

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING  
**MINUTES**  
October 11, 2012  
EDC Office, Willmar

Present: Jon Anderson, Robert Carlson, Ronald Erpelding, Duane Hultgren, Rick Nordin and Milan Schmiesing

Excused: Beverly Dougherty

Ex Officio: Jim Butterfield and Bruce Peterson

Staff: Steven Renquist, Executive Director and Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Media: Anne Polta, West Central Tribune

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

President Ronald Erpelding called the meeting to order at approximately 11:00 a.m.

**AGENDA—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Milan Schmiesing, SECONDED BY Robert Carlson, to approve the agenda and the following Consent Agenda:

**CONSENT AGENDA—**

- Approve:
1. Minutes of September 13, 2012 board meeting
  2. Financial reports as of September 30, 2012, subject to audit
  3. Payment of the REDstar invoice of \$1,878.33 to be paid from the Marketing and Public Relations Committee's budget
- Accept: Committee Minutes
1. Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag) 8/16/2012
  2. Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE/R) 9/5/2012
  3. Marketing and Public Relations 8/27/2012
  4. Leisure Travel 8/13/2012

MOTION CARRIED.

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

**Willmar.** Bruce Peterson reported on activities by the city of Willmar, including reviewing the Mills project plans; the Goodwill project is moving along; the Minnesota Department of Transportation is expanding its District 8 headquarters facility; Ridgewater College submitted its plans; receiving preliminary plans for a barbecue place; and his increased responsibilities due to the public works director leaving. The Public Works/Safety Committee approved two projects—improvements at the Willmar airport and construction of the western interceptor sewer project.

[Duane Hultgren joined the meeting.]

Peterson reported Phase 2, release of the former airport land, is expected in two weeks; infrastructure improvements west of County Road 5 will be done next year; the Public Works/Safety Committee also reviewed contracts for design of the Lakeland Drive interceptor sewer and a lift station at MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC); and reconstruction of Lakeland Drive between Willmar Avenue Southeast and Civic Center Drive will also be done.

**EDC/MWTC.** Steve Renquist reported he attended a conference by the Initiative Foundation in Little Falls on "Saving Your Hometown Grocery Store," which recommended communities look at community-owned groceries; the EDC will pursue New London participating in Willmar's Community-Owned Grocery (COG); the COG is looking at potential sites in Willmar; meetings have been held concerning Highway 12 improvements and completing the Highway 23 four lane; Renquist has been tasked with seeking potential investors for road projects; he is working with individuals concerning the fixed base operator at the Willmar airport; his appointment to a Steering Committee as to the goals of the Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center; attending the International Bio Energy Days conference in Mankato this week and making good contacts—the EDC was a sponsor of the conference; no appointments have yet been made to the Dairy Research, Teaching and Consumer Education Authority. Renquist informed the board he was invited to a meeting with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

Jean Spaulding reported the Animal Science Venture Forum was a huge success with more participation by metro companies; the Forum is a way to get people from outside the area to see MWTC. President Erpelding passed around the program book from the Forum. Spaulding stated Dan Malmstrom, president of Douglas Scientific, gave an excellent talk at the Forum. Jagi Gill of Tenex was interviewed for the EDC's newspaper tab in which he promoted the MWTC and stated Tenex is looking at expanding its manufacturing to the MWTC in 2013. Spaulding and MWTC have started planning for Life Science Alley—the EDC is a co-sponsor with MWTC, which pays for a booth. Spaulding attended a regional intake center meeting for the Minnesota Angel Network (MNAN); MNAN created an alliance with a Twin Cities organization that mentors technology-based and software development businesses; one of MNAN's certified companies received \$1 million in funding; two other companies in greater Minnesota have also been funded; Spaulding attended an advisory session for a healthcare software development company with ties to Willmar and was assigned its mentor—she will meet with them next week regarding their business plan; she is working on Discover Manufacturing that will be held October 23; participating teams in the Minnesota BEST Robotics Program will practice at the Kandi Mall on October 20 with the competition being held October 26-27 at NL-S Schools; and she is actively involved in the Economic Development Association of Minnesota and the Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers, both of which are working on their legislative agendas.

Peterson reported he presented a \$1.25 million check to MWTC for the MCROC grant project.

President Erpelding noted this year's Discover Manufacturing is taking a different focus and will be open only to local area schools. President Erpelding complimented the *West Central Tribune* on its recent article and editorial on the area's workforce needs.

**Willmar Design Center.** Peterson reported next Wednesday will be a downtown planning meeting where 2013 major projects will be discussed, including a parking study, design of gateways, the trail project, its impact on the downtown and a trail head.

**Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center (WAM-BC).** Spaulding reported Los Primos relocated to the WAM-BC kitchen and is using its technical assistance. WAM-BC received a grant from the Otto Bremer Foundation for technical assistance.

