



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
July 11, 2018

1. Meeting called to order at 10:03 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.

2. **Roll Call/Introductions:**

Members Present: Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County (ITV), Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking), Lynn Fitch – Representing Sawyer County, Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County (ITV), Jenice Meyer – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group)

Members Absent: John Richards – Representing Burnett County, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Betsey Harries – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Becky Haase – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge) (ITV), Jim Caesar – Representing Douglas County, Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County, John Will – Representing Education (WITC)

Others Present: Thomas Michels – Department of Workforce Development, Melissa Rabska – Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board (NWWIB), Marie Steenlage – WEDC, Mary Gage – WEDC, Ken Pearson – NWRPC

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County, Tribal Representative

3. **Approval of March 14th, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the March 14th, 2018 meeting minutes was made by Scottie S., a second was made by Leo N. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Presentation: Public Finance Moving Northwest Wisconsin Forward**

Ken Pearson, Loan Fund Manager with NWRPC provided an update on the various NWRPC loan programs, focusing on recent millennial lending throughout the region. Ken's presentation can be viewed [here](#).

5. **Election of Visions Northwest Executive Committee Members**

Tabled until future meeting when a quorum of board members is present.

6. **Visions Northwest Key Initiative Updates**

2018 RISE Series:

Crystal explained that the 2018 RISE Series was again deemed a success considering the feedback received from participants across the region. There were over 100 participants throughout the three locations this year: Hayward, Washburn, and Phillips. Dave Armstrong's Placemaking presentation proved to be a good topic and led to many engaging discussions through local panels. One common piece of feedback throughout the years has been that the sessions aren't long enough. All resources are available from the 2018 Series on our website at <http://www.visionsnorthwest.org/rise-sessions-1> including Dave's entire presentation that was professionally recorded and made available online. Northwest Regional Planning Commission will be collaborating with West Central WI Regional Planning Commission to perform the Placemaking process in the Hayward Community this Fall/Winter. Washburn has also expressed interest in moving forward with the process as well. The Visions Northwest Executive Committee will convene shortly after the first of the year in 2019 to discuss what comes next for RISE.

Inspire Northward

Melissa Rabska, Inspire Northward Administrator, provided an update on the process of deploying Inspire Northward across the 10-county region. She explained the outreach efforts to date and provided a [graphic handout](#) which included a list of companies onboarded onto the system, initial pilot schools, as well as “where we have been”, and “what’s next”. To date, there are 17 companies onboarded, five pilot schools identified, and face-to-face outreach has been done in seven of the 10 counties. A business sign-up day was coordinated in Washburn County and another is being scheduled for July 31st, 2018 at the Superior Chamber office from 10AM-2PM. Presentations are still being offered to those counties with any upcoming chamber, local EDC’s, and community-based organizations that have business connections. Direct targeted outreach to employers will begin as well as the creation of a condensed video on how to sign up on Inspire and the development of a “tool kit” for local partners and regional stakeholders. Outreach to K-12’s will continue as the ‘18-’19 school year gets underway.

Wood Industry Collaborative

Crystal noted some of the recent “accomplishments” of the Collaborative:

- The Forestry Technician Program from Northwood School/WITC/Ericson Logging visited Nicolet College to inform other school districts in the Grow North region about the program that was developed and could be replicated.
- The Collaborative helped coordinate a “Timber Tour” with the Department of Financial Institution’s Secretary and Deputy Secretary.
- Grow North is currently working on a billboard project to help create awareness of the benefits that managed forests bring for recreation, habitat, and the environment. Signs will be constructed on county forest land with donated materials from industry partners. Visions Northwest hopes to replicate this project in some of our counties through a potential grant opportunity in 2019.
- As a result of conversations through the Collaborative, the Department of Workforce Development is working with industry representatives to discuss training needs related to the logging industry to develop pathways to meet the needs of industry. A meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 31st from 10AM-12PM at GLTPA office in Rhinelander. If any members would like to attend, please let Crystal know ASAP.

As a reminder, all Visions Northwest members are invited to attend our Wood Industry Collaborative meetings. Our next meeting is scheduled on August 23rd, from 10:30AM-12:30PM at the Minocqua Town Hall. Please let Crystal know if you’d like to be added to the correspondence.

7. Around the Table

Crystal noted that the FY19 WEDC base funding application is yet to be received. Mary Gage with WEDC stated that the application would likely be sent out sometime in August.

Scottie Sandstrom (Bayfield County):

- Planning for the upcoming Tech Ed to business day: Building Business and School Relationships is scheduled for October 17th, at WITC Ashland.
- The upcoming Business on Stage featuring Scottie S. and Betsey H. discussing the ABC’s of EDC’s will take place on July 26th and the Great Northern Visitor Center.
- Bayfield County was recently designated as a “Telecommuter Forward” county. Telecommuter Forward! will designate Wisconsin communities where broadband speeds, local support and co-working space combine to make ideal remote working environments.

Jenice Meyer (NorthWERC – UW-Superior):

- NorthWERC is scheduled to meet again in September.
- UW-Superior is now offering online eight-week modules in their Business Administration program.
- Douglas County/Superior recently submitted a Broadband Expansion Grant application.

Melissa Rabska (NWWIB):

- NWWIB will be releasing the third Workforce Waves Podcast – podcasts can be listened to at: <http://www.nwwib.com/podcast/>
- NWWIB’s Business Services Team also hosts monthly webinars the can be viewed here: <http://www.nwwib.com/bizserviceswebinars/>. A special webinar is scheduled for Thursday, July 26th at 11:00 AM: *The Story Behind the Investments in Wisconsin’s Workers*. More information as well as registration can be found at the link above.

Dale Heikkinen (Price County):

- Price County has been approached by FirstNet regarding cell phone towers going up that allow for EMS/Police to utilize service first.

Marie Steenlage (WEDC):

- Small Town Forums will take place in Hurley on September 19th – for more information and to register, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hurley-small-community-forum-tickets-46371183458>
- FabLab grants will be awarded in mid-October
- If interested in learning more about Connect Communities, contact Marie at marie.steenlage@wedc.org.

Lynn Fitch (Sawyer County):

- Sawyer County/LCO EDC has been absent for about six months considering its volunteer board without an Executive Director
- A Workforce Resource handout was recently produced
- Hayward area plans to move forward with a Placemaking process which included a recent survey sent out to juniors and seniors throughout Sawyer County school districts asking them what would make them stay/bring them back to the area. Results will be incorporated into the process.
- A housing study will be developed in near future – will be contracting out to complete the study
- The group has been successful recently in bringing the downtown business leaders together
- The county is still struggling with the organization of a broadband expansion grant application
- WITC -Hayward will be hosting an Open House (cookout) on July 25th from 10AM-1PM

8. Confirm Next Meeting Date

The next Visions Northwest meeting will take place on September 12, 2018 at WITC Hayward at 10:00 AM.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Lynn F.; with a second by Scottie S.