



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 August 12, 2015 – 10:00 AM

Meeting called to order at 10:16 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.

- 1. Roll Call:** Scottie Sandstrom – Representing Bayfield County, Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Ken Maki – Representing Sawyer County, Dale Kupczyk – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Renee Watcher – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group), Dale Heikkinen (via ITV) – Representing Price County and Mari Kay-Nabozny (via ITV) – Representing NWWIB [note: ITV units were experiencing technical difficulty throughout the meeting]

Members Absent: Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County, Mike Spafford – Representing Washburn County, Brent McFarland – Tribal Representative, Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Mike Bebeau – Representing Private industry (Xcel Energy)

Others: Marie Steenlage – WEDC CAM, Sheldon Johnson - NWRPC Staff, Myron Schuster - WBIC President, Crystal Rohde – Visions Northwest staff

Vacant Seats: Ashland County, Burnett County, Taylor County

2. Approval of May 20, 2015 Meeting Minutes

No quorum was present at the time for approval. No comments or changes were suggested to the 5-20-2015 minutes.

3. Discuss Changes in NWRPC Staffing for Visions Northwest

Myron Schuster explained to the group that Wayne Lindemans, former staff for Visions Northwest had retired from Northwest Regional Planning Commission, effective July 3, 2015. He introduced Crystal Rohde, staff member at NWRPC for the past 10 years, as Wayne's replacement, effective August 1, 2015. Crystal briefly introduced herself and the group welcomed her.

4. Update on WEDC FY16 Funding and Potential Capacity Building Grant Projects (Review "Minimum Requirements for Regions")

Myron Schuster stated that the Regional Leadership Council had met on July 9, 2015 and WEDC FY16 Funding was discussed. On July 22nd, email correspondence from Kathie Colbert at WEDC indicated that the WEDC Board approved a total of \$450,000 base funding (\$50,000/EDO) with no match required and would not be based on population. The email also stated that the WEDC Board approved a 10% increase in Capacity Building Grants to \$550,000. These grants are also available to other partners, not just EDO's. A copy of the email correspondence as well as the guidelines for the Capacity Building Grants was included in the meeting packets for the Visions members. Myron introduced the "Branding, Banding, Retaining and Expanding –

Minimum Requirements for Regions” document and explained that the five core functions listed are what each region is expected to commit to achieving. Myron told the group that it is not likely that all five core functions can be met at the \$50,000 base funding level and that the Visions group will need to discuss and then focus efforts on specific functions that the group thinks it can achieve at the level of funding received. Much time was spent by the group discussing Capacity Building Grants and how the goals set forth in the CEDS could align with projects that fit into the criteria for Capacity Building Grant Funding. Myron informed the group that the Capacity Building Grants are capped at \$50,000 per project and do require a match. It was decided that preliminary discussion on applications for Capacity Building Grant projects would be discussed more during agenda item 7. Ken Maki raised a question about the possibility of the Visions members meeting with the consultants at WEDC to help raise a voice for the Northwest Wisconsin Region. Marie Steenlage offered to verbalize to them that the group would like to meet with them. Although a timeline is unclear, it is assumed that a contract will be coming from WEDC within the next couple of weeks and will be on our next meeting’s agenda.

5. CEDS Status Review

Crystal Rohde reviewed the draft changes to the CEDS document. She notified the group that she changed the “look”, but the contents of the document remained unchanged from the previous draft they had received back in May. She asked for input/comments on the design and also reminded the group to supply pictures to help with creative efforts in producing the document. It was decided that the “Report Card” section would be removed and replaced with something different that aligned with the other items on the second page. Discussion occurred regarding the “Major Committed Projects of Regional Significance” section of the document. Crystal asked the group what their intentions were for that portion of the document. The group informed her that the section was intended for a list of committed projects supplied by counties, municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, etc. Crystal will draft a letter to send out the week of August 17th to those previously listed asking for a list of up to three projects that are currently “committed” (does not require that funds have been obtained yet) and set forth to happen within the next three years. Crystal will ask that the project lists are completed and returned within 10 days to allow time for compiling and incorporating into the CEDS document. The Visions group will then review the list (with recommendations from NWRPC about which projects are eligible for funding through the Economic Development Administration) and decide which projects they would like to “highlight” on the following page. Once the project section of the CEDS is complete it will be in a final draft format.

6. Strategic Planning Action Items Status

Crystal Rohde reviewed the goals set forth in the Action Plan in the CEDS and explained that Goal 1 (re: infrastructure) and Goal 2 (re: workforce development strategy) could lead to projects that would align with the criteria for the Capacity Building Grant guidelines. The group started with goal 1 and preliminary discussion took place about possible projects. The group decided that the focus would be on hard instead of soft infrastructure. Conversation was had about transportation (rail) and sewer/water being the main emphasis. Sheldon Johnson stated that there may be matching funds available from NWRPC Transportation (planning) funds depending on the scope of the project. Goal 2 was briefly discussed, but it was decided that the group would need more input from Mari Kay-Nabozny and would revisit the discussion when she was able to participate in the meeting. Due to time, goal 3 was not brought up, but revisiting these Action Items will be on the next agenda after the group generates more ideas on possible project ideas.

7. Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 9th, 2015 - 10 AM to 12PM, WITC - Hayward

8. Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 12:15 PM