#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

**2013 goals.** Renquist reviewed with the board his list of “EDC Projects and Potential Projects” (see attached), which was also presented to the BRE/R Committee and asked for the board’s recommendation as to the importance of projects or potential projects. Board members liked the 10 areas laid out in a basic format and then built on with specifics to reach a measurable goal. President Erpelding requested this list be sent to the EDCOB along with the following columns added for the board to rank the list: 1) do now; 2) concentrate on in the future; 3) put on hold or eliminate and 4) routine/ongoing. An 11 and 12 labeled Other will be added to this list. The board will be asked to place their name on their rankings and bring their rankings to the November board meeting, at which time the board will discuss and reach a consensus on those items to do now and set timelines and, if time allows, those projects to do in the future. Ex officio board members will participate in the ranking. The board’s goal is to have no more than 20 projects in the do now category. The board requested **Renquist** add a short narrative to each project he feels should be a priority. Consensus building on the 2013 goals will be the first agenda item after the Consent Agenda at the November board meeting.

#### NEW BUSINESS—

**Agribusiness and Renewable Energy Specialist position and office.** President Erpelding reported a meeting was held with him, Duane Hultgren, Denis Anderson, Harlan Madsen and Steve Renquist, resulting with the following recommendations: 1) whoever is hired will be on a six-month probation; 2) the person must be an employee versus a contract position; 3) it will be a part-time (half time) position; 4) the position will office at the downtown EDC office; 5) the current job description will be reviewed, refocused and narrowed for a part-time position; 6) the process to fill the part-time position start as soon as possible; and 7) if candidates are not acceptable, the position be reopened. Following discussion of the position being part time, the board added to item 3) “with the possibility of full-time based upon the qualifications of the candidate and performance.” As to item 7), the board recommended the ad state the position is open until filled.

IT WAS MOVED BY Duane Hultgren, SECONDED BY Milan Schmiesing, to recommend the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission Joint Powers Board accept the resignation of Catherine Keuseman as the Agribusiness and Renewable Energy Development Specialist. MOTION CARRIED.

IT WAS MOVED BY Duane Hultgren, SECONDED BY Milan Schmiesing, to approve the following recommendations and forward them to the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission Joint Powers Board for adoption as to the Agribusiness and Renewable Energy Specialist position: 1) whoever is hired will be on a six-month probation; 2) the person must be an employee versus a contract position; 3) it will be a part-time (half time) position with the possibility of full-time based upon the qualifications of the candidate and performance; 4) the position will office at the downtown EDC office; 5) the current job description will be reviewed, refocused and narrowed for a part-time position; 6) the process to fill the part-time position will start as soon as possible;

and 7) the want ad will state the position is open until filled to allow time for finding an acceptable candidate. MOTION CARRIED.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS—**

**BRE/R.** Renquist stated Spaulding gave an excellent report on the business survey done by the University of Minnesota.

**Technology Advisory Subcommittee.** Spaulding reported a broadband conference will be held in November in Duluth. School districts have been invited to send students to the broadband conference to learn how to work on computers—four students from NL-S will attend and take advantage of this opportunity. Spaulding is participating in a webinar this afternoon on moving forward the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities goals and expanding broadband and infrastructure in the state as there are still some gaps. Minnesota Connect is bringing cellular and broadband conversation into one discussion. Minnesota Connect's report as to speed and coverage in Kandiyohi County shows the county has room for improvement.

**Finance.** Rick Nordin reported the information provided at the Finance Seminar was great, but there was low attendance by small business owners, who were the target audience.

**Marketing and Public Relations.** Spaulding reported the committee is fine tuning the newspaper tab before publication.

**Leisure Travel.** Erpelding reported he is very impressed with Beth Fischer and what the Willmar Lakes Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) is doing. A Zombie 5k run is being held October 20 at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center; the Bike Minnesota with Parks and Trails Labor Day Weekend Expedition will be held at Sibley State Park in 2013; October 20 is the Minnesota BEST Robotics Program practice at the Kandi Mall from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. outside the JC Penney entrance. **Spaulding** will find out if the practice will be filmed and shown on WRAC-8. The board agreed the majority of the tourism activities occur in the northern part of Kandiyohi County. Jim Butterfield stated the number one goal of the CVB and the Leisure Travel Committee is to bring visitors to Kandiyohi County.

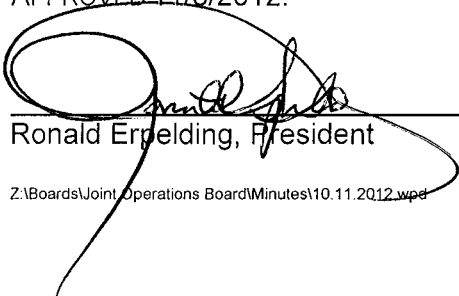
**Other.** Peterson informed the board he will be out of town for the November meeting. Hultgren thanked the board for pursuing its goals.

