

# The Economic Alliance

## Board Meeting

August 25, 2021  
Zoom Meeting

### **Attending Board Members:**

Chris Branch, Chairman, Okanogan County Commissioners  
Lael Duncan, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman, No County #1, OCCAC  
Kurt Danison, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman, City Rep. #1, City Planner  
Alan Fisher, Central County #2 Rep., CEO Mid Valley Hosp  
Rachelle Haven, Nespelem/Grand Coulee #2, GCD Chamber

George Brady, Pt Chair, So Co Rep #2, Cascade Biological Sply  
Don Linnertz, MV #2, Twisp Works & Winthrop Chamber  
Stacy Luckensmeyer, At-Large Representative #2, WVC  
Aaron Kester, No. County #2, Tonasket Natural Food Co-op  
Amanda Jackson-Mott, Arts Comm. Rep., MAA

### **Absent Board Members:**

Anna Dalbey, Secretary, South County #2, Coldwell Banker  
Lanie Johns, Ok Co. Rep., Clerk of the Brd  
Sally Ranzau, Mayor of Winthrop, Methow Valley #1  
Jon Culp, Mayor of Okanogan, City Representative #2  
Ted Piccolo, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Rep. #1, NNDF  
Mayra Pamatz, Community Finance Rep., Umpqua Bank

Maria Lassila, Treasurer, Omak Mirage Theater  
Michael Porter, At Large #1, Omak School Superintendent  
John St. Pierre, Colville Planning, CCT Rep  
Jonnie Crossland, CTFC Representative  
Kristi O'Neill, Central County #1 Rep., WorkSource

### **Guests/Staff:**

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Ex. Director  
Carolyn Davis, Admin Assistant  
Abby Bailey, CPA  
Mikaela Marion, SubKulture Co.  
Kelly Scalf, TransGo, General Manager

Sheila Corsen, Okanogan PUD  
Jennifer Howard, Econ Dev Specialist, Econ. Alliance  
Joy Abrahamson, SubKulture Co  
Rachel McClure, Senator Newhouse Office  
Jackie Gleason, Clerk of Board, TransGo

Chairman Chris Branch called the meeting to order.

Addition or Changes to Agenda: No Changes

Consent Agenda: Lael Duncan made a motion to approve consent agenda (minutes 7/28/21). Don Linnertz seconded. Motion passed.

### **Guest Speaker**

Abby Bailey, CPA CSE, Bailey CPA LLC, recently did a single audit of 2020 for the Economic Alliance. She explained the process of an audit. She did an audit of the Economic Alliance's statement of financial position as of December 31, 2020, and the related statements of activities and changes in net assets, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year ended and the related notes to the financial statements.

The objective of her audit was to expression an opinion about whether the Economic Alliance's financial statements are fairly presented in conformity with U.S. GAAP and to report on the fairness of information when considered in relation to the financial statements taken as a whole. The objective also includes reporting internal control over financial reporting and compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of awards, contracts or grants agreements, noncompliance which could have a material effect on the financial statements in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

This was not a typical year for the Economic Alliance. There was a lot of "pass-through" funds with grants to small businesses. In her opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Economic Alliance as of December 31, 2020, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year, are in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. Lael Duncan asked if it was standard to have two check signers. Ms. Bailey stated that it was good, but usually there was a threshold amount that would trigger two signers. The Economic Alliance now requires two

signers on each check, no matter the amount. Kurt Danison made a motion to accept the audit as presented. George Brady seconded. Motion passed.

Ms. Bailey also suggested utilizing QuickBooks classes to facilitate the tracking of grant funds and expenses.

### Reports

Executive Director Report -- Roni Holder-Diefenbach showed a little of the new Economic Alliance web site. It has the key indicators, community site selections, demographics, and the Economic Dashboard. This was done by Earth and Sky Studios in Twisp. Monthly Board minutes and agendas will also be on the site.

New Hire -- Jennifer Howard was recently hired as an Economic Development Specialist. She is a resident of Okanogan for the past 3 ½ years. She is currently working to get acquainted with Word Press, Facebook, etc. She has worked in retail and in HR for the CTFC Casinos.

Office Space -- Our bid for the Hancock Building in Okanogan was accepted by the county and we will be moving today and the rest of the week. Roni Holder-Diefenbach spent two weeks cleaning, painting, changing lighting, etc. for the new space. It is hoped to have a “Grand Opening” sometime in October.

Financials – Current Balance Sheet and Income Statements were distributed to the Board prior to today’s meeting. We are still waiting for SBDC funds for the first and second quarter 2021. Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the grants from USDA for the Business Tech Center and the Broadband Action Team were reimbursable grants, and we need to spend the funds before asking for payment. We can bill monthly.

Business Education -- Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that nothing was planned right now but will be offering classes soon either individually or in groups.

Infrastructure Committee -- Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the prioritization process had a lot of applications, and the process went very well with a full day of listening to presentations and scoring the applications. The questions were very insightful and the new people on the committee did very well with some great questions. The committee will reconvene to re-evaluate ranking process and timelines. The Executive Committee did vote to approve the Infrastructure Committee’s ranking and on August 16<sup>th</sup>, Roni Holder-Diefenbach presented the list to the county commissioners. The commissioners have ARPA Funds and will be considering some of the projects for funding and will be working on how to evaluate projects. They did pass a resolution approving the list of projects as prioritized by the Infrastructure Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. The full Board now needs to ratify the motion by the Executive Committees. Kurt Danison made a motion to ratify the motion to approve the list of prioritized projects as presented. Lael Duncan seconded. Motion passed. Chris Branch abstained.

