

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
January 28, 2015
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Kurt Danison, City Planner
Janet Wilson, City of Okanogan
Lael Duncan, OCCAC
Sheilah Kennedy, County Commissioner

Dr. Erik Swanson, Omak School Superintendent
Chris Branch, OCTC Rep
Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board, Ok County
Arnie Marchand, Oroville VIC

Absent Board Members:

Kyle Desautel, Chairman, CCT Planner
Jeff Brender, NCW Business Loan Fund
Stacey Luckenmeyer, WVC
Alison Gillette, Twisp Works
John Andrist, No. Cascades Broadcasting
Central County Area #1 – Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant

Melanie Wyss, Gebbers Farm
Amanda Jackson-Mott
George Brady, Cascade Biological Supply, Pateros
Ted Piccolo, NNDF
Colville Tribal Fed. Corp. -- Vacant
Methow Valley #2 -- Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant
Ralph Malson, Omak City

David Gottula, MV Electric Co-op & Winthrop Chamber
Roz Jennings
Gail Howe-Jennings, Pateros

Kurt Danison, 2nd Vice Chair, called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

Approval of Minutes

Lael Duncan made a motion to approve minutes from the December 3, 2014. Sheilah Kennedy seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker

Chris Branch reported that he works for the city of Oroville as their planner and serves on the Economic Alliance Board as a representative of the Okanogan County Tourism Council. He has been associated with the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA) for several years and recently attended their conference. This group is an industry-led organization that represents and supports all business and community tourism interests throughout the Thompson Okanagan in British Columbia. Their mission is “To sustain the Thompson Okanagan region as a competitive destination through setting strategic direction for the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association and working as a policy board to ensure the long-term viability of the Association”. TOTA is now two years into their 10-year strategy to grow the volume of new and returning visitors to the Thompson Okanagan region. They have increased the recognition of the area as a world-class destination across the globe. They also look at tourism beyond the US/Canadian border.

Chris Branch reported that he attends these meeting also because of his involvement with the Okanogan Trails Scenic Byway and the Route 97 (formerly Via 97). Highway 97 is a great byway and promotes tourism, trade, and transportation. Discover Route 97 is a joint partnership between the TOTA and the NCW Economic Development District (NCWEDD). Its mission is to promote this unique region, with particular emphasis on the Highway 97 corridor and all its tributaries, for the

benefit of all in the varied communities. The web site for this group is www.Route97.net and the web site for Okanogan Trails Scenic Byway is www.okanogantrails.com

Board Business

Vacant Positions

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that Board Chairman, Kyle Desautel, no longer works for the Colville Tribe and had to resign his position on the Board and as Chairman. Kurt Danison current 2nd Vice Chairman stated that he was willing to step up. Lael Duncan made a motion to seat Kurt Danison as Chairman. Sheilah Kennedy seconded. Motion passed.

There are now five positions vacant on the Board

Nespelem/Coulee Dam Representative #2 (term expires 2017)

Methow Valley Representative #2 (term expires 2017)

Colville Tribal Federal Corporation Representative (term expires 2016)

Central Okanogan County Representative #1 (term expires 2015)

Colville Tribe (term expires 2015)

Signatures on Checking Account

Carolyn Davis reported that because of the change in Board members and officers we need to change those that can sign on our checking account.

Lael Duncan made a motion to add Kurt Danison, Janet Wilson, and Lalena Johns to the checking account and remove Kyle Desautel, Rich Watson, and Coleen Couch. Janet Wilson seconded. Motion passed.

2015 Budget

A copy of the 2015 budget was distributed and Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about the two contributions that we might not receive this year. One was from Kinross Gold and the other was from the Colville Tribe Federal Corporation. She has reached out to Kinross Gold to see if they would be willing to contribute this year. She has also been working with CTFC and has been working with them. She has provided them with various demographic information and hopefully they will see the benefit in contributing.

Pass through funds from the Governor Strategic Fund for the tourism promotion following the fire and for Omak Wood Products for training have flowed through the Economic Alliance, but there is no administration fee attached to these funds, but they both entail considerable work from the Economic Alliance.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also stated that after speaking to our carrier, she felt that the medical and dental insurance will probably not increase as much as projected.

Chris Branch made a motion to approve the 2015 budget as presented. Lael Duncan seconded. Motion passed.

Standing Committee Reports

Finance/Budget Committee: No additional report.

Infrastructure Committee: Kurt Danison and Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that there is a \$611,242 fund balance in the Public Facilities Account (.09 funds). The income for 2014 was approximately \$510,000. We have been operating under the assumption that there are no funds to allocate for projects and have been building the fund. But, it was felt that we need to look at possible projects and move ahead and do a ranking of projects. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated she will get a press release out to local papers to let the cities know that we are now accepting applications, although there will probably not be any allocations at this time.

Discussed the upcoming payment for the Public Works Trust Fund for the East Lake Sewer Project that will need to be made this year. Payback for this loan was supposed to be made with hookup fees, but those hookups haven't occurred, so the Public Facilities Fund account was designated to make the payments.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also reported that we did send out a letter six months ago asking for any Emerging Opportunities project applications, but didn't receive any.

The Economic Development District (EDD) is also accepting applications for project ranking on a regional basis. This ranking can help when projects are looking for funding. Projects that are ready to go or have a portion of the funding would probably rank higher.