**NEXT MEETING—**The next regular board meeting is **11:00 a.m., Thursday, November 8, 2012,** at the EDC office.

**ADJOURNMENT—**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:35 p.m.

  
Rick Nordin, Secretary

APPROVED 11/8/2012:

  
Ronald Erpelding, President

## **EDC Projects and Potential Projects**

The purpose of this list is to provide the EDC Operations Board with a partial listing of EDC projects and how they apply to the current 5 – Year Goals. There is no intent to suggest the Operations Committee should endorse all of these goals as a specific work plan – it is to be a menu of opportunity to assist the board in determining direction for staff/committee which areas should receive concentrated attention.

1. Business retention programs
  - a) Align effort with \_\_\_\_ Kandiyohi County Communities – **Goal #1**
  - b) Consistent zoning/ regulatory review – **Goals # 1 & 4**
  - c) Discover Manufacturing. . Innovation Showcase – **Goals # 1 & 4**
  - d) Community Owned Grocery – **Goals # 1 & 5**
  
2. Business expansion – Build capacity
  - a) Social media and internet programs – **Goal #1**
  - b) 100% broadband coverage – **Goal #1**
  - c) Financing workshops – **Goal # 1**
  - d) Item of measurement - Increased number of businesses – **Goal # 1**
  - e) Item of measurement - Increased number of jobs – **Goal # 1**
  - f) Item of measurement - Increased dollar value of jobs – **Goal # 1**
  - g) Pre-zoning of rural agri-business intensive sites – **Goal # 1**
  - h) Animal Science Conference and Venture Forum – **Goals # 1, 3 & 4**
  - i) Promote development of local Angel Investment group – **Goals # 1, 3, 5**
  - j) Market Kandiyohi County – **Goals # 1, 4 & 5**
  - k) Facilitate success of new Willmar Industrial Park - **Goals # 1 & 4**
  
3. Business attraction
  - a) Railroad – Passenger, west-end yard, Willmar Industrial Park – **Goal # 1**
  - b) Downtown business attraction – all cities – **Goal # 1**
  - c) Individual city as they identify opportunities and needs – **Goal # 1**

4. Medical regional center
  - a) Downtown Willmar parking study – **Goals # 1 & 2**
  - b) Parking ramp – sales tax - **Goals # 1 & 2**
  - c) Extended-stay lodging - **Goals # 1 & 2**
  - d) Assist in staff attraction and retention - **Goal # 2**
  
5. Airport
  - a) Increased direct utilization – FBO, marketing plan - **Goal # 6**
  - b) Increased indirect utilization – aviation related businesses - **Goal # 6**
  - c) Satisfaction of present users of facility - **Goal # 6**
  - d) Air-taxi and charter - **Goal # 6**
  - e) Metro over-flow, cargo - **Goal # 6**
  
6. MinnWest Technology Campus
  - a) Attraction of new businesses to facility, marketing & sales - **Goal # 3**
  - b) Attraction of personnel to businesses - **Goal # 3**
  - c) Continuation of Agri-business and Renewable Resource Office – **Goal # 3**
  
7. Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center
  - a) Assist University in identifying purpose – **Goals # 1, 3, 4 & 5**
  - b) Commercialization of intellectual property – **Goals # 1, 3, 4 & 5**
  - c) Assist University in marketing the facility – **Goals # 1,3 & 5**
  - d) Recruit entrepreneurs and businesses to utilize facility assets – **Goals # 1 & 3**
  - e) Successful 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Animal Science Venture Forum – **Goals # 1, 3 & 5**
  - f) Participate in International Bio-Energy Days – **Goals # 1, 3 & 5**

8. Cooperation with similar agencies
  - a) Regional renewable resources corridor – **Goals # 1, 4 & 5**
  - b) Regional bio-sciences corridor – **Goals # 1, 3 & 4**
  - c) Highway 12 Improvement and Regional Marketing Coalition – **Goals # 1 & 4**
  - d) Finish Highway 23 – **Goals # 1 & 4**
  - e) U of M Office of Commercialization. IREE, IRETI – **Goals # 1 & 4**
  
9. Commercialization of renewable energy projects
  - a) Ag bio-mass to anhydrous ammonia – **Goals # 1, 3, & 5**
  - b) Fuel cell, algae – **Goals # 1, 4 & 5**
  
10. Value added agri-business related projects
  - a) Large dairy – Pennock – **Goals # 1 & 5**
  - b) Large beef finishing operation – **Goals # 1 & 5**
  - c) Dairy Research, Training and Consumer Education facility – **Goals # 1, 3, 4 & 5**
  - d) Turkey Research and Development facility – **Goals 1, 3, 4 & 5**
  - e) Turkey litter combustion – **Goals #1,4 & 5**