

The Economic Alliance Board Meeting

July 23, 2025
Via Zoom

Attending Board Members:

Anna Dalbey, Chairman, So. Co. #2, Keller Williams Realty	Rocklyn Culp, Town of Winthrop, Planner
Maria Lassila, 1st Vice Chair, Omak Chamber	Beth Strohane, Applied Bldg Infor, At-Large #4
Anthony Popelier, 2 nd Vice Chair Reman & Reload, North Co. #2	Jord Wilson, At-Large #5, City of Pateros
Kurt Danison, Past Chairman, City Rep. #1, City Planner	Lisa Bauer, City Rep., City of Okanogan
Lael Duncan, Partners for Rural WA, No. County #1	Steve Quick, Central #2 Okanogan School Super.
Sarah Jo Lightner, Methow Arts, Sec., Arts Comm Rep	

Absent Board Members:

Nick Timm, County Commissioners Rep., Rep. #1, Treasurer	Monica Garza Acevedo, WorkSource, At-Large #3
Sarah Brown, Methow Valley #1, Twisp Works	Brett Riley, WVC, At Large #A2
Lanie Johns, Ok Co Commissioners Rep., Ck of the Brd Co Rep #2	Scott Graham, South County #1, 3 Rivers Hospital
Crystal Gage, Confluence Heath, Central Co. Area #1	Cindy Simpson, Finance Rep, WA Federal Bank
Michael Porter, At-Large #1, Omak School Dist. Super.	Rikki Whipple, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #1,
Vacant, CTFC Representative	Vacant, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2

Guests/Staff:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Ex. Director, Economic Alliance	Mason Duke, E. Dev. Specialist, Economic Alliance
Leonel Marcial, Business Outreach Specialist, Economic Alliance	Carolyn Davis, Project Assistant, Economic Alliance
Breanna Sollender, Comm/Outreach Specialist, Economic Alliance	Cal Goolsby, WVC
Whitney Somday, NNDF	Crystal ??,

Maria Lassila, 1st Vice Chairman called the meeting to order and asked everyone to sign in to the chat room to introduce themselves.

Agenda: No conflicts with the agenda items. Add to agenda: Motion to approve Cal Goolsby, WVC as a Board member replacing Brett Riley in the At Large #2 position.

Consent Agenda: Minutes from June 25, 2025, were emailed out. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that the financials are sent out prior to the meetings and don't reflect the funds that have been received recently. We are still waiting for funds from SBDC for 2nd Qt billing and from Okanogan County for June's billing. Kurt Danison made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and the financials as of July 16, 2025. Lisa Bauer seconded. Motion passed.

Motions- (Chairman Anna Dalbey then took over the meeting for Maria Lassila.)

New CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Policy: Maria Lassila made a motion to approve the new CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance policy with the addition of a signature line for clients. Jord Wilson seconded. Motion passed.

Ratify Executive Committee's Approval of the Emerging Opportunity Application: Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about the County Planning Department's recent Emerging Opportunity application. The Infrastructure Committee approved, and the Executive Committee approved, and it was taken to the Board of County Commissioners who also approved the application. This application would provide funds to do an Economic Study on the Cannabis Industry so that the county commissioners can make an informed decision on whether to continue the moratorium. Kurt Danison made a motion to ratify the

Executive Committee approval of the Emerging Opportunity application. Maria Lassila seconded. Motion passed

Creation of new Sub Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about forming a new Technical Training and Arts Education subcommittee for the Economic Alliance. Maria Lassila made a motion to form the subcommittee. Lael seconded. Motion passed. Sarah Jo Lightner volunteered to chair this committee.

Seat Cal Goolsby to replace Brett Riley on the Economic Alliance Board: This is for an at large position #2. Cal Goolsby spoke about her role as new dean of WVC @ Omak. Lael Duncan made a motion to seat Cal Goolsby to replace Brett Riley on the Economic Alliance Board. Beth Stroshane seconded. Motion passed.

Reports

Executive Director Report: (see attachment #1) Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported the Economic Alliance ended several contracts as of the end of June and she has been doing a lot of reports and billings. She attended a CERB meeting last week and she and Mason Duke will be attending and speaking on panels at the August 11 – 13th WEDA conference in Tacoma. She will be presenting the final CEDS to the county commissioners on August 4th. She has also been working to make sure we are transparent on the different contracts and doing reporting for each and making sure we don't overlap the services.

