



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

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
Flat Creek Inn & Suites, Hayward, WI
January 10, 2018

1. Meeting called to order at 10:06 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.

2. **Roll Call/Introductions:**

Members Present: Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Don Semler – Representing Sawyer County, Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Betsey Harries – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Jenice Meyer (for Renee Wachter) – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group)

Members Absent: Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County, Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Becky Haase – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge), Jim Caesar – Representing Douglas County, Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County, Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking), John Richards – Representing Burnett County, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), John Will – Representing Education (WITC), Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County

Others Present: Thomas Michels – Department of Workforce Development, Ken Pearson, Sheldon Johnson, Rick Roeser – Northwest Regional Planning Commission, Dave Pawlisch and Sarah Buschman – Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources, Bryan Antony and William Martin – Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA), Lee Shirey – Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA), Jim Miller – Congressman Duffy's Office, Mary Ann Lippert – Department of Administration, Governor's Northern Office, Melissa Rabska and Mary Lois Bolka – Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board (NWWIB), Seth Hudson – Cedar Corporation, Art Hancock – Town of Cable, Marie Steenlage – Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County, Tribal Representative

3. **Approval of November 8, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the November 8th, 2017 meeting minutes was made by Don S.; a second was made by Geri D. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Housing Resources/Programs Presentations**

William Martin from WHEDA gave an in depth overview of the programs and resources that WHEDA has for communities across Wisconsin. For additional follow-up, contact information for our regional representative is:

- ❖ *Bryan Antony*
Business and Community Engagement Officer
Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)
Office: (414) 227-3136 | bryan.antony@wheda.com | Cell: (608) 780-4668

Dave Pawlisch with the Department of Administration, Division of Energy, Housing and Community Resources provided a presentation on the Rural Economic Area Development Initiative (READI) program. If anyone would like a copy of the presentation emailed to them, please contact Crystal Rohde at crohde@nwrpc.com. For additional follow-up directly with DOA, please contact:

- ❖ *David J. Pawlisch | Bureau Director*
Department of Administration - Division of Energy, Housing, and Community Resources
David.Pawlisch@wisconsin.gov | Main: (608) 266-7531 | Direct: (608) 261-7538

Both presenters stressed the importance of a **regional housing approach** with bundled development projects across the region.

Lee Shirey with EDA gave a brief overview of his role with the agency and potential resources that may be available to local communities. To follow-up directly with EDA, contact:

- ❖ *Lee J. Shirey*
EDA – Chicago Regional Office
Main: (517) 447-4253 | lshirey@eda.gov

5. 2018 RIsE Sessions – Planning Committee Recommendations

Crystal provided details recommended by the RIsE planning committee including the platform, content, preliminary dates and locations, etc. Building upon previous RIsE Sessions, the theme for 2018 will be “Developing Attractive Communities”. The format will be the same as previous years, including a buffet breakfast with a presentation followed by a panel discussion. The panel will showcase a variety of projects focused on successful community attraction.

Preliminary dates for RIsE 2018 are: April 5th (Hayward), May 3rd (Washburn), May 31st (Phillips) – all sessions will begin at 8AM and convene around 10AM. Location details are still being finalized. More information through email will be distributed in late February/early March.

6. Wood Industry Collaborative - Update

The collaborative developed and finalized the strategic plan at the December 12th meeting outlining three main goals:

- 1) Maintain, grow, and replace the wood industry workforce
- 2) Expand the collaborative and develop legislative partnerships
- 3) Develop branding and marketing for the wood industry

A work plan was established for the upcoming meeting in February with clear, actionable steps to work toward goal achievement.

7. Inspire Northward - Update

Crystal noted that the Inspire Northward deployment plan/scope of work was included in the packet for participants to review. The scope of work for the project was submitted as a part of the application to fund the Inspire effort throughout the region to WEDC on November 10th. The plan outlines activities, deliverables, outcomes, and milestones. At this time, there has been no update on the application process other than the fact that it is currently in underwriting at WEDC.

8. Around the Table

- ❖ Don Semler informed the group of the upcoming workforce job summit planning that is underway in Sawyer County.
- ❖ Jim Miller inquired about the recent machine shutdown at Flambeau River Papers. MaryAnn Lippert assured that the Department of Administration is committed to helping and the DWD, etc. sent “SWOT” teams to help with immediate needs of those impacted by the shutdown.
- ❖ Seth Hudson noted that there will be an upcoming Housing Forum hosted by Momentum West on February 16th, 2018. For more information, contact Steve Jahn at steve@momentumwest.org.
- ❖ MaryAnn Lippert highlighted the upcoming Superior Days and Heart of the North Days. She also noted that there are five counties within the northwest region that have not applied for Broadband Expansion grants and that it is never too early to think about the next wave of funding – counties need to start putting together partnerships to move an application forward. There will likely be a mini-training session with staff at the Public Service Commission at Superior Days.
- ❖ Marie Steenlage provided an update on the FabLab grant program through WEDC and noted that eight schools expressed interest and six schools applied for funding from the region.

9. Confirm Next Meeting Date

The next Visions Northwest meeting will take place on March 14th, 2018 at WITC Hayward at 10:00 AM.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:35AM was made by Don S.; with a second by Betsey H.