

**The Economic Alliance**  
**Board Meeting**  
January 27, 2010

**Attending Board Members:**

Jim Martin, Chairman  
Lael Duncan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  
Coleen Couch, Treasurer  
Nan Kallunki, Secretary

Raleigh Chinn  
John Belcher  
Andy Lampe  
Tom Gehring

Rich Watson  
Bill Black  
Mary Watson  
Kary Nichols

**Absent Board Members:**

John Andrist, Past Chairman  
Gail Howe  
Jerome Thiel

Michael Blake  
Kyle Desautel  
George Brady

Kate Jones  
Pam Leslie

**Staff & Guests:**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Ex. Director  
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant  
Art Himmler, Omak School Superintendent

Kristi Mollman, Omak Chamber  
Sheila Corsen, Omak Chronicle  
Arnie Marchand, VIA 97

Amanda Gehring, Twisp

Chairman, Jim Martin called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes: Lael Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes from October 28, 2009 and November 11, 2009. Coleen Couch seconded. Motion passed.

**Guest Speaker:**

Art Himmler, Omak School District Superintendent, spoke about the M&O levy that is currently out. This is not an additional or increased tax, but a replacement levy. Levy dollars provides funding for much of the academic programs and activities that are not included in the state's Basic Education formula, including instructional materials, books, student transportation, special education services, school counselors, sports/athletic programs, music, technology maintenance, library staffing, health services, building and sports fields maintenance, snow removal, extra-curricular activities, and other programs. State funding provides approximately 85% of the Omak Schools funding. This M&O levy provides the remaining 15% of necessary funding. Successful passage of this levy would generate additional state levy equalization funds of approximately \$1,139,200. Mr. Himmler stated that yard signs are available if anyone would like one. Mr. Himmler also spoke about the developing of the Virtual Schools. Currently 70 kids are enrolled in the Omak program from all over the state. This offers classes not offered normally, and provides a good variety for kids.

Andy Lampe questioned the perception that there is a lack of support for vocational type classes. John Belcher stated that Omak has one of the best vocational program, this side of the mountains. Andy suggested that the school district needs to bring this out more. Mr. Himmler stated that he hopes to bring the technology of the Omak School District up to a higher level to education kids for jobs that will be out there.

Arnie Marchand with the VIA 97 International Alliance spoke about his involvement with this group since its inception in 1991. This group promotes Highway 97 from Wenatchee to Vernon. It has evolved since the beginning and promotes Tourism, Trade, and Transportation. He would like the Economic Alliance to be the lead organization for this side of the border, since a major portion of Highway 97 is in Okanogan County. He felt that the Economic Alliance was an organization that could take this to the next level. It is currently sponsored by the RC&D and it would be a huge benefit if the Economic Alliance could step up and take this over. It was questioned how soon we would have to take action and what would be involved, both in financial commitment and personnel commitment. It was decided that we should consider this during the development of the 2010 Work Plan for the Economic Alliance.

**Board Business:**

Election of Board Members: The positions that are up for another three year term are:

Mary Watson, Central County #1 position  
Kyle Desautel, CCT Position  
Andy Lampe, Commissioners Rep #1  
Bill Black, Grand Coulee/Nespelem #1  
Tom Gehring, Methow Valley #1  
Rich Watson, NCW Business Loan Fund Representative  
Coleen Couch, South County #2

Lael Duncan made a motion to seat these members for another three year term. Kary Nichols seconded. Motion passed.

Election of Officers:

Slate of officers for 2010 were presented:

Lael Duncan, Chairman  
Nan Kullinki, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair  
Rich Watson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair  
Secretary, John Belcher  
Treasurer, Coleen Couch

Jim Martin will remain on the Executive Committee as Past Chairman.

Raleigh Chinn made a motion to elect the slate of officers as presented. Mary Watson seconded. Motion passed.

Vacant Board Positions: There is currently one vacant position on the Economic Board for the Colville Confederated Tribes. Kary Nichols thought that Ernie Clark, Manager of the Energy Department for the Colville Confederated Tribes, might be interested in this position. Roni Holder-Diefenbach will get in touch with him.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also stated that the Arts Community Representative, Kate Jones, would like to be replaced. Program Director for the Omak Performing Arts Center, Laura McNamara is interested in filling the remaining term for Kate Jones. John Belcher stated that he will contact her.

