

Marion County Economic Development Advisory Board

August 12, 2015 Meeting Minutes

555 Court St NE, 5th Floor Salem, OR

Members Present: Bill Burich, Kevin Cameron, Chad Freeman, Bob Hill, Jay Kemble, Nate Levin, Jim Rasmussen, Dave Tibbets, and Renata Wakely.

Members Present Via Phone: Evann Remington

Staff and Guests Present: Sarah Cavazos, Jody Christensen, Tamra Goettsch, Nick Harville, Cheryl Hill, Mark Hunter, Jen Senner, Mary Stewart, JD Shinn, and Brandon Reich.

Call to Order: 3:30pm

Agenda Item: Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Information/Discussion: Hill welcomed guests and reviewed announcements. In response to last month's request, the Merit Loan and Grant Brochure is included in the board packet. Hill mentioned that there will be future discussions exploring the benefits of a loan fund as recommended by the PACE group last spring. RedBuilt has declined EDAB's Business Development grant award because they are postponing the project due to market declines in California. Reich provided an updated on agri-tourism in Marion County. He has connected with Mary Stewart with the Service District and learned that she is working on a similar project; the County will plug into those efforts rather than contract with a consultant. Stewart added that they are just starting and are exploring the extent of the project. Reich shared that there are opportunities to explore how to expand agri-tourism policies to farms. Cameron added that adding manufacturing to agri-tourism could highlight the industry and its contribution to agriculture.

Action: None.

Agenda Item: July Minutes

Information/Discussion: The minutes were reviewed, no discussion was held.

Action: A motion was brought forth by Burich to approve the July minutes; a second was made by Cameron. The motion was voted for and approved unanimously.

Agenda Item: Membership Application

Information/Discussion: The application of Nate Brown from City of Keizer was presented as a prospective representative for the urban city ex officio position that is vacant due to Doug Rux's transition. Remington questioned if appointing Brown would remove the opportunity to have a representative from the City of Salem; Cameron confirmed that the spot would be filled. Levin inquired if there were other vacancies. Cavazos shared that there is an ex officio vacancy for Business Oregon due to Mitchell Gee's transition; we will explore the possibility of his replacement being appointed to the board once the position is filled. There is one vacancy left for general membership. Cameron has been in conversation with Wendy Veliz about that position; she is very interested in serving on the board and would like to meet to learn more. Cameron clarified that there are thirteen business member positions with one vacancy; he asked for feedback on the idea of a PGE representative filling that vacancy. Kemble acknowledged that PGE is a big player, represented on many boards, and does good things in the community, but expressed interest in having someone from rural Marion County. Cameron added that EDAB is a public meeting and anyone can attend and he would invite Veliz to attend as a guest if the board chose to go a different direction with the vacancy. Cavazos asked the board for potential leads. Hill thought an agriculture representative would be good and referenced Larry Wells who was formerly on the EDAB. Cameron suggested ag equipment manufactures and asked Harville for ideas. Harville suggested GK Machines, Doerfler Farms, Ioka Farms, Kraemer Farms, or Kevin Joyce from Littau Harvester. Goettsch suggested that we explore the opportunity to have PGE in a temporary appointment in the ex officio vacancy for Business Oregon since it may take them some time to fill that vacancy. Cavazos will check the bylaws to determine if that is possible.

Action: A motion was brought forth by Levin to recommend Nate Brown's application to the Board of Commissioners for appointment to EDAB; a second was made by Freeman. The motion was voted for and approved unanimously.

Agenda Item: Community Projects Grants

Information/Discussion: Cavazos presented information on the Community Project Grants and asked the board to review the information in the packet to become familiar with the prior awards made and the evaluation criteria to prepare for the upcoming grant review and evaluation.

Action: None

Agenda Item: Youth Workforce Development Programs

Information/Discussion: The presentation and discussion on youth workforce is in follow up to the opportunity presented last month on the potential to bring the McMinnville Works project to Marion County. Representatives from Incite, McMinnville Works, Salem Chamber, Boys and Girls Club were invited, along with Nick Harville who is serving as the voice for multiple, small rural school districts. Boys and Girls club was not in attendance. Jen Senner provided an overview of Incite and their recent efforts to establish a standardized employment readiness certificate that employers throughout the region would recognize; the idea is to create a standard that employers can rely on and know that if an applicant has this certificate, they will have a minimum level of skills. Senner provided an overview of The NET project which primarily serves out of school youth and provides curriculum soft skills training combined with internship placements. Students are treated as regular temporary employees and evaluated on a variety of areas throughout their placement. Shinn shared that the Chamber closely partners with Incite to identify internship placement sites that are skilled and able to support an intern with a learning environment. The Chamber also recruits mentors from the business community to go into schools for one day events to present to classes about various career opportunities to expand students' awareness of career paths. Harville shared that various partnerships exist between rural schools and manufactures to train students in basic construction and manufacturing skills. A few examples of successes include local manufactures that have partnered with high schools in Stayton and Silverton to provide scraps so the students can get hands on practice in class. Companies are seeing the value of preparing kids with skills so they are ready to employ later.

Action: None.

Agenda Item: McMinnville Works Program Overview

Information/Discussion: Jody Christensen from McMinnville Works provided an overview of the program they developed to equip companies to serve as internship sites for students. Companies were struggling to find qualified people to employ so the community started a strategic planning discussion to identify solutions to address their workforce challenge. They began hosting recruitment events to draw people in and implemented an internship program to introduce new workers to the environment and ready them to enter the workforce. Under the program, interns are treated as employees and are required to adhere to the same policies and expectations of the regular employees. Companies pay a small fee to McMinnville Works to manage the program. Christensen stated they had to create a plug in play for the industry to bring in interns, and they had to take the risk off of the company. The program recruits and screens the interns, host sites provide project based work so interns are able to start and finish a project within the nine week placement. Sites release intern two hours a week for them to attend professional development training. Interns are hired, supervised, paid, and fired (if needed) by the site. McMinnville Works provides an one day training for sites to prepare them for the program. Kembler asked if the program qualifies prospective sites to ensure they are going to provide a quality placement. Christensen confirmed that they interview the sites, complete a site visit and review project lists prior to approving the site. Discussion was held on the disconnect of younger generations with reality and expectation that they should start at the top rather than working their way up, and on how to make work more attractive to younger generations.

Action: None

Meeting adjourned: 5:10 pm