Below is a list of projects and their ranking.

### **2022 Okanogan County Public Infrastructure Project Prioritization List**

Tonasket Perfect Passage	1
Omak Shumway/US 97	2
OK PUD Pine Creek Broadband	3
Brewster Broadband Initiative	4
Twisp Civic Building/EOC Courtyard	5
Okanogan Municipal Well	6
Pateros Mall Renovations	7
Omak Sandflat Rd Public Infra.	8
Pateros Starr Road Development	9
Winthrop Waterline Replacement	10
Brewster RV Park	11
Omak Stampede Concourse	12
Methow Water/Septic Feasibility Study	13

Omak Municipal Pool	14
CCT Nicholson Beach Recreation	15
Brewster Old 97 Hosp. Way Improvements	16
Winthrop Town Trailhead	17
Pateros Pederson Rd Access	18
Twisp Town Bathrooms	19
Tonasket Annexation	20
Tonasket Chief Tonasket	21
Winthrop Pedestrian Improvements	22
Tonasket Municipal Building	23
Winthrop EV Charging Station	24

**Community/Economic Projects Prioritized List**

OCCAC Resource & Training Center	1
EA Retail Academy Community/County Analysis	2
WVC North Health Sciences Bldg.	3
OCLTR Phase 1 Home Rebuild	4
Methow Housing Trust Affordable Housing	5
NCW Sports Rink/Event Center	6

Discussion

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Economic Alliance has contracted with ACRS for \$40,000 to do study on costs of “Fiber to Premise”. With funding from USDA RBDG, the Broadband Action Team will continue to look at getting fiber to all of Okanogan County. She has been working with ACRS and looking at a couple of grant opportunities. She also wants to speak with the State Broad Band Director to see what funding might be available. Okanogan PUD needs to be the applicant because they will be owning the fiber.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach recently attended the Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA) conference in Spokane. The breakout sessions were great. She also led a breakout session on Supply Chain. She felt it was a great conference and it was nice that it was in-person.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the “Supernova”, a business launch competition that identifies and supports new and growing businesses in the Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Ferry Counties and the Colville Tribes regions. Supernova winner this year was out of Entiat. This was a virtual event, and the Economic Alliance will continue to support this event.

Contract Update:

The SBDC contract for 2021 has finally be signed.

Other Business: Roni Holder-Diefenbach has been in touch with a couple of Board member that haven’t been able to participate for a while. She asked if we should hold the next meeting in person or continue to do Zoom meetings. It was felt that because the rise in Covid numbers around the county that we should do the September meeting virtually.

Mikaela Marion, SubKulture Co., asked about grant programs from the state. There might be another Working Washington grant process, but Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that she hasn’t heard anything yet and hasn’t heard if the county or any of the cities will be doing additional business grants.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 2021, via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Carolyn Davis, Administrative Assistant



**ECONOMIC ALLIANCE**  
*Executive Directors Report*

*August 2021*

*Here are a few of the highlights from the month of August:*

- **New office space**-we won the bid for the new office at .445 per sq foot. We signed the contract and paid the first 2 months of rent. The County will be crediting us for the first 10 days in August that we paid for in October. The office needed a lot of work before we move in. We painted the paneling, had to do a deep clean and are now ready to move in. We will be pressure washing and spraying for spiders on the outside of the building.
- **Prioritization Process**-We received 30 applications, 24 for Public Infrastructure and 6 for Community and Economic Development. The Infrastructure Committee ranked the projects and the Executive Committee Approved the recommendations. I presented them to the County Commissioners for approval on 16<sup>th</sup>. The Infrastructure Committee will be meeting in the next couple of months to discuss recommended changes to the process for next year.
- **USDA Grants**-
  - *Small Business Resource and Tech Center*-Hired Jennifer Howard as our Economic Development Specialist she started August 16<sup>th</sup>.
  - *We entered into a contract with ACRS to continue the work that they are doing for the BAT to expand our study to include fiber to the premise.*
  - *Loomis Fire Station*-We received several inquiries on the RFQ, but received only one response by the deadline. We will interview them on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and present our recommendation to the County Commissioners on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September.
- **Broadband**-We had both our BAT Committee and our full BAT meeting this month. We heard from Trevor Lange who presented on Precision Agriculture. If you are interested in his presentation, I can email it to you.

**LOCAL/REGIONAL:**

**Economic Recovery Dashboard:** We are working with UW and the OK Public Health to determine a way to continue the dashboard past October. We have a UW student who is interested in working on this for a minimal charge.

**EA Website Update**-The website is finally up and going. We are still making tweaks to the site, but it is overall complete.

**Downtown Academy**- Okanogan County has 2 communities, Brewster and Oroville who are participating in this project is funded through the USDA. This project was funded through the statewide competitive process. Discussions/Work begins in October 2021.

**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.

**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