### **Executive Director Reports:**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed a report on her activities in December and January. She stated that a lot has happened over the past two months. She developed an online business survey on SurveyMonkey.com and has received 44 responses so far. She encouraged everyone who hasn't taken this survey to do so, as we are hoping to use this information to lead us in our planning process for 2010. You can access this survey by clicking on the link at [www.economic-alliance.com](http://www.economic-alliance.com). She will bring the results at the February meeting.

She has also been working with the Economic Development District project selection committee to evaluate and recommend priority projects for the North Central Washington Region (Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan County).

She met with a possible new business location to Okanogan County and arranged a site visit for them. Roni also attended a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) meeting in Olympia with Lael Duncan and Andy Lampe. This was a discussion on changing the CDBG program, which would affect how Community Action received funds. (please see attached Executive Director's Report)

### **Standing Committee Reports:**

Treasurers Report: Coleen Couch reported that 2009 revenues were down, but expenses were down also. We ended 2009 with a carryover of \$38,870. We still haven't made any decision about investing in a CD. Coleen will look into this. In 2010 we are projecting \$210,595 in revenues and \$201,750 in expenses and should have at least a \$40,000 carryover for 2011. The medical insurance was increased more than anticipated and staff elected to add a deductible to the RX portion of the plan, which will help to keep costs down. Jim Martin made a motion to adopt the 2010 budget as presented. Raleigh Chinn seconded. Motion passed.

Communication Committee: No report. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that she will update the web site with new Board members and officers.

Infrastructure Committee: The Infrastructure Committee met and approved and forwarded to the county commissioners a list of overall county infrastructure projects and those that were seeking funds from the Public Facility Fund. Raleigh Chinn made a motion to ratify the approval of the committee's prioritized list of projects. John Belcher seconded. Motion passed.

Overall County Prioritization List

1. City of Pateros-Extend Pedestrian Mall
2. Twisp PDA-Facility Upgrades\*\*
3. City of Omak-Design, bid docs, concourse & restrooms\*\*
4. Town of Winthrop-Paving Ice Rink Lot
5. City of Omak-SR 155/Central Ave Bridge\*\*
6. OCD-Food Depot Bldg Project
7. OCDC-SDTIP Sales and Marketing
8. OCDC-Small Timber Incentive
9. OCDC-Forester/Landowner Outreach
10. City of Brewster-Anderson Field Airport Water System
11. City of Tonasket-Dev Plan, etc Hwy 97/Whitcomb Ave
12. City of Tonasket-Extension city sewer & upgrade water main
13. City of Brewster-Angle Trailer ct. Water Main Replacement
14. City of Brewster-Water Comprehensive Plan

Of these 14 projects, six projects were seeking funds from the Public Facility Fund (.09 dollars). There was \$53,000 available to allocate for 2010.

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5. City of Tonasket-Extension city sewer & upgrade water main
6. City of Brewster-Water Comprehensive Plan

The committee recommended funding the top two projects, with \$15,000 for the city of Pateros and \$38,000 for the town of Winthrop. These two projects would be pulled out of the overall prioritization (as they were now funded) and the remaining projects would be moved up. The top three projects will be submitted to the Economic Development District from Okanogan County for prioritization in the three county region.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that we received an emerging opportunity application from the City of Oroville for costs associated with the transfer of ownership/operation of the Osoyoos Veterans Memorial Park from the WA State Parks Department. The Infrastructure and Executive Committee approved the request in the amount of \$50,000 contingent upon the city of Oroville's successful acquisition of the facility. This was presented to the Okanogan County Commissioners on Tuesday and they provided the final approval on this request. Jim Martin made a motion to ratify the action of the Infrastructure Committee and the Executive Committee. Rich Watson seconded. Raleigh Chinn abstained. Motion passed.

Business Education Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that the Economic Development District has also been looking at doing some webinar training for businesses. She will make sure that our local businesses are aware of these training sessions. Mary Watson stated that the web site for the Center of Entrepreneurship Virtual Center is up and working and could host a webinar workshop. Carolyn Davis reported that the Okanogan County Tourism Council is working on developing training workshop for customer service. Dr. June Darling will be conducting the workshop. It will be about 4 – 5 hours including lunch and they want to have one session in the Methow and one in the Omak area in April.

