



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

MEETING MINUTES
VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP
WITC Hayward – Room 4
September 13, 2017

1. Meeting called to order at 10:07 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), Don Semler – Representing Sawyer County, Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Jenice Meyer (for Renee Wachter) – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group) (ITV), Ruthe Batulis (for Becky Haase) – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge), Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County (ITV), Jim Caesar – Representing Douglas County, Betsey Harries – Representing Economic Development Organizations

Members Absent: John Richards – Representing Burnett County, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), John Will – Representing Education (WITC), Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County, Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking),

Others Present: Marie Steenlage – WEDC, Thomas Michels – Department of Workforce Development, Jim Miller – Outreach Representative – Congressman Duffy, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest Administrator, Mary Lois Bolka – NWWIB

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Taylor County, Tribal Representative
3. **Approval of July 12th, 2017 Meeting Minutes**
A motion to approve the July 12th, 2017 meeting minutes was made by Don S.; a second was made by Ruthe B. Motion carried unanimously.
4. **Executive Committee Election**
Treasurer/Secretary (vacant – previously held by Ken Macke)
Kelly K. asked if anyone was interested in the position. Mary K.N. asked if meetings for the Executive Committee took place in Ashland. Geri D. expressed interest in the position.
A motion by Mari K.N. was made to nominate Geri D. as Treasurer/Secretary, second by Jim C.
A motion by to cast a unanimous ballot to elect Geri D. as Treasurer/Secretary was made by Don S., a second by Scottie S. Motion carried unanimously.
5. **WEDC FY18 Funding Application**
Crystal R. explained that the core requirements of Visions Northwest had not changed from FY17 to FY18 for base funding so the application was similar to what was submitted in FY17 with any updates to initiatives as needed. Crystal R. will work with Mari K.N. to utilize the \$5,000 available to the regions for talent recruitment visits, etc. aligning with the Superior Talent Initiative that the NWWIB coordinates. The current application for FY18 funding is in underwriting at WEDC and it is their intent to have draft contracts out to the regions by the end of the month. The end of the first quarter is September 30th and the first disbursement request and performance report is due by the end of October.
6. **Infrastructure Capacity Analysis – Final Copy Disbursement**
Final copies of the analysis were distributed to board members after revisions were made from the July meeting. Dale H. noted that the Village of Prentice information was still not accurate. Crystal R. will update the document* to reflect the updates and can be accessed directly at <http://www.nwrpc.com/DocumentCenter/View/1333>. For

members distributing information to their respective counties, please direct people to the Visions Northwest Website at <http://www.visionsnorthwest.org/key-projects> for the most recent version of the plan.

(*updates have been made as of 9/14/17 to the document online and map server)

7. Wood Industry Group Collaborative - Update

Crystal R. referred to the SOAR results from the packet and noted that the group will be moving into the final stages of strategic planning to identify clear goals and objectives - short and long term. Kelly K. gave a brief overview of the initiative to the board for new members and expressed that anyone at the table was invited to join the collaborative for future meetings. Please let Crystal R. know if you'd like to be included in the correspondence. Crystal R. shared that the wood collaborative had been given the opportunity to present during a 45-minute breakout session at the Governor's Northern Economic and Community Development Summit at the end of October in Trego. Kelly K. will provide a brief overview of the collaborative and then Brian Brashaw, Program Manager from the Forest Service, Forest Products Laboratory will present on the future of the wood industry. Also, in August, Several members attended a tour of the Forest Products Lab in Madison to learn more about their research being conducted and had the chance to discuss opportunities with several state agencies. Kelly K.'s assistant also drafted Wood Industry Collaborative logos for the board to review and provide comments on.

8. Career Crusing Inspire - Update

Crystal R. referred to the one-page summary that had been distributed in the packet providing an overview of what the goals of the Inspire initiative are and what some of the benefits include for students and employers. Crystal R. explained that the budget and application for funding to support the deployment is still being drafted in partnership with NWWIB. The budget will include a two-year model for deployment. Considering WEDC's Targeted Industry Project (TIP) program requires a 1:1 match (can be in-kind), leveraging time from local economic development and partners will be critical in finalizing the application. Realistically, deployment efforts will begin early in 2018.

9. Around the Table – Other Business

Don S. noted that they recently had the Hayward Superintendent come to their local Sawyer County/LCO meeting to provide an update.

Scottie S. talked about the event that he is helping coordinate on October 19th at Northwestern High School in Maple with local partners bringing together TechEd teachers from the CESA 12 area – the event will also highlight a panel of local manufacturers.

Mari K.N. discussed the new Retail and Hospitality Industry Career Pathway that has been formed than can be done online at varying levels. She will share the information with Crystal R. who will then distribute to the board members. Mari K.N. also talked about the upcoming WEDA Conference "Convening on Wisconsin's Workforce" taking place in Elkhart Lake September 27th-29th.

Marie S. noted the WEDC, International Finance Assistance Road Show coming to Superior 8am – 12:30 on Friday, October 20th at WITC. She also thanked local partners for their assistance in coordinating industry visits throughout their respective counties.

Jim C. was excited to announce the grand opening for Epicurean on 9/14/17 – this business makes high-end, gourmet kitchen cutting boards and utensils. The business is relocating to Superior from Duluth. Jim C. also noted several other developments currently underway such as the downtown hotel, apartment complexes, etc. as well as housing initiatives that are taking place across the Superior area.

Betsey H. discussed the many levels of construction underway in the Ashland area highlighting the three Kwik Trips, Cobblestone Hotel next to the Deepwater Grille, the Daycare Co-op (in partnership with NWWIB), and the fieldhouse at the Ashland High School.

Geri D. noted that fiber optics are being laid throughout Bayfield County, improvements will be taking place on Hwy 2, and that there are several new businesses in Iron River including Runamuk Rides specializing in sales and service of marine and UTV/ATV products, as well as our multi-season rental fleet of boats, jet skis, ATV/UTVs, and touring and performance snowmobiles.

Several board members noted the issues that all of our communities are facing with housing needs. It was noted that housing should be on the Visions Northwest agenda for future meetings.

10. Confirm Next Meeting Date

The next Visions Northwest meeting will take place on November 8th, 2017 at WITC Hayward at 10:00 AM. The 2018 tentative meeting schedule was also distributed. Geri D. noted the March date may conflict with the Governor's Tourism Conference for many board members.

11. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Jim C.; with a second by Don S.

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