

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
March 26, 2014
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Kurt Danison, City Planner
Coleen Couch, Treasurer, Mgr. Sterling Saving
Melanie Wyss, Gebbers Farm
Andrea Martin, No. Cascades Broadcasting (alternate for J. Andrist)
Stacey Luckensmeyer, WVC (alternate for Mary Watson, WVC)

Arnie Marchand, Oroville VIC
Chris Branch, OCTC Rep.
Dr. Erik Swanson, Omak School Superintendent
Janet Wilson, City of Okanogan

Absent Board Members:

Kyle Desautel, Chairman, CCT Planner
Rich Watson, NCW Business Loan Fund
Amanda Jackson-Mott, Secretary
Sheilah Kennedy, County Commissioner
Ted Piccolo, Image Communications
Debbie Atuk, Business Director, Colville Tribal Federal Corp.

George Brady, Cascade Biological Supply, Pateros
Alison Gillette, Twisp Works
Lael Duncan, OCCAC
Methow Valley #2 -- Vacant
Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant
County Commissioner Rep. #2 – Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant
George Thornton, Oroville

Ralph Malone, City of Omak
Trinity Stucker, Tonasket
Nancy Nash, WorkSource

1st Vice Chairman, Kurt Danison called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

Arnie Marchand made a motion to approve the minutes from February 26, 2014. Coleen Couch seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker

Stacy Luckensmeyer, instructor at Wenatchee Valley College for the past four years, has owned several small businesses over the years. She currently works with the Wenatchee Valley College Center for Entrepreneurship program. She has had to learn the administrative side of working for the college and she is getting to know the area. She works with a lot of people that want to start businesses and is currently working with companies like CrunchPak on a job skill grant program. Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan Counties are a priority since they have had very little from this area. Continuing Education at WVC offers noncredit classes and workshops and these classes offer flexibility for busy entrepreneurs and business owners. Classes may be one-day events or online classes. Longer, more intensive entrepreneurship classes are currently in development. WVC is currently offering three welding classes at the Omak Campus and they are looking at offering electrical classes this fall.

Discussed not having enough experienced loggers and the need to teach transferable skills. The Economic Alliance is always looking for ways to collaborate with other organizations.

Executive Director Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed a report for March (see attachment #1). Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported she worked as a counselor for Okanogan/Omak Business week. The Economic Alliance was also a sponsor this year. Her team ended up third overall. This program is always looking for judges, counselors, and people to speak to these high school juniors. You can contact Greg Hamilton if you are interested.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that Stampede Forest Products started up in April with six employees. This company is a processing plant to remanufacture the left over 4-inch core from the plywood plant into value added lumber products. They will be making 2x4. Omak Wood Product will be pressing plywood and will increase its employment to 200 soon. Access to raw material is very important and they need to have materials from federal and state sales to make it sustainable. She also reported that the MOU with Omak Wood Products has been finalized.

Roni had a meeting with the county commissioners last week and presented the quarterly report of activities. The next meeting is scheduled for June and topic of discussion will be the Infrastructure Funds.

The Business 101 workshop is scheduled for tomorrow at the Havillah Road Conference Center.

Board Business

Vacant Positions: Nan Kullunki has taken a new position out of the county and submitted her resignation. Arnie made a motion to accept Nan's resignation, Chris seconded. Motion passed. With this vacancy the Economic Alliance has three vacant positions on the Board, the Nespelem/Coulee Dam #2 position, the Methow Valley #2 position, and the county representative #2. The commissioners will appoint someone to fill the position vacated by Nan Kullunki. Roni Holder-Diefenbach is working to fill the other two positions

Standing Committee Reports

Treasurers Report: Coleen Couch reported that an updated budget was available on the back table. Advertising was up because of an ad placed in the Omak Chronicle outlining the services available at the Economic Alliance. Rent expense was more in February because of paying for the storage unit rent (6 months) as well as monthly rent. This has been projected to be paid in January.

Communication Committee: No report.

Infrastructure Committee: Chris Branch reported that the committee met prior to the Board meeting. The Public Facilities Fund is currently being used to pay for the East Lake Sewer Project payment, as well as the bond payment and funding for the Economic Alliance. There is a concern that the Economic Alliance won't be in the budget for next year. It was suggested that we get a letter to the county to give them the history of this fund. Originally 40% was for city projects, 40% for the county projects, and 20% for an emerging opportunity projects. With the change of the RCW it could be used to finance the economic development office (Economic Alliance). We need to educate the commissioners on the importance of the Economic Alliance. Kurt Danison asked for a breakdown of retail sales tax by cities and county. The cities have a real stake in these funds. There was also a concern about who would be tracking and doing reports on this fund now that Nan Kullunki isn't working for the county. It was suggested that a draft letter be sent out to the Board to review prior to sending to county commissioners. There are also vacant positions on this committee for the south county, Methow Valley, and a county representative.

Business Education Committee: Business 101 workshop scheduled for March 27, 9 a.m. to noon at the Havillah Road Conference Center in Omak. There is also an upcoming Job Fair for the Methow Valley on April 3 at the Methow Valley Community Center, there are currently 25 employers scheduled for this Fair. Nancy Nash also stated that employees are starting to hire again and there are currently 200 plus job opening at WorkSource.

Old Business

None

New Business

Roni Holder-Diefenbach asked if there were any speakers that the Board would like to have present at our monthly Board meeting. She has been speaking to Lindsay Woolsey with the Workforce Development Council to see if she could speak about the trends and jobs. Also, she has spoken to Dena Zaker with Kinross Gold to see if she could give a report on the mine. It was also suggested that having someone in to discuss the East Lake Sewer Project might be a good idea.

Kurt Danison spoke about the city of Omak and DOT working on getting sidewalks by the swimming pool and an additional lane at the intersection by McDonalds. He also reported that DOT will be doing ADA on sidewalks in both Omak and Okanogan.

Melanie Wyss reported that Gamble Sands will be opening in July and that creating a Boys & Girls Club might be back on the table in Brewster.

Meeting adjourned 12:45.

Next Meeting April 23 26, 2014, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



March 2014

March:

- NCW Workforce Development Meeting
- CTFC/CCT meeting on CIPP
- Omak Okanogan Business Week
- NCW EDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Economic Alliance Board Meeting
- Workstart Meeting-MOU
- CTFC-Meeting MOU
- Quarterly Report to County Commissioners\
- Speed Jobbing-HS Gear Up Program
- Infrastructure Committee Meeting
- Small Business 101 Seminar

Direct Small Business Assistance: January 1-March 19, 2014 *

Total Clients-33

Capital Formation-\$352,000.00 (\$\$ borrowed+Owner Investment)

New Jobs-3

Jobs Saved-6

Total Jobs-9

Business Starts-3

*does not include Omak Wood Products or Stampede Forest Products

During the month of March we continued to market and advertise our Business 101 seminar. I also attended Business Week as a Company Advisor to 11 Jr. Students; this was a great opportunity to work with HS Students and teach them about the responsibilities and decisions that are made while operating a business. I also had the opportunity to attend the Okanogan HS Gear Up Speed Jobbing event, which allowed the students to hear about different career opportunities.

I shared with them my job with the Economic Alliance and what it encompasses. We finalized the MOU with Omak Wood Products on the Workstart Grant, and have sent the MOU to CTFC for final signature.