



GOODHUE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Tuesday, June 21, 2005

County Boardroom

Government Center, Red Wing, MN

2:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioners: Jim Bryant, Ron Allen, Dan Rechtzigel, Richard Samuelson and Ted Seifert, David Hamilton, Kelly Rezensoff, Amy Hove, Stacy Thuman

C/Allen called the meeting to order.

C/Samuelson move, C/Seifert second, carried to approve the April 19th EDA minutes as presented.

C/Seifert move, C/Bryant second, carried to approve the June 21st agenda as presented.

C/Allen stated that we have two vacancies on the EDA Board, which is made up of five commissioners and 2 people appointed from the community, in the County of Goodhue, one of the appointments and before us today is Kelly Rezensoff.

C/Bryant move, C/Allen second to appoint Kelly Rezensoff to the Goodhue County Economic Development Authority Board.

Mr. Hamilton commented that they met Ms. Rezensoff when they attended the Mayor's forum on the strategy that this Board has already moved forward on with Economic Development, everyone was very encouraged by Kelly's enthusiasm and are delighted that she has agreed to become a part of the EDA Board.

Business Retention & Expansion Program Update – Ron Zeigler

Mr. Zeigler updated the Board on where they are at with the Business Retention and Expansion study/survey that is ongoing. Mr. Zeigler stated that on behalf of SEMDC, Goodhue County could be very proud of the process that it is going through right now, have just under 30 of the surveys completed right now and they are very positive, there is a lot of good response, a lot of companies say that they are glad that the County cares. Mr. Zeigler highlighted a few of the positive points and negative points and also stated that once the information is collected it will be reported back in mid to late September. Positives include that Goodhue County is beautiful area to live and work in, easy to voice concerns, negatives that are out there; cost of doing business, taxes is very high in Minnesota, it is an issue that will drive businesses out, after the results are back it would be wise to get the legislature involved, they need to know what businesses are thinking and what can be done to reduce the costs. Most of the costs are all inclusive; health care is a huge issue, it needs to be curtailed, taxes, unemployment taxes, lack of a qualified workforce is also a main issue. Greater county communities feel that there is a lot of focus on the City of Red Wing. A comment found interesting is that a lot of business owners feel that the average citizen in Goodhue County does not know the struggles that a manufacturing business faces, right now is overseas competition.

The meeting that was held with the cities was interesting and they did have questions and concerns as to why we are doing this survey? Mr. Zeigler stated that the process that we went through in starting this was a press releases, an email was sent to every City Economic Development person and did offer to let them know what was going to be taken place, also requested to verify our information with the city officials; we did not receive a response from any of the cities, so we did start the process, we are about a 1/3 of the way through the process and he feels comfortable with the process and the city officials do as well. Staff at Workforce Development Center is aware of the process and we are working with some expansion possibilities and pulling the cities in right away that those plants are located in and working with they right away. C/Allen stated that they met with the Port Authority to discuss some of things that we are doing.

C/Bryant questioned that once we get the information together in late September, commented that he likes the idea of getting the legislator together and expand out to Southeastern MN and metro legislators, invite as many as we can to share the information together and suggested that it be done before December, also questioned when we get the information are the plans to sharing the information with them all businesses generically. Mr. Zeigler stated that the commitment that was made to them was that their information will not be shared on an individual basis; it will be assembled in an aggregate format.

Mr. Zeigler stated that it is very important that once we get this information back that it does not get put in a drawer or on a shelf, it needs to be on the agenda and we need to do what we have committed to and keep the heat on.

Mr. Hamilton stated that series of closure of plants, have we run across any that are contemplating following that pattern, closing up and leaving? Mr. Zeigler stated that at this point no closures or downsizing has been come across have actually come across a couple of possible expansions and one of them could have a significant impact. Mr. Hamilton questioned if the businesses are surprised that someone is coming out to talking with them, Mr. Zeigler stated that they are very pleased and surprised.

C/Rechtzigel questioned if the study would measure if and how many businesses have been impacted by JOBZ, taxes, etc. tax abatement, Mr. Zeigler stated that they are not talking about that but it could be a follow up question.

C/Bryant questioned who is physically doing interviews? Mr. Zeigler stated that he and Chris Gassner are conducting the 1 on 1 interview with businesses.

Mr. Hamilton stated in mid to late September, possibly at the September 20th EDA meeting to receive the survey results and from there will there be an opportunity to move to some form of public forum to communicate in general what we have done.

Resignation of Mark Vahlsing

Mr. Hamilton indicated that we received a written letter of resignation from Mark Vahlsing, the community member from Pine Island who was an EDA Board member.

C/Bryant move, C/Seifert second, motion carried unanimously to accept Mr. Vahlsing's resignation with regrets.

C/Bryant commented that Ms. Rezanoff is going to be a good fit for the EDA Board and if Mr. Zeigler should happen to meet someone in the rounds of interviews that would be a good fit, the Board is welcome to any recommendations that he would have and also commented that he is interested in obtaining someone outside of government.

Other

C/Seifert move, Ms. Rezanoff second, motion carried unanimously to adjourn the June 21st, 2005 EDA meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Hamilton

Executive Secretary