

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
May 28, 2014
Koala Street Grill, Omak

Attending Board Members:

Kurt Danison, City Planner

Rich Watson, NCW Business Loan Fund

Janet Wilson, City of Okanogan

Andrea Martin (alternate for John Andrist, No. Cascades Broadcasting)

Stacey Luckensmeyer, WVC (alternate for Mary Watson, WVC)

Damris Ortiz, Northwest Native Dev. Fund, (alternate for Ted Piccolo, NNDF)

Lael Duncan, OCCAC

Chris Branch, OCTC Rep.

Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board, Okanogan County

Absent Board Members:

Kyle Desautel, Chairman, CCT Planner

Coleen Couch, Treasurer, Mgr. Umpqua Bank, Brewster

Alison Gillette, Twisp Works

Amanda Jackson-Mott, Secretary

Arnie Marchand, Oroville VIC

Debbie Atuk, Business Director, Colville Tribal Federal Corp.

Sheilah Kennedy, County Commissioner

Melanie Wyss, Gebbers Farm

George Brady, Cascade Biological Supply, Pateros

Methow Valley #2 -- Vacant

Dr. Erik Swanson, Omak School Superintendent

Nespelem/Coulee Dam Position #2 – Vacant

Staff & Guests:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director

Carolyn Davis, Admin. Assistant

Nancy Nash, WorkSource

Ralph Malone, City of Omak

Jennifer Korfiatis, NCW EDD

Braden Draggoo, Community Outreach Project
“Operation Rise”

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

Chris Branch made a motion to approve the minutes from April 23, 2014. Rich Watson seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speaker

Braden Draggoo spoke about a project he is working on called “We Are Okanogan County”. They did a similar project “We are Wenatchee” and you can view that video at www.vimeo.com/88411706 He is teaming up with local youth and business owners to produce a video production that he hope will make all the people of Okanogan County proud to be from this area. It will showcase the positive attributes of our area. He is working with the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) through the schools. With guidance from FBLA advisors, students will be filming the raw footage in their respective communities. This will keep the cost low. Charley Voorhis of Voortex Productions will be mentoring the FBLA students as they collect footage and will be editing the footage to produce the final video. The Omak Performing Arts Center Board will provide the venue for the premier of the video next year. He is looking for the Economic Alliance and local businesses to help sponsor this project and to provide insight and ideas for what should be included on the video. “What is Okanogan County to me?” He asked that people send suggestions to him at bldraggoo@ft.newyourklife.com He hopes to have this completed by next March, 2015. He is looking for about an additional \$7,000 and already has about \$3,000 for this project.

Executive Director Report

Roni Holder-Diefenbach distributed a report for May (see attachment #1). Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the city of Pateros had requested a letter of support for their CERB application. The grant application if funded would provide small business opportunities on their land and turn it into a business district.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also spoke about the recent letter received from Kinross Gold. They are withdrawing their application for permits for exploring additional sites. The company made the announcement to withdraw the application that after five years of efforts to get the necessary permits to drill exploration holes. When the mine closes it will have a significant impact on both Ferry and Okanogan Counties. They currently pay about \$1 million in taxes and have about 130 employees.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach discussed the 1.47 acre parcel that was purchased with a special appropriation through HUD in 2006 to build a Small Business Incubator. Since that time because of economic conditions, the Economic Alliance has decided that it is not feasible to move forward with this project and the property needs to be disposed of and the funds returned to HUD. The property was given to the city of Omak when it was purchased and they need to declare the property surplus. Chris Branch made a motion to reaffirm the Economic Alliance's previous action to dispose of the 1.47 acre parcel that was to be used to build a small business incubator and to have the city of Omak declare the parcel surplus. Rich Watson seconded. Motion passed.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Omak Wood Products will be producing plywood and adding another 35 jobs. They have asked for additional funding to train new employees on the plywood operations. She has spoken with Sally Harris, Department of Commerce to see if there were additional funds for this training.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach was asked by the governor office to be a panelist to discuss workforce and economic development at the Governor's Tribal Economic Development Summit. She reported that this was a very good experience and opportunity to share challenges in our rural area. She felt that the Governor heard our concerns and suggestions for solutions to some of the problems. It was a great networking opportunity.

Board Business

Vacant Positions: The Economic Alliance has two vacant positions on the Board, the Nespelem/Coulee Dam #2 position, the Methow Valley #2 position.

Standing Committee Reports

Treasurers Report: An updated budget spreadsheet was available on the back table with actual through April.

Communication Committee: No report.

Infrastructure Committee:

The committee met and recommends to the Economic Alliance Board to inform the cities that if they have an Emerging Opportunities project that meets the criteria for the Public Facilities Fund (.09) Emerging Opportunities, they should submit an application. This would help us to get a list of projects that could possibly be funded if funds become available. Lanie Johns reported that the county has restructured the PWTF payment and the county needs to keep two payments and funds for the upcoming balloon payment in this fund. She also felt it would be a good idea to collect applications so the county can see what projects are out there if funds become available.

Rich Watson made a motion that although there is no funding at this time, the Economic Alliance informs the cities that if they have an Emerging Opportunities project that meets the criteria for the Public Facilities Fund (.09) Emerging Opportunities, the Economic Alliance is now accepting applications. Janet Wilson seconded. Motion passed.

Ralph Malone stated that he would like to see real project come forward, not "made up projects" to fit the funding.

Chris Branch made a motion to ask the cities that have received funds from the Public Facilities Fund (.09) to send a short written update of the project(s) and to give the Economic Alliance a list of their top three (3) projects and a one page description (snap shot) with an estimated cost. Janet Wilson seconded. Motion passed.

Business Education Committee: No Report.

Old Business

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the survey that was recently distributed had 38 responders. Twenty of those were home based businesses. They stated that major challenges were government regulations, difficulty in obtaining qualified employees, access to capital, and expensive employee wages/benefits. They felt they needed assistance with advertising/marketing, social media, and succession planning. Hopefully with further analysis of the additional responses to questions on the survey, the Economic Alliance should be able to determine what type of workshop to offer. Roni will post the result of this survey on the web site.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also reported that the Economic Alliance is close to finishing the 2014 Fact Sheet on Okanogan County and should have something to show at the next meeting.

New Business

Jennifer Korfiatis with the NCW Economic Development District reported that there would be a workshop at the Confluence Technology Center in Wenatchee on June 4 & 5 titled "Taking Your Business International". The cost is \$45 per person and will be conducted by Jim Foley from the International Trade Center at Bradley University.

Chris Branch made a motion to adjourn. Rich Watson seconded. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned 1:15 p.m.

Next Meeting June 25, 2014, 11 – 1, at the Koala Street Grill. Please mark your calendars!

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



May:

- NCW Economic Development District
- NCW Business Loan Fund
- Gebbers Farm/Gamble Sands tour/Affordable Housing alternatives
- Okanogan Fact Sheet-update
- Infrastructure Committee Meeting
- Score-Okanogan County
- 2014 Business Survey Completed
- Groundbreaking Ceremony CCT Casino
- Governors Tribal Economic Development Summit

The Economic Alliance's Small Business Development Center has continued to be busy, we have had many people accessing our services in the month of April and May for new business startup, and business expansion and retention services.

Stats for 2014 Quarter 1
SBDC Jan – Mar, 2014

Met with 41 clients (some multiply times)

- 32 less than five hours
- 7 five to 10 hrs
- 2 over 10 hrs

Impact Report – Financing

Three clients started their businesses which created 2.5 jobs and retained 6 jobs.

Owner Investments \$10,000

Other capital \$342,000