



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

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**MEETING MINUTES**  
**VISIONS NORTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
**WITC, Hayward, WI**  
**July 10, 2019**

1. Meeting called to order at 10:02 AM by Chairman Kelly Klein.

2. **Roll Call/Introductions:**

**Members Present:** Kelly Klein – Representing Iron County, Cole Rabska – Representing Bayfield County, Dale Heikkinen – Representing Price County (ITV), Leo Naumann – Representing Private Industry (Jeff Foster Trucking), John Richards – Representing Burnett County, Geri Dresen – Representing Chambers of Commerce, Jim Caesar – Representing Douglas County, Joel Zimmerman – Representing Washburn County, John Will – Representing Education (WITC), Betsey Harries – Representing Economic Development Organizations, Mari Kay-Nabozny – Representing NWWIB, Lynn Fitch – Representing Sawyer County

**Members Absent:** Becky Haase – Representing Private Industry (Enbridge), Mike Bebeau – Representing Private Industry (Xcel Energy), Andy Albarado – Representing Rusk County

**Others Present:** Jenice Meyer – Representing Education (NorthWERD Group) (ITV), Carly Burson – UW-Superior Center for Community Engaged Learning, Jim Miller – Congressman Duffy's Office, Craig Harmes, Dairyland Power Cooperative

**Vacant Seats:** Ashland County, Taylor County, Tribal Representative

3. **Approval of April 10, 2019 Meeting Minutes**

A motion to approve the April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019 meeting minutes was made by Jim C.; a second was made by Leo N. Motion carried unanimously.

4. **Presentation: Economic Development Assistance ~ Dairyland Power Cooperative**

Craig Harmes, Manager of Business Development with the Dairyland Power Cooperative provided a presentation of [Economic Development Assistance Available from Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative](#).



For more information about resources, visit <https://www.dairylandpower.com/>. To view the presentation, click [here](#). Any questions regarding the presentation can be directed to Craig Harmes at 608.787.1310 or [craig.harmes@DairylandPower.com](mailto:craig.harmes@DairylandPower.com).

## 5. **Visions Northwest Board Membership – Term Updates**

Several members of the board have terms expiring as of July, 2019. Per the Administrative Guidelines, at the end of a member's term, the member may be reappointed for another term and there will be no limit to the number of terms a member may hold.

Crystal received verbal confirmations from many members stating that they would like to be reappointed to another term, including Cole Rabska, Leo Naumann, Mari Kay-Nabozny, Joel Zimmerman, and Kelly Klein. These member terms will be extended for another three years.

Any members whose term is expiring that were not present to confirm appointment will be contacted in the coming days through email.

## 6. **Visions Northwest Key Initiative Updates**

### ***2019 Rise Series Update***

Crystal updated the board on the feedback for: Rising to Success: Business Startups in Northwest Wisconsin.

- ✓ Thursday, May 2nd, 2019 - Hayward
- ✓ Wednesday, May 22nd, 2019 - Phillips

Feedback was included in the meeting packet and was very positive again! All session follow-up is available on our website at <https://www.visionsnorthwest.org/rise2019>

Board members began to talk about possible topics for our 2020 series and included discussion about potentially focusing on our aging population as an asset for our workforce shortage... "Hire the Retired"

### ***Inspire Update***

Inspire is going through some big changes at a state level. Career Cruising as it is currently known will no longer exist and is being migrated to a new platform called Xello. With this change, access to Inspire in Career Cruising is removed and program outages for all users will begin on July 29<sup>th</sup>. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, Inspire in Xello is made available to network administrators and on September 4<sup>th</sup> will be available to business partners. On September 12<sup>th</sup>, Inspire in Xello will be live and available to school districts.

In the meantime, our Inspire Northward deployment is in limbo. We are waiting until data is migrated to the new platform before we continue an outreach effort to businesses. We have officially asked WEDC for an extension on our deployment grant to extend through August of 2020 considering the migration to this new platform.

### ***Wood Industry Collaborative - Update***

Crystal has completed the Capacity Building Grant application for WEDC for the "Know Your Wisconsin" project with Discover Mediaworks. The project outline and components were included in the meeting packet for members to review. We are currently seeking financial support from industry partners for the match portion of the grant opportunity prior to submittal. We have \$6,000 of the \$15,000 required match committed through two partner groups. We are hoping to have more industry partner groups provide financial support to help move the application forward to WEDC in the coming weeks. Discussion occurred at the meeting regarding local economic development contributions (donations) as another potential funding source for the project.

## 7. **Fall Housing Summit Discussion**

Information regarding the upcoming Momentum West Housing Conference was disseminated. This event will occur in Rice Lake on August 15, 2019 at WITC from 9AM-3PM. If members are interested in attending, registration can be completed [here](#).

Board members discussed the possibility of promoting this event or hosting one of our own in the northwest region. It was decided that Visions Northwest should organize and host an event here and tailor an agenda to suit the unique needs of our region. Topics that were discussed included:

- Multi-family housing
- Seasonal housing
- Regulations – local, state, and national codes

- Inventory what cities/counties/municipalities have completed housing studies and what have been the outcomes?
- Need for developers to attend
- Need for regionalization of projects to attract developers
- Discussion of appraisal values
- What are other areas doing to incentivize and what have the outcomes been?

A subcommittee of members will be formed to outline an agenda and plan the housing summit. A tentative date has been set for next Spring, 2020.

## 8. Around the Table

- ❖ Joel Z. noted that the next Washburn County Economic Development Corporation banquet will be held on April 1, 2020. The group intends to bring in Andrew Davis, author of Town, Inc. and is seeking potential sponsors and support to offset some of the costs. If any other county economic development entities have interest in "leasing" Andrew's services for part of the day, please contact Joel Zimmerman at [joelz@washburncountyedc.org](mailto:joelz@washburncountyedc.org).
- ❖ Leo N. stated that he and others had been out in Washington D.C. lobbying for the trucking industry for the [Drive Safe Act](#). Through this effort, 18-year-old students would be legal to drive interstate after a probationary period, allowing the industry to compete with higher education for an immediate post-high school workforce.

John W. noted that currently the CDL training program is not currently financial aid eligible, which creates a barrier for some interested students. There would need to be legislative action to change this.

- ❖ Lynn F. stated that Sawyer County is currently focusing on recidivism from incarceration through a partnership with workforce resource offering a construction essentials course immediately following release from jail.
- ❖ Jim C. discussed the many multi-family housing units being built in Superior by a developer. They are also contracting with a company called "[The Retail Coach](#)" that offers a fully customized system of products and services that better enable communities to maximize their retail development potential.
- ❖ Cole R. noted that Bayfield County is still heavily focused on broadband topics and recently presented at a Telecommuter Conference to showcase broadband and telecommuter success in the county.
- ❖ Dale H. added that Norvado recently acquired Price County Telephone Company and will focus on broadband/fiber expansion in the area.

## 9. Confirm Next Meeting Date

REMINDER: 2020 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) SWOT Analysis

In 2020, the CEDS will require a full update including a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Aspirations (SWOT) analysis. From the analysis, priorities and goals will be set forth for the next five-year plan. Please mark Wednesday, **October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019** on your calendars to participate in a full day planning session (9AM to 3PM) at Flat Creek Lodge in Hayward – this will be the first (and most important) step in revising the 2020 CEDS for Northwest Wisconsin.

## 10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:55AM was made by Joel Z.; with a second by Cole R.