



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
March 9, 2016 – 10:00 AM

1. Meeting called to order at 10:00 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.

Roll Call: Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, David Minor (ITV) – Representing Douglas County, Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Brent McFarland – Tribal Representative, Ken Maki – Representing Sawyer County, Dale Heikkinen (ITV) – Representing Price County, Mari Kay-Nabozny (ITV) – Representing NWWIB, Teresa Stein – Representing Washburn County, Dale Kupczyk – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking)

Members Absent: Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Renee Watcher – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group)

Others: Tim Weber (ITV) – WEDC, Marie Steenlage (ITV) - WEDC, Danielle Jones – WEDC, Christine Berry – WEDC, Mike Bailey – Wisconsin Innovation Network, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest Administrator

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Burnett County, Taylor County

2. **Approval of January 13, 2016 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the January 13, 2016 meeting minutes was made by Dale Kupczyk, a second was made by Scottie Sandstrom. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **Visions Northwest Administrator's Report**

Crystal gave a brief update to the group on some of the activities she has been involved in between January and February of 2016 serving as the Visions Northwest Administrator. Her report was included in the meeting packet for review prior to the meeting. Crystal highlighted from the report that EMSI Economy Overview reports are available on the website and requests for reports can also be made. She also highlighted that she attended the NorthWERD meeting to discuss collaboration in the upcoming RIsE Sessions, the website was finished and launched on 2/8/16, the Quarterly Beacon second edition was sent in early March, and the final RIsE invitations were distributed.

4. **Wood Products Initiative Information and Discussion – Danielle Jones and Christine Berry, WEDC Staff**

Aligning with our high priorities set forth in our 2015 5 Year CEDS, we invited key forest products sector staff to present and inform the group about efforts being made to expand the forest and wood products potential throughout the state. Danielle gave a presentation of WEDC's Division of Business & Industry Development, the Sector Strategy Development division within the organization. She explained the Priority Industry Sectors throughout the state and the engagement and general investment criteria. She also gave a breakdown of the company support resources for the forest products sector such as DNR, DATCP, DOT, WEDC, DWD, etc. She emphasized the importance in involving industry in the preliminary conversations. She recommended reaching out to industry and regional academia to find out where they are headed and where sector development can occur and to focus on non-traditional markets with a longer view and more innovative ways of thinking. Christine Berry provided an overview of some of the efforts being made in the Grow North region that she has been involved in and how our project visions could align with their efforts. She provided great insight to the group and offered to work with Marie Steenlage to begin conversations between the two regions (Grow North and Visions Northwest) regarding the forest products industry. Next steps will be to try to arrange a meeting between the two regions as well as industry, etc. to work collaboratively to further the efforts. Brent McFarland also discussed the

use of tribal connections and how forming strategic partnerships with tribal entities can benefit all involved. He gave the Lac du Flambeau Tribe as an example of success in forming these strategic partnerships.

Kelly Klein also gave an update on the Natural Resource Research Institute tour that is planned for Visions Northwest members on March 31, 2016. He provided a map with directions on parking, etc. Crystal will provide final details the week prior to the tour to those participating.

5. Website and Quarterly Beacon E-Newsletter – Update and Feedback

Crystal was happy to announce that the website launched on February 8, 2016! Overall feedback has been positive and we are happy to have a web presence to send stakeholders to for information about Visions Northwest and our efforts going forward. She explained that there was a \$117 fee attached with attaching the visionsnorthwest.org domain name to the website before it went live. This will be an annual fee going forward and will come out of the base funding. She also informed the group that the “Buildings and Sites” portion of the website had been updated by GIS Planning to fit into the new webpage. This Locate In tool will be provided by WEDC at no cost to Visions Northwest going forward. The services are the same as before, but at no cost to us (we paid \$6,000 last fiscal year for this tool).

The 2nd Edition of the Quarterly Beacon was distributed on March 1, 2016 and highlighted the new website, the CAP Grant Award Letter and the upcoming RIsE sessions. The next issue will go out June, 2016 and will most likely include updates on our forest products discussions, NRRI tour, and RIsE Sessions.

6. Capacity Building Grant Status Update

Crystal explained that she still has not been provided with a contract for the infrastructure project from WEDC. WBIC will meet on 3/11/2016 to approve the contract between NWRPC and WBIC for the work involved. Once this document is signed, it will be forwarded to Tim Weber and a contract should be provided at that point. The project timeline will be affected by this contract being released later than anticipated, but the work should be completed by early 2017 depending on what the contract states.

7. Economic Development Breakfast Series

Crystal referenced the document provided in the packet which included all of the final details for the upcoming sessions called RIsE: Regional Insights on the Economy – final dates/locations, details for the format, cost of the event, etc. were discussed and a draft copy of the handout to be provided at the meeting was distributed. Another “reminder” invitation will be distributed by email again as the event dates approach.

8. Business Partnerships/Membership Discussion

Crystal informed members of a call she received from a public relations consultant for Enbridge during the end of January. He called to inquire about collaboration/sponsorship opportunities for Enbridge and Visions Northwest. The Visions Executive Committee met on 2/24/16 and discussed offering an “At Large Membership” opportunity to Enbridge. Enbridge accepted this offer and will be appointing their key community affairs staff person to the board prior to our next meeting. We look forward to welcoming them to the table!

9. Around the Table – Other Business

Crystal added this agenda item as a platform for members to speak freely about any other topics or issues they would like to bring to the board. It will remain as an agenda item for upcoming meetings.

Leo Naumann, our newest At Large member discussed his role on the board and gave a brief overview of his company, Jeff Foster Trucking. Welcome, Leo!

Mike Bailey with the WI Innovation Network also briefly spoke about the Innovation Network and welcomed any opportunities for collaboration going forward between the two entities.

10. Confirm Next Meeting Date

Crystal notified the group that the tentatively set meeting for May 11th, 2016 will be moved to May 12th following the RIsE event in Ashland that morning. This decision was made by the Executive Committee on 2/24/16. The RIsE session will be at Hotel Chequamegon from 8-10AM with the Visions Northwest meeting following at the Ashland Area Development Corp. conference room from 11-12:30. Please make note of this change in your calendars

11. Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 AM by Dale Heikkinen, second by Dale Kupczyk.