

Egan, chair, called the meeting of the Economic Development Committee to order at 9:00 a.m., on February 6, 2012 in conference room #2, at the Vilas County Courthouse, Eagle River, Wisconsin.

Present: The following persons were present: County Board members: Bob Egan, Ralph Sitzberger, Ed Bluthardt, & Jim Behling; others Ken Stubbe, Roger Weber, & Rosemary Leveille
Media present: Joe Van De Laarshot
The following County Board member was excused: Emil Bakka
The following County Board members were absent:

Introduction –

Egan introduced all attending to the Lakeland Times reporter, Joe Van De Laarshot.

Approve Agenda: Motion by Sitzberger, second by Behling to approve the agenda to be handled in any order at the discretion of the Chair. Motion carried, all voting aye.

Approve Minutes: Motion to approve the minutes of January 9, 2012 by Bluthardt, second by Sitzberger. Motion carried, all voting aye.

Agenda Format and Dept. Oversight Activities –

As requested by the County Clerk for the Legislative and Judicial Committee, all committees were asked for their opinions on what could take place to streamline the committee meetings and by what means. Ed Bluthardt stated that he thinks that the ED committee is a prime candidate for consolidation now that the VCEDC is now formed and fully functioning this committee has no real accomplishments. Jim Behling stated that since there are already two Economic Development committee members on the VCEDC they should be advocates directly to the full board without the committee. Ralph Sitzberger would like to see the departments pay small bills with a petty cash fund; of course this would be a policy change. Bob Egan stated that this is to collect all thoughts for streamlining committees and meeting and to preserve the integrity of the County and the services to all communities and residents. All of the board members present agreed that the approval of bills, oversight of the budget, and out of county travel could be handled by the department, and the correspondence and communication could possibly be handled by a report from the department head. These comments will be sent on to the Legislative and Judicial Committee for their February 28th meeting as requested.

Resolution to Form a Railroad Commission –

A resolution (on file in the UWEX office) was presented to the committee on forming a “Northwoods Rail Transit Commission”. Egan explained that this would be with 8 other counties and have no fiscal impact for the first year and the subsequent years will not exceed \$500. **Motion for the committee to sign and forward the resolution for adoption to the full County board was made by Behling, second by Sitzberger. Motion carried, unanimously.**

Economic Development Reports and Updates –

a) Vilas County Economic Development Corporation (VCEDC) – Stubbe reported a trans-thermal company is looking for seed investor proposals. They are currently trying to connect with Angel Investors and are looking for \$300,000 and have a match from the state if they can raise the first \$300,000. If this company hits the ground they will employ engineers and many more. They will also be the first to use the newly created business incubator, which is located in the old Cranberry Plant offices. A possible second location is in the works. The VCEDC will be starting classes on starting a business, writing a business plan, and more will be added as the need arises. They also will have students working on computer repairs for donations. A contest for students at Northland Pines High School has started on creating an “app” for the smart phone that will be for the County. The state of Wisconsin is now consolidating the \$12 million in revolving loan funds from around the state to one location in Wausau, the help VCEDC in cooperation with Grow North is trying to have some of the monies given to Grow North for local investment. Some of the other items they are working on are getting more permanent funding for controlling AIS,

pushing the broadband for the area, starting an online marketplace for any and all of the businesses in the area among other things.

b) Grow North – Egan stated that Grow North received a \$30,000 face grant and a \$7,500 deployment grant. The face grant is a matching grant and can be partially matched with in-kind help. They have raised about \$10,000 so far and have a \$10,000 website development commitment. Pilch and Barnet advertising agency has been hired to promote the five county group. Egan also stated that the Entrepreneur and Inventors Club will have their show on April 18th from 5pm – 8pm at the Taj Mahal in Rhinelander, and that the VCEDC will be giving them \$1,000 towards awards.

c) Other Economic Development Activities – Egan will be contacting Dennis Lawrence from NCRPC and/or Deb Clemens from the Wisconsin Dept. of Economic Development to give a presentation to the committee. Behling said that in the past thoughts of a revolving loan fund for Vilas County has been mentioned and he would like to pursue the possibilities of forming one. **A motion by Behling, second by Bluthardt for the Economic Development committee to take on the task of finding models, ideas of how they are handled, and all other aspects. This project will be taken on by Behling and Stubbe with a report on their findings in the next 3 or 4 months. Motion carried, all voting aye.**

Economic Development Budget/Approval of Bills –

A budget update (on file in the UWEX office) was given to the committee.

Out-of-County Travel –

None for this month.

Correspondence and Communications –

Leveille stated that the CRD position with UWEX will be posted on February 10th. Weber stated that he thinks that combining committees is a good idea and they are very important to the communities. His thoughts on combining are to combine the Information Technology, Tourism and Publicity, UWEX, and Economic Development Committees

Future Meeting Dates/Items –

The next regular meeting will be Monday, March 5, 2012 at 9:00 a.m.

Adjournment –

Sitzberger adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Minutes reflect the recorder's notations and are subject to approval by the appropriate board or committee.

Submitted by: Rosemary Leveille