

Florence County Economic Development COMMITTEE MEETING

MISSION: EDC will retain, expand and recruit a diversified business population which provides broad and varied job opportunities while safeguarding the area's natural surroundings.

Date: February 25th, 2016

Time: Thursday, 4:30 pm – 2nd Floor Conference Room - Courthouse

1. Call to order and roll call

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair, G. Steber. Members J. Bomberg, G. Steber, L. Dzekute and alternate E. Wenger were present. J. Halada and L. Neuens were excused. Director W. Gehlhoff, Joe Bestor and Florence Town Chair Tim Bomberg were also present.

2. Approve agenda

The agenda was approved on a motion by J. Bomberg, E. Wenger 2nd, motion carried.

3. Approve minutes

The minutes were approved on a motion by L. Dzekute, J. Bomberg 2nd, motion carried.

4. Discussion/Action re FCED Financial Management Resolution with Town of Florence

On a motion by J. Bomberg, E. Wenger 2nd, the FCED Financial Management resolution and promissory note will be amended to reflect starting in 2017, the County will pay \$1,000 per year toward the balance on the note. The FCED Commission will pay 100% of the net proceeds from industrial park land sales toward the note until the note is paid in full. Motion carried. The paperwork will need both Town and County Board approval. The remaining balance on the note is \$15,805.

5. Discussion/Action re Monthly Bill Approval

The January and February bills were approved on a motion by J. Bomberg, L. Dzekute 2nd. Motion carried.

6. Economic Development Project Updates

The attached EDC Project Update was review. Architectural drawings of the Birchwood Meadows Assisted Living Project were shared. Dr. Hassell sent information that his business lost 35% of its insurance billing this year when the County employees were moved to a different type of eye insurance plan. This has caused him to further reduce hours in the Florence office. He suggested two other insurance carriers that he works with that still offer the County insurance cost savings. The Committee suggested this information be forwarded to Donna Trudell to have the County insurance rep look investigate.

7. Board Member Concerns

J. Bomberg explained that the recent sale of Pride Mfg. to Medalist Corporation should be a big plus for the Florence operation. They expect to hire more people. Pride now has the ability to print on golf balls. She also mentioned that the Pride partnership with the new FHS Fab Lab has been beneficial for all parties.

8. Adjournment

On a motion by G. Steber, L. Dzekute 2nd, the meeting was adjourned. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gehlhoff – FCEDC Director

EDC Project Update February 25th, 2016

- **RLF Loan Program**
 - 13 loans in Fence, Florence, Tipler, Long Lake. Loanable balance \$208,517. All loans current or deferred.
 - Closing for Florence Sport & Bait to Whislers has not closed yet due to wait time for appraisal.
- **Forest Products Industry Support**
 - First meeting to organize new to develop Forest Industry Day for FHS students (5th-12th grades) to get hands on understanding of the industry equipment, process and careers via John Force Forestry grant.
 - Sustainable Forestry Conference 4/21/16 Steering committee finalizing agenda and speakers.
 - Grant for regional Wood Products marketing project has been reinstated by USFS from fire funds.
- **Business Development and Entrepreneur Support**
 - Assisted Living facility working through EB1 and SBA financing, preliminary plans are complete.
 - Drafted WEDC Connect Communities Application for Downtown business growth. Will hold March meeting to get final input from business owners and potential volunteers prior to 4/15 deadline.
 - TelePharm making connections to help find pharmacist for medical clinic tele-pharmacy services.
 - Planning 3/1 Business Plan Workshop for Kitchen Processors with NWTC and Business Counselor.
 - Notified of \$3,500 Catholic Diocese Economic Development Technical Assistance grant to do feasibility study for virtual and/or bricks and mortar business incubator to market locally made products.
 - 2015 County Sales Tax Revenue was up 2% versus 2014 (\$238,587 up to \$243,320)
 - Attended broadband conference to explore CAF II and state grant projects with providers.
- **Florence High School/Public Fab Lab**
 - Industry Advisory meeting discussed best certificate to prove work ready skill level of H.S. students and an April Tech Fair for students to present project to practice soft skills and business to highlight jobs.
 - Awarded \$1,000 WPS Foundation grant to help purchase higher capacity/resolution 3-D printer.
 - Assisted school with WEDC Fab Lab grant application for \$25,000.
 - Meeting with Superintendent and 3 professional retirees re how to grow industry jobs & entrepreneurs.
 - Need to ID new ways to promote Fab Lab to adult users to incubate product concepts.
- **TIF District (TID)**
 - Nothing to report at this time.
- **Tourism and Website Projects**
 - \$27,000 WI-DNR funding bill follow-up. Bills passed both houses and word is that Governor will sign.
 - Letters of support/application for possible selection to Governor's ORV Council to help get NE WI grants.
 - Writing and taping monthly radio ads re events/attractions in Florence County for 2 radio stations.
 - Press releases, promotion and event day help for Keyes Peak Ski Race/Lessons on 1/30 which attracted new families to ski hill from area school districts (88 students).
 - Promotional materials and activities for WinterFest 3/5/16.
 - Wrote February Chamber newsletter and post-Christmas event meeting & plan to move event to school.
- **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)**
 - Stakeholder discussions to prep for January meeting to determine path forward with CN and short lines.
 - Planning for 4/20/16 CN Vice President meeting with NRTC committee re short line leasing idea.
- **Other Projects**
 - Time spent on EDC as county position and department details ie financing resolutions, processes etc.