

Florence County Economic Development

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

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: March 18th, 2015

Time: Wednesday, 5:00 pm, 2nd Floor Jury Room – Courthouse

1. Call to order & roll call

The meeting was called to order by Chairman G. Steber. Board members G. Steber, T. Bomberg, E. Wenger were present along with FCEDC Director, W. Gehlhoff and Dave Stohl. S. McLain was absent.

2. Appoint new member at large

On a motion by T. Bomberg, E. Wenger 2nd, Dave Stohl, VP Consumer Lending with State Bank of Florence was appointed the new member at large in taking the place of Clyde Nelson who moved out of the area. Motion carried.

3. Approve agenda

An agenda was approved on a motion by T. Bomberg, E. Wenger 2nd, motion carried.

4. Approve minutes

The minutes were approved on a motion by E. Wenger, T. Bomberg 2nd, motion carried.

5. RLF Loan Program (discussion and/or action)

- a. **Review of 2014 RLF Loans:** On a motion by E. Wenger, D. Stohl 2nd, the summary of the 2014 loan payment information was accepted. Motion carried.
- b. **Current RLF loans – monthly payment status:** All loans are current after receipt of one double payment and review of an October double payment that paid ahead for another business. There is a \$170,000 balance in the program fund available to make new loans.

6. Financial Items: (discussion and/or action)

- a. **Monthly Bill Approval:** On a motion by E. Wenger, D. Stohl 2nd, the October - February monthly bills were reviewed and approved. Motion carried.
- b. **Approve director compensation:** On a motion by E. Wenger, T. Bomberg 2nd, the same 2% pay increase retroactive back to 1/1/15 received by the County Administrators was approved for the director as well as an increase in hours from 33 to 35 hours that will be reflected in the April 9th paycheck. Motion carried.

7. Industrial Park: The Town has a very busy schedule this summer. It is unknown at this time if they will be able to finish the leveling project. They are using the extra fill as needed. If not, the October Storm Water Management Permit renewal bill should be forwarded to Shelly at the town.

8. Update on projects: The attached EDC Project Updates were reviewed. It was noted that Toro, who recently purchased Boss Snowplow should be contacted as a potential participant in the industry advisory council for the school's new Fab Lab.

9. Board member concerns: DOT saved \$20,000 back in the 90's when the WRIC was built because we agreed that it would function as our Welcome Center so the WI-DOT did not have to build one in Florence.

10. Adjournment: On a motion by E. Wenger, T. Bomberg 2nd, meeting was adjourned. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gehlhoff – FCEDC Director

EDC Project Update 3/18/15

- **RLF Loan Program**
 - 14 RLF loans in Fence, Florence, Tipler, Long Lake. Balance to loan out \$170,000. Loans all current.
 - Press release about program to Mining News, Daily News, website, County Newsletter and others.
- **Forest Products Industry Support**
 - Located speakers, sponsors and details for 4/16/15 11th Annual Sustainable Forestry Conference.
 - CNNF SPA #1: 235 acres, 2.35 MMBF for \$150,000 of goods had 5 timber bids. Harvesting started.
 - Worked with Congressman Duffy and Senator Baldwin's DC aides on letter to CNNF Forest Supervisor to pressure for a much larger 2nd SPA ASAP. Duffy, Ribble, Johnson and Baldwin all signed the letter.
 - \$25,000 WEDC grant awarded to NewNorth/Grow North region Hardwood Products Market Expansion.
- **Business Development and Entrepreneur Support**
 - Facilitated "Resources to Grow your Tourism Business" with our Tourism area rep. 11 people attended.
 - Chamber newsletter detailed events and 2 new businesses: Kiddie Cottage + Eagle Marine & Sport Club.
 - Next newsletter will highlight new Superior Auto Detailing and two new bar owners in Long Lake.
 - Continued work on Independent/Assisted Living facility project in Florence TID.
 - Commissioned update to Lodging Study for TID. Was contacted by AmericInn for possible new location.
 - Facilitating DCHS and pharmacist partnership to establish small pharmacy in the Florence medical clinic.
- **TIF District (TID)**
 - Family Dollar will continue project once ground is ready this spring.
 - Investigated small reduction in TID value from 2013 to 2014. ID'ed discrepancy in Florence Hardwoods personal property taxable value. DOR will be correct giving TID to a positive growth from 2013 to 2014.
 - Florence Transport building project will not be complete for assessment by end of December, so it will show growth on 2015 assessment payable in 2016. Upfront monies are not paid until building is done.
- **Tourism and Website Projects**
 - Handled radio and print promotions for 3rd Annual Mike Roberts Memorial Ski Race & Lessons event at Keyes Peak. 80 kids from our region participated.
 - Working with Pat Smith, Lori Moore and our Legislators to get DNR funding for WRIC back into budget.
 - Facebook likes have grown to 8300 vs. 3000 last summer and 700 during 2012 summer due to grant projects driving people there and Lori Moore adding unique posts. Dickinson County has only 2000.
 - Working with TORPEDOS students and Meg on Dog Park signs, benches and details that will be located behind new RV Dump Station at the Visitor Center to draw in more US 2 traffic. Found used fencing.
 - Promoting Badwater Bass Tourney July 11th with no Ski-ters show or band. Hoping for party across st.
 - Organizing 50th Anniversary of the Wild Rivers state designation on June 13th with paddle on June 12th.
 - Promoted Wild Rivers/County at Madison Canoecopia 3-day trade show w/ Pat Smith & Aaron Johnson.
- **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)**
 - NRTC applied for WI-FRPP grant to purchase 40 new public owned log cars with 10 cars as match by CN.
 - Minor word change needed for this program to allow rolling stock application. WMC addressing this.
 - Building freight shipper decision maker network in 19 counties to get data to prove business to CN.
 - April or May meeting to initiate next DOT TIGER grant application for 150 regional public log cars.
- **Other Projects**
 - Wrote majority of DWD Fast Forward grant to develop a **Fab Lab** at FSD to feed workers to industry.
 - Facilitating Industry Advisory Committee for Fab Lab in partnership with NWTC & FSD Superintendent.
 - Fab Lab curriculum will expose students to high demand, good paying, safe, clean manufacturing jobs .

