

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB)  
MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING  
MINUTES  
December 17, 2012  
EDC Board Room, Willmar**

Present: Jean Geselius, Ann Winge Johnson and Joanna Schrupp

Excused: Shari Courtney and Julie Redepenning

Absent: Heather Koffler and Liz VanDerBill

Guests: Betsy Bonnema, REDstar Creative and Sara Goebel, Marketing Director for Marcus Construction

Staff: Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

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

Jean Spaulding called the meeting to order at approximately 12:11 p.m., welcomed guest Sara Goebel and explained the efforts and goals of this committee followed by self introductions.

**MINUTES—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Jean Geselius, SECONDED BY Joanna Schrupp, to approve the minutes of the November 26, 2012 meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Newspaper tab.** The committee reviewed a final proof of the newspaper tab, which will be printed this month. Geselius suggested putting a link to the tab on Facebook requesting feedback.

**Bring Them Back Home.** Spaulding informed the committee a survey has not yet gone out to local employers concerning reinstating the Bring Them Back Home Program. The committee viewed past *Closer to Home* newsletters done through the Bring Them Back Home program. Joanna Schrupp indicated she has heard more employers speak of recruiting individuals who were raised in the area and believes the Bring Them Back Home program is worthwhile. Schrupp is willing to hold a tenant meeting regarding the program. Bonnema indicated companies are interested in a recruiting piece on the area and it may be of benefit to coordinate marketing efforts with others. Sara Goebel suggested attracting both former residents of the area and others and include what has changed since you lived here, opportunities available for a family, career and a place to call home and suggested doing teasers on Facebook to direct individuals to the EDC's website. Geselius indicated a local company did a contest using a Facebook app that was very well done. Spaulding stated the program will continue to be a focus. Possibly partnering with the Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce (WLACC) and the Willmar Marketing Coalition that just adopted a new tagline, "Expect great things," was mentioned. Possible training of realtors or human resources personnel on information to provide to new residents and employees was suggested, such as where are the common

popular locations, such as coffee shops, medical facilities, etc. Spaulding will speak with the WLACC on how to expand the program.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**2013 marketing plan/projects.** Spaulding informed the committee the 2013 budget is again \$33,000 and highlighted two projects on which to focus: 1) determine how impactful the newspaper tab was for the approximate cost of \$9,000, should it continue to be done and, if so, how often; and 2) work with local realtors on whether the local property search feature on the EDC's website should continue past 2013 at an annual cost of approximately \$4,600. Spaulding intends to meet with area realtors on the search feature and a relationship with the Minnesota Commercial Association of Realtors (MNCAR).

**Willmar airport marketing.** Steven Renquist joined the meeting to request the assistance of the committee for marketing the new Willmar airport and attracting complimentary businesses to the vicinity of the airport. The next Airport Commission meeting is in April; Renquist suggested committee members may wish to attend to find out what the commission is seeking. Airport fly-ins were discussed. In St. Cloud, a local nonprofit does the fly-in and hires staff to manage it. One comment made during a meeting attended by Spaulding was the airport is an economic development tool and should maybe be a higher priority in marketing the community. It was the consensus of the committee that the city of Willmar needs to define what marketing it is seeking and what are its objectives for the airport so this committee can ask the right questions to assist. It was suggested to invite someone from the city of Willmar or the Airport Commission to attend a future committee meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:15 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next scheduled committee meeting is **12 noon, Monday, January 28, 2013** at the EDC board room.