

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING

**MINUTES**

March 14, 2013  
EDC Office, Willmar

- Present: Rollie Boll, Robert Carlson, Beverly Dougherty, Robert Enos, Gary Gilman, Rick Nordin and Milan Schmiesing
- Ex Officio: Jim Butterfield and Bruce Peterson
- Staff: Steven Renquist, Executive Director, Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director and Leroy Petersen, Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Specialist
- Media: Anne Polta, West Central Tribune
- Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

President Bev Dougherty called the meeting to order at approximately 11:00 a.m. and introduced Leroy Petersen, the EDC's new Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Specialist. Petersen provided his background in agriculture, education and employment and what his work with the EDC will entail. New board member Gary Gilman was also introduced and welcomed.

**AGENDA**—There were no changes to the agenda.

IT WAS MOVED BY Milan Schmiesing, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to approve the agenda and Consent Agenda as emailed.

**CONSENT AGENDA**—

- Approve:     1.     Minutes of February 14, 2013 board meeting  
               2.     Financial reports as of February 28, 2013, subject to audit
- Accept:       1.     Committee minutes:  
                  a.     Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development  
                          1/17/2013  
                  b.     Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment 2/6/2013  
                  c.     Finance 2/12/2013  
                  d.     Leisure Travel 1/7/2013

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

**Willmar Design Center (WDC).** Dougherty stated the WDC received a Legacy grant to explore a downtown Willmar historic district and is currently reviewing Minnesota Main Street's requirements for historic preservation; public meetings will be held to gain support of the historic designation; RFPs will go out to see if enough buildings qualify; qualifying buildings receive tax credits; the new director of the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office is coming to Willmar May 19; Willmar has not yet created a downtown restoration commission

similar to what Litchfield has done; the WDC is moving ahead with its stakeholder fund raising and is at 17% of its goal; donations can be made through the WDC's website. Board members recommended moving forward cautiously with historic designations in light of the former Willmar airport terminal. Steve Renquist offered to speak to the WDC's committee on the pros and cons of historic designation. Renquist reported the Community-Owned Grocery is moving forward with a site selection; the downtown parking study is moving forward; Lakeland Hotel has new ownership and he is optimistic on the new owner's plans. Jean Spaulding recommended the WDC speak with Steve Salzer and Joanna Schrupp concerning historic preservation.

**Willmar.** Bruce Peterson reported he has been focusing on engineering; Willmar city staff is awaiting completion of an organization study; 2013 improvement projects are out for bid; the city will complete bids for the Willmar Avenue reconstruction from 22<sup>nd</sup> Street to County Road 5 to be done this summer; the western interceptor sewer project will be completed this summer; the Robbins Island trail will be bid; Rice Care Center completed its most recent construction phase; Peterson is working with Bethesda Pleasant View on a major expansion, as well as with Torgerson Properties on its legacy project and tax abatement; Mills Auto will continue work on its dealership by Mills Ford; a parking study presentation will be made next week; the Willmar Planning Commission approved several new businesses at MinnWest Technology Campus (MWTC), one of which will operate a bakery and coffee shop; the city is working on the Willmar Avenue trail along County Road 5 by the ball field to Highway 12; is partnering with Kandiyohi County on a trail from County Road 26 to the Eagle Lake public access and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) site; the city received plans from MnDOT and Ridgewater College for their expansions; the city has \$30 million in projects for 2013. Peterson will work with the EDC on a contact looking for 30-40 acres to develop a compressed natural gas from waste conversion project; he is working on getting approval to demolish the former Willmar airport terminal, which is now formally on the National Historic Register; the city is in the process of rezoning the former airport property for an industrial park; is constructing a 400' cul de sac for four industrial lots in the former airport property; and the 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue and County Road 5 intersection will get a street light in cooperation with Kandiyohi County and the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission.

**EDC/MWTC.** Renquist reported the EDC is working with the Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center (MCROC), which has set up an avian research lab; he is on MCROC's advisory board and is working to recruit the turkey research and development center and dairy facility to Willmar; he continues to work with MCROC and intellectual property commercialization and is working on maximizing MCROC's potential. Spaulding is working on a marketing plan to maximize MWTC for business development; engineering has grown and makes this community unique; the robotics competition is moving forward with a five-year plan without the assistance of the EDC; MWTC sees the benefit of supporting engineering activities, such as the robotics competition; IT and computer sciences are other areas to develop; Ridgewater College was awarded a grant to do an entrepreneur program at MWTC. Spaulding will be working with the city of Willmar and townships on JOBZ annual reporting. March 20 Renquist and Spaulding will staff a booth and attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Minnesota Entrepreneur conference hosted by TiE Minnesota. Spaulding and five others from the area attended Economic Development Day at the Capitol, co-sponsored by the Economic Development Association of Minnesota, Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers and National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials. Rep. Bob Gunther is initiating a program with Southwest Initiative Foundation and southern Minnesota counties for funding programs for culturally diversified business development in southern Minnesota—Spaulding provided Gunther with information on the Willmar Area

Multicultural-Business Center (WAM-BC) to use as a model and he met with WAM-BC last week in this regard.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Employee Handbook.** Spaulding informed the board she, Milan Schmiesing and Nancy Birkeland reviewed and revised the handbook to fit the needs of the EDC. Attorney Dean Anderson reviewed the handbook and suggested a minor change. The revised handbook will be emailed to the board following this meeting to review prior to next month's board meeting where it will be asked to be approved.

There was no other unfinished business.

**NEW BUSINESS**—There was no new business.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**—

**Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development.** Renquist informed the board the NH<sub>3</sub> project may be moving forward—a group is in place to move forward with raising the necessary capital; Renquist and Leroy Petersen will travel to the state capitol May 18 to meet with legislators to discuss a regional resource zone from Meeker County and west to include up to 18 counties.

**Business Retention and Expansion/Recruitment (BRE/R).** Renquist reported the BRE/R Committee is looking to complete another business survey among a larger group of businesses and has set aside funding for eight website grants for the Technology Advisory Subcommittee's use.

**Technology Advisory Subcommittee.** Spaulding reported the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities program submitted its final report to the federal government. Spaulding and subcommittee chair Dean Bouta are meeting on the next steps. Discussion is being held on the need for better cellular coverage and she is looking to bring Minnesota Connect to Willmar for a presentation to discuss local needs. Cellular coverage in this area is more expensive than in the metro area. The board discussed the use of card readers in the local area.

**Finance.** Spaulding stated the Finance Committee did not meet in March, but may review a couple of projects in April.

**Marketing and Public Relations.** Spaulding reported the Marketing and Public Relations Committee did not meeting in February, but has been asked to attend a Willmar Airport Commission meeting in April.

**Leisure Travel.** Jim Butterfield reported the committee's last meeting was in the new addition at the Kandiyohi County Historical Society; this weekend is a national curling tournament at the Willmar Civic Center; the committee attended sport shows in Omaha and Sioux Falls and distributed more visitors guides than in the past and next week it will attend the Minneapolis sport show. The committee's next meeting is at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular board meeting is **11:00 a.m., Thursday, April 11, 2013**, at the EDC Board Room.

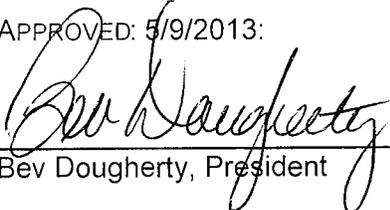
**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:56 p.m.



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Rick Nordin, Secretary

APPROVED: 5/9/2013:



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Bev Dougherty, President