from local partners, but do emphasize an importance on the regions being heavily involved as well as a regional reach of the project. If the project does not have an extended reach beyond the community, it will be used as a pilot project and all information is shared for replication among other regions/communities. Barb shared a talent assessment of Wisconsin as one of WEDC's initiatives currently underway. She also mentioned enhancements to the rural development strategy explaining the importance of supporting the areas that DO need government intervention. Barb talked about the [InForce Network](#) as being a platform for communication between WEDC and local partners. Crystal will follow up with the group again at an upcoming meeting to see if there is more interest in doing training again on the platform. Efforts were made last August to arrange training with no interest. Barb also discussed the [Fab Lab](#) Funding for this upcoming fiscal year and said there were 91 applications made to the program last year and only 20 were awarded funds. The opportunity has generated much interest!

6. Confirm Next Meeting Date

Our next meeting will take place on Wednesday, July 13th, 2016 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM at WITC Hayward.

7. Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 12:06 PM by Mike Bebeau, second by Jerry Hembd.

DRAFT