

The Economic Alliance

Board Meeting

June 23, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Attending Board Members:

Chris Branch, Chairman, Okanogan County Commissioners
Lael Duncan, 1st Vice Chairman, No County #1, OCCAC
Kurt Danison, 2nd Vice Chairman, City Rep. #1, City Planner
Alan Fisher, Central County #2 Rep., CEO Mid Valley Hosp
Aaron Kester, No. County #2, Tonasket Natural Food Co-op
Kristi O'Neill, Central County #1 Rep., WorkSource
Amanda Jackson-Mott, Arts Comm. Rep., MAA

George Brady, Pt Chair, So Co Rep #2, Cascade Biological Sply
Maria Lassila, Treasurer, Omak Mirage Theater
Jon Culp, Mayor of Okanogan, City Representative #2
Stacy Luckensmeyer, At-Large Representative #2, WVC
Rachelle Haven, Nespelem/Grand Coulee #2, GCD Chamber
Don Linnertz, MV #2, Twisp Works & Winthrop Chamber
Anna Dalbey, Secretary, South County #2, Coldwell Banker

Absent Board Members:

Lanie Johns, Ok Co. Rep., Clerk of the Brd
Ted Piccolo, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Rep. #1, NNDF
Mayra Pamatz, Community Finance Rep., Umpqua Bank
Jonnie Crossland, CTFC Representative

Sally Ranzau, Mayor of Winthrop, Methow Valley #1
Michael Porter, At Large #1, Omak School Superintendent
John St. Pierre, Colville Planning, CCT Rep

Guests/Staff:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Ex. Director
Carolyn Davis, Admin Assistant
Dennis Conger, CCL Coordinator
Carl Horning, AJAC Director
Heather Collins, AJAC
Mikaela Marion, SubKulture Co.
Bri Durhan, AJAC

Justine Salazar, WorkSource (K O'Neill Alternate)
Sheila Corsen, Okanogan PUD
Mike Beaver, Probation Mgr, Ok Co Juvenile Dept.
Frank Herbert, Pateros City Council (G Brady Alternate)
Cari Horning, Career Connected Learning/Apple STEM
Sue Kane, Director STEM Initiatives & Strategic Partnerships

Chairman Chris Branch called the meeting to order.

Addition or Changes to Agenda: No additions or changes.

Consent Agenda: Kurt Danison made a motion to approve consent agenda (minutes 5/26/21). George Brady seconded. Motion passed.

Guest Speakers

Bri Durhan with the Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee spoke about the program. This is an advanced manufacturing training organization. They are exploring the expansion of its on-the-job training/apprenticeships for youth and adults into Okanogan County. They use a variety of training models to capture the skills required across many industries to match employment needs from entry-level to highly skilled journey-level workers. With the advancements in machinery and automation, they can help with the needs for assembly, production, processing, machine automations, machine operations and maintenance. They use a combination of 93% job site training and 7% class instructions. They are a 501(c)3 organization and work with small to mid-size companies. They also partner with Apple STEM and others. They try to be responsive to what the communities want. They want to build a program in Okanogan County and want to work with businesses. Don Linnertz asked if they were doing outreach to Jr. & Sr. High Schools. They are but need to do more of that. Kristi O'Neill reported that the crew is heading to Nespelem this afternoon and will meet with Reman & Reload tomorrow along with the Pateros Resource Center, Omak, Okanogan, and Lake Roosevelt School Districts. They also want to connect with Sunopta and Gebbers. There are currently a lot of Okanogan County businesses that are experiencing a lack of applicants for open positions.

Reports

Executive Director Report: (see attachment #1) Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Economic Alliance web site update was being completed. Earth & Sky Studios has been working on this rehaul of our web site. We have been providing content and have been in touch with the Executive Committee to get pictures of each of them. It is hoped to have a program to upload commercial properties that would be available for realtors to log in and upload their properties. New site will also list key industries, demographics, business resources, as well as updated news from around the county. We are grateful to the Department of Commerce for providing funding to update our web site and for funds for Eric Hovee to do the Comprehensive Economic Development and Recovery Strategy.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she is also looking for larger office space in the central county area. The Economic Alliance has received grant funding that is going to require a larger space. If anyone has any office space available, please let her know.

Covid-19 Response: The Economic Alliance is currently conducting two surveys. The Economic Alliance is working with the NCW Education Services District for our region to conduct a survey on childcare and how employers and businesses are being impacted by the lack of available childcare in the county. Have had just under 30 responses so far. The other survey is the Latino Business Survey. Keila Diaz has been doing face-to-face surveys. They also met with the Brewster Hispanic chamber. The results will help us understand what services are needed and resources that we refer these businesses to.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about the Economic Dashboard and how to continue to have this dashboard updated. The E-impact needs to be paid for the work done and for continuing to update the Dashboard. Mikaela Marion asked if the new EDD Dashboard will automatically fee into Okanogan County's. Some of the information is the same, but Okanogan County's has additional data sets, i.e., socio-economic data that is specific to Okanogan County.

Financial Report: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Economic Alliance is doing well. The Balance Sheet and current Income Statements as of the end of June 22 were sent out prior to the meeting. We will need to do some budget modification since we have received additional funds. We should have the SBDC contract soon and hopefully will be paid for the first and second quarter billings by the end of July. The audit has been confirmed for July 14 and 15.