EDC Project Update 12/2/14

- **RLF Loan Program**
 - Currently 14 RLF loans - businesses in Fence, Florence, Tipler, Long Lake. Balance to loan out \$157,000.
 - All loans paying on time. New loan application requested - expect Spread Eagle Sales application soon
- **Forest Products Industry Support**
 - Locating speakers, sponsors and details for 4/16/15 11th Annual Sustainable Forestry Conference to include Panel on groups working with CNNF to get more timber harvested, Northern Long Eared Bat biology and listing guidelines, Forest Products Market trends and new DNR Industry specialists, Timber Related Tax Tips for Loggers and Landowners, WI and MI state level Forestry Council work, Tick Borne Illnesses and Habitat Plantings for Wildlife.
 - CNNF SPA #1: 235 acres, 2.35 MMBF for \$150,000 of goods had 5 timber bids. Final contract is being negotiated and several service items have been bid out. Will attend 12/15/14 steering committee meeting to get commitment from CNNF Supervisor Paul Strong to begin 2nd, much larger SPA ASAP.
 - Met with Senator Baldwin's local aide and conference call with her DC aide to get help applying pressure for 2nd SPA. Congressman Duffy's staff working with us for letter with Baldwin, Reid and Johnson.
 - WEDC grant awarded for \$25,000 NewNorth/Grow North regional Hardwood Products Market Strategy.
- **Business Development and Entrepreneur Support**
 - Family Dollar frost wall in and backfill/leveling done as first big snowfall was falling.
 - Day care business in Florence in Acorn Cottage building is hoping to open in January.
 - Assisting Superior Auto Detailing with \$4,000 micro loan application – loan meeting is next week.
 - Continued work related to developing a new Assisted Living facility in Florence County.
 - Facilitating DCHS and pharmacist partnership to establish small pharmacy in the Florence medical clinic.
- **TIF District (TID)**
 - Investigated why TID showed slight reduction in value from 2013 to 2014. ID'ed discrepancy in Florence Hardwoods personal property taxable value that DOR has signed off on correction that will change our TID to a positive growth from 2013 to 2014
 - Florence Transport building project will not be complete for assessment by end of December, so it will show growth on 2015 assessment payable in 2016. Upfront monies are not paid until building is done.
- **Northwoods Rail Transit Commission (NRTC)**
 - Next meeting in January to approve application to state FRPP for grant monies to purchase regional log cars and continue project to collect shipper data from businesses for rail use.
- **Tourism and Website Projects**
 - Handled radio and print promotions for 5th Annual Christmas in Florence. Delivered a 20 ft evergreen garland and 25 ft LED light string to 33 businesses on main street to replace business decorating contest.
 - Represented tourism industry at two County Deer Advisory Council meetings to review deer herd #'s.
 - Grant funded facebook ads for Badwater Bash and Wild River Tour helped push our facebook likes to 8300 vs. 3000 last summer and 700 during 2012 summer. We now have 200 keyword top 10 rankings
 - Completed fall advertising campaign (print, radio, facebook) to promote new Wild Rivers Tour. Final report being written on \$18,935 Wild Rivers 6 month JEM grant. This included \$2,000 to redo our Florence County Recreation Map – the final proof was sent to the printers today for 15,000 copies.
- **Other Projects**
 - Wrote Chamber Newsletter including article about Debbie Gursky (Cuisine Art) who moved her business here from an Iron Mountain side street and is very happy with increased traffic.