Sheilah Kennedy stated that she felt that the commissioners would like to see what projects are out there and a project ranking.

Business Education Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Wenatchee Valley College Center for Entrepreneurships is sponsoring a "Start a Business Weekend", scheduled for January 29 – 31, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. This is presented by The Entrepreneur Source as a way to help people discover businesses and franchise opportunities. Participants can visit 'Virtual Booths' and compare business concepts, download valuable content on all types of business ownership opportunities, and attend keynotes from world-class speakers to inform and empower them to take the first step towards business ownership, includes information on financing a new business. For more information on this, contact Wendy DalPez at (509) 888-0863 or visit www.startabusinessweekend.com/sabw/?wdalpez . These events are held periodically and they will continue to share upcoming dates.

The next Job Fair is scheduled for March 12 at the Omak Community Center from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If your business would like a table contact Lisa Hathaway at WorkSource, 509 826-7560 or via email a lhathaway@esd.wa.gov

Okanogan-Omak Business Week is also scheduled for March 16 – 20 at the Okanogan Fairgrounds. The Economic Alliance is a sponsor for this program and Roni Holder-Diefenbach is a counselor.

Executive Director Report

(see attachment #1). Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that a conference call was held with BrandQuery and committee members to discuss using the remaining 25% of the funds for tourism advertising. These funds need to be spent by the end of June. The committee discussed using the funds for social media to promote community events.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she has continued to work with Terry Lawhead and the Department of Commerce to assist the local long term recovery work from the Carlton Complex Fire.

She has been compiling and providing demographic data, i.e., Hotel/Motel Tax, Sales and Use tax, B&O Tax information.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also reported the Wenatchee Valley College at Omak Foundation is holding a Magic Lantern Show and a rare opportunity to see part of the Frank Matsura photo collection. This will be in Omak on February 6 at the Omak PAC and in Oroville on February 7 at Vicki's Backdoor. Both shows start at 7:00 p.m. there is a \$15 donation per person. The Magic Lantern projectors used glass plate negatives showing cultures, places, and stories, these "Magic Lanterns" were then replaced by silent movies.

Old Business

Board members were asked to select a designated alternate for when they are unable to attend meetings.

New Business

Dr. Erik Swanson spoke about the community wide needs assessment that is being conducted by the Omak School District. They want to know what skills are needed by workers in the business community, what skill sets are needed. It is a great way to exchange thoughts.

Janet Wilson reported that the city of Okanogan is doing a survey of the population within the city limits to gather information on how many people live within the city limits.

Sheilah Kennedy reported that Commissioner Detro and Campbell will be testifying before the House for the Carlton Fire Long Term Recovery Group.

Ralph Malone reported that the city of Omak is providing water and sewer for the new casino. They are working on a contract with the Tribe and hope to have the new sewer line operating by the May 15 opening date.

Chris Branch reported that Oroville Reman and Reload is doing another expansion, which will bring their employment up to 100.

Kurt Danison reported that the city of Tonasket will soon be going to bid to link the city by sidewalk and bridge to the Legacy Park. He also reported that Brewster has a real problem with the water reservoir and is struggling on how to pay to fix this problem. Pateros is applying for CERB funds to do a feasibility study for an industrial park.

Meeting adjourned 12:50 p.m.

Next Meeting February 25 2015, 11:00 – 1:00, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant

Attachment #1



ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
January 2015
Executive Director Report:

January:

- NCW EDD
 - Representing the EA on the re visioning and the project selection committee. They are in the process of soliciting projects for the 2015 prioritization process. The EDD has applied for an EDA grant for those Communities directly impacted by the fire.
- Wenatchee Valley College-Omak Foundation
 - The foundation will be holding 2 Magic Lantern shows 1 in Omak and 1 in Oroville. Funds raised will go to the WVC at Omak Hazel Burnett Hall.
- Job Fair Planning
 - The 2015 Job Fair will be held on March 12, 2015 from 10-1 at the Omak Community center. Any businesses interested in attending contact Lisa Hathaway at Worksource
- Rural Pathways to Prosperity Planning Conference
 - The EA will be working with the EDD to locate communities who are willing to host a webinar in their area. I will work with Amy and local chambers to identify those who are interested and connect them with WSU who is leading this event.
- Pine Meadows Senior Housing
 - Attended a board meeting to discuss local housing for senior citizens in our area. Pine Meadows currently has a waiting list of 6, and has 1 vacancy.
- BrandQuery Conference Call-2nd part of Campaign
 - Planning has begun on how to spend the remaining 25% of the tourism promotion funds. Communities will send their top 3 events that they want featured into me by January 30th. Targeted events will fall within the timeline of Memorial Day-Labor Day.
- Long Term Recovery-Carlton Complex Fire
 - Continue to work with Terry Lawhead and the Dept. of Commerce to assist the local long term recovery work. Also providing and compiling demographic data ie. Hotel/Motel Tax, Sales and Use tax, B&O Tax information.
- CTFC 12 Tribes Resort and Casino-Omak
 - Assist Geoff Miller, Casino HR Director with demographic information, identifying assets within the community to help them recruit employees. As well as provide them with local affordable housing options.
- Commerce Work session
 - Testify on behalf of the Long Term Recovery Group on the local economy and community needs. Provide demographic comparisons on the effects of the fire.