Business Education: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the E-Tail classes have been scheduled and will also be in offered in Spanish.

Infrastructure Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that both the mural project in Tonasket and the Loomis Fire District, projects that were ranked through the Infrastructure Prioritization Process have received funding. The City of Omak also received funding for the airport. Lael Duncan reported that the OCCAC received funds for a feasibility study for a new OCCAC Center. Roni Holder-Diefenbach said that next Monday she will be rolling out the process for applying for ranking from the Infrastructure Committee. We are starting the Okanogan County process to prioritize projects earlier and have it done by end of July. Once approved by the County Commissioners, it will be submitted to the EDD for ranking in the three-county process. Having the ranking is important for funding applications. Kurt Danison stated that he appreciates that Chris Branch is looking at working with the Economic Alliance to get projects funded.

Pateros was selected to receive a Retail Strategies report about recruiting businesses to the town. They looked at where people are coming from, who is currently shopping, staying and how to recruit franchises and other businesses.

Mikaela Marion stated that there are a lot of empty businesses, and some properties are really dilapidated. She asked if there were any plans to either tear them down or revamp them to have desirable commercial space. Roni

Holder-Diefenbach stated that she has had conversations with cities, but if property owners are paying taxes and doing minimal repairs there is not anything the community/city can do. It was questioned what incentives could be provided to building owners. Chris Branch asked if anyone wanted to discuss this further and if there was anyone wanting to sit on a committee to further investigate this problem. Aaron Kester said he was interested, as well as Anna Dalbey, Don Linnertz, Kurt Danison, and Chris Branch.

Motions

The Economic Alliance needs to change the signers on our checking account to reflect the new Executive Committee. Don Linnertz made a motion to remove Eric Swanson, as he no longer on the Board and add Chris Branch and Maria Lassila. Also need to keep Kurt Danison, Lael Duncan, George Brady, Lalena Johns, and Roni Holder-Diefenbach on the account. Anna Dalbey seconded. Motion Passed.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that Lionel Marcial with Red Rooster Restaurant in Omak has expressed an interest in being on the Economic Alliance Board. This would be an At-Large #3 position. He was not able to attend today's meeting but is excited to be part of the organization. Kristi O'Neill made a motion to seat Lionel Marcial to the vacant At-Large #3 position. Anna Dalbey seconded. Motion passed.

Discussion

Kristi O'Neill reported that the job search waiver will be over the first of July. Those on unemployment will need to start actively looking for work. Their WorkSource office is slowly being opened back up.

Maria Lassila reported that June – September there will be a “pop up market” on Friday and Saturday morning in Pateros. The Omak Mirage Theater is doing free movies on Wednesday afternoon for kids, and they are also selling specialized popcorn at the Farmers Markets as well as in several stores.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for July 28, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



June 2021

Overview:

The month of June has flown by, and we have spent most of the month working on completing the obligations in our ADO Sponsorship Contract and the WSMA Contract that we have, that need to be wrapped up and complete by June 30th. We are also closing out the current ADO contract and preparing for the next biennium with several new updates and changes to their reporting system and deliverables.

Countywide Surveys:

- **Okanogan County Childcare Survey for Employers-***At the request of the NCW Educational Services District we conducted a Childcare survey that was sent to local Chambers of Commerce and the Business Community to determine the impact childcare or lack of childcare has on local employees and how it impacts business operations.*
- **Latino Business Survey-***As part of our WSMA grant we are conducting face to face business surveys with the Latino business community to introduce ourselves, the services that the Economic Alliance provides and asking a set of questions that will help us determine the service gaps and needs of the Latino businesses within Okanogan County. We will use this information to identify trainings, programs that need to be developed and how we can best serve their businesses.*

LOCAL/REGIONAL:

Economic Recovery Dashboard: *Will be incorporated into our NEW website and UW will be updating the information for us. We are currently working with the NCW CHI and UW to determine where we go after Oct 2021 to keep this updated.*

CEDRS-*Conducting meetings in the county to gather data and information needed to complete the study by June 30, 2021.*

EA Website Update-*The website should be live on June 30th, we*

Downtown Academy- *Okanogan County has 2 communities, Brewster and Oroville who are participating in this project is funded through the USDA. This project was not funding through the Okanogan County Set Aside and will now go through the statewide competitive process.*

Okanogan County/CCT Broadband Action Team:

We will continue to meet monthly and are scheduling presentations from the different industries directly impacted by COVID-19 and how lack of broadband access has affected their business and industry. Awarded the USDA RBDG Grant to continue the work with ACRS to complete our strategic plan to include cost estimates for Fiber to the Premise.

IEDC Conference-*Attended the IEDC Regional Conference held virtually. Topics included Regionalism, Economic Recovery post Covid19, Equity and Inclusiveness in Economic Development, and Broadband.*

External Board of Directors: *Currently I am representing the Economic Alliance on the following boards:*

NCW Economic Development District

NCW Career Connect Leadership Team

NCW Workforce Development Council

Family Health Centers Board

CFNCW Helping Hands Grant Committee

Washington Economic Development Association