### **Old Business:**

Business Incubator Report: Lael Duncan reported that when this project first started there was a lot of interest and funds available, but over the years that has changed and at this time there is not the interest to continue with the development of a Small Business Incubator in Okanogan County. There were only two responses received from the ad for Request for Qualifications for the Small Business Incubator Feasibility Update. These were sent to the Incubator Committee to review. The committee met and they recommended the following:

- Contact the RFQ respondents and inform them that we have chosen not to pursue a Business Incubator at this time.
- Economic Alliance's Executive Director will continue to work with Senator Murray's office to identify what we can do with the land that was purchased for the Business Incubator, as well as the remaining money allocated for the project. We will probably have to sell the property and roll those funds into a new project.
- Work with the OK County Commissioners in identifying how to re-allocate the .09 Public Facility funds that were set aside for this project. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that we can look at other projects that would create and retain jobs for these funds.

### **New Business:**

2010 Economic Alliance Workplan: Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that the feedback she has received from the survey and suggestions from her employee evaluation will be used to outline a 2010 workplan. Jim Martin proposed that the VIA 97 be included in the workplan. The Executive Committee will work with Roni to get the 2010 Workplan drafted.

Rich Watson, Director of the NCW Business Loan Fund, reported that the Loan Fund has committed or already loan out \$625,000 in Okanogan County in the last six months. These loans created or retained 17 jobs. Two of these businesses were expanding and four were startups (2 in Twisp, 1 in Okanogan, and 1 in Omak). The bad news is that they are out of funding. The USDA doesn't think that our area is distressed enough, as the unemployment rate isn't high enough. Other funding was from the CDBG and that has been siphoned off and put in the state's general fund. They will continue to look for additional funding for other sources and foundations.

Raleigh Chinn reported that the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Ice Fishing Festival at Sidley Lake is scheduled for February 13. A 10 ft. boat will be given away for the highest weight of your two heaviest fish caught. Cost is \$20/adults and \$10 for 14 & under. The day will start with a pancake breakfast from 7 to 10 and you must turn your fish in by 4:00 p.m. There will be dog sledding demonstration and arts & crafts booths and end with a spaghetti dinner from 4 – 6.

Tom Gehring reported that the Twisp Public Development Authority is moving forward with designs for the acquired forest service property. They have five draft designs from the development meeting and the four areas of interest are agriculture, technology, education, and arts. The PDA Board will get together and find the common thread in these five designs and develop the master plan by April.

Meeting adjourned 12:45 p.m.

**Next Meeting January 27, 2010 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!**

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



## ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

### ACTIVITY REPORT

December 2009/January 2010

#### Executive Director:

##### Meetings Attended in **December**

- Community Visioning Webinar Meeting
- Twisp PDA/Board mtg Invent Manufacturing
- Washington State ADO Conference Call
- Incubator Committee Meeting

##### Meetings Attended in **January**

- NCW EDD/RCD
- NCW Business Loan Fund (Credit Committee)
- NCW Business Loan Fund Board Meeting
- CDGB meeting in Olympia
- Presentation to the OK County Commissioners

The Economic Alliance's Executive Director participated in a Community Visioning webinar. The recorded presentation can be found at:

<http://heartlandcenter.acrobat.com/p15752288/>.

Completed the .09 Public Facility process, contacted the applicants and informed them of the committee's selection. We provided them with the resolution passed by the Okanogan County Commissioners and informed the funded projects that they would need to contact Nan Kallunki to enter into a contract to access the funds.

Only two responses were received from the ad for Request for Qualifications for the Small Business Incubator Feasibility Update. These were sent to the Incubator Committee and at that time we reconvened the committee and they recommended the following:

- Contact the RFQ respondents and inform them that we have chosen not to pursue a Business Incubator at this time.
- EA Executive Director will continue to work with Senator Murrays office to identify what we can do with the land that we purchased for the BI, as well as the remaining money allocated for the project.
- Work with the OK County Commissioners in identifying how we will split the .09 public Facility funds in the amount of \$105,000.00 allocated to the EA for this project.

The Executive Director has also been working with the Economic Districts project selection committee to evaluate and recommend priority projects for the North Central Washington Region (Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan County) during the months of December and January.

Conducted a site visit from an instate start up who would like to relocate to Okanogan County.

Developed an online business survey on SurveyMonkey.com and received ytd 44 responses. I encourage everyone who hasn't taken this to do so as we are hoping to use this information to lead us in our planning process for 2010.

Received an emerging opportunity application from the City of Oroville for costs associated with transfer of ownership/operation of the Osoyoos Veterans Memorial Park from the WA State Parks Department. The Infrastructure and Executive Committee approved the request in the amount of \$50,000.00 contingent upon their acquisition. We presented this to the Okanogan County Commissioners who provided the final approval on this request.