Infrastructure Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the “grant writer” contract is ended and was a success. The application process for the Infrastructure Committee for projects for 2026 will start August 25 with letters of intent, then the applications. A notice will be sent out to former applicants and a notice will be placed in the local papers. This is not just city project, but for community projects also. The 2026 process will be to rank projects, but in 2027 there should be funding available. Rocklyn Culp asked what type of projects submitted grant requests and can we see a summary version of the requests that were made. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that she can send out a spreadsheet showing what grants were submitted and what was funded. Kurt Danison spoke about the Covid Funds received by the county and cities and asked what they did with these funds.

Business Education/Outreach: Mason Duke spoke about a micro grant being submitted for digital literacy such as online banking and accessing your records for health care. He has also been working with clients to help them find suitable buildings to open to their businesses. Leonel Marcial spoke about assisting businesses that are ready to open their business. He will be doing the Start Simple classes in Spanish again and will also be doing a Spanish version of the banking online and about retirement plans. Breanna Sollender reported she is still learning about the Economic Alliance and working on the Economic Alliance's social media posts, the website and getting out the newsletter for the Economic Alliance. She has been trying to highlight the various projects of the Economic Alliance and how it benefits those looking to start a business or expand their business.

Discussion

Vacant Board Member Positions/Alternates: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that there are still two positions on the Economic Alliance Board that are vacant. One is for the Nespelem/Coulee Dam area, and one is for a representative from the Colville Tribal Federal Corporation (CTFC). We are still looking to fill these positions.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that the Port District Committee won't be meeting again until we can meet with our legislators to see if they are willing to sponsor a bill to change or amend legislation that requires any new Port District needs to be countywide.

Broadband Funding – BEAD funding: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that there is an upheaval in the Broadband world and new rules have been created for states that receive BEAD funding. Utilities across the state are getting very frustrated. It costs a lot to submit these applications, since they need to work with architects and engineers on their applications. Providing fiber to residents now has changed to providing wireless, LEO etc.

Contracts/Grant Updates – Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she is waiting for the ADO contract from the Department of Commerce, which begins July 1, 2025, should have the paperwork next week. The SBDC contract has been increased to fully pay for the BDS out of our contract, instead of paying for part of the funding and then WSU paying the remaining amount. There will be no additional match. The CDBG sub-reception contract should be done by tomorrow. She is waiting for the contract on the CDBG funding.

Other Business/News/Member Updates

Jord Wilson stated that he has been invited to be on a resource team for CERB. As someone who has gone through the process of applying for funding, he can speak about the process and assist applicants with their questions. He would be a resource for those that are applying for funding. The IACC will be held in Wenatchee again this year at the end of October.

Maria Lassila reported that the Omak Chamber's Business After Hours will be August 13 in the Miller Building. These are held around town at various businesses on the second Wednesday of each month.

Jord Wilson reported that Pateros had a great Apple Pie Jamboree this past weekend.

Cal Goolsby stated that Wenatchee Valley College is the fastest growing junior college in the state. They are creating a curriculum on indigenous history and programs such as medical assistant program. They are working on fall CTE classes as well.

Meeting adjourned, 12:30 p.m. **Next meeting is scheduled for August 27, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.**

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis

Roni Holder-Diefenbach Executive Director





ECONOMIC ALLIANCE Executive Director Report

July 2025

I hope that everyone had a great 4th of July and that you are all having fun in the sun! This has been a busy month for us all at the Economic Alliance as June 30th was the end of the biennium for our ADO contract as well as the ending of several of our other annual contracts. Which meant that we had a lot of reporting to get done in July, as well as ramping up for the start of the new contracts!

One of the contracts that ended was our Grant Writing Contract through the Department of Commerce. Together with our consultants we applied for or assisted with 14 different grant applications for local municipalities, community organizations, and the county totaling more than \$11,823,222.82 out of which we received \$288,000.00 in funding. Several of the applications are still being considered and funding notifications have not been received yet. This was a great experience for us and those who had been ranked through the prioritization process to have access to this opportunity. Mason and I are currently working to apply to the Confluence Foundation for additional funding to allow us to continue this work to bring state, federal and philanthropic dollars to projects in Okanogan County.

With new contracts and new programs, also brings new policies and processes that must be developed to ensure that we are meeting eligibility requirements and doing our due diligence in ensuring that we are compliant with the funding requirements. In July, I have worked on developing a new policy and procedures for our CDBG Microenterprise Technical Assistance Program. This program is targeted for Low- and Moderate-Income households within Okanogan County and has a lot of specific requirements. I have created a new policy that will hopefully be approved today that ensures that we are following both the CDBG and Okanogan County subcontract that we have agreed to. I have also created a new intake form that staff will utilize for all clients that we are providing Technical Assistance to that will assist us in determining what program that we currently have that best fits there needs.

We recently received the finalized version of the CEDS document from Points Consulting, who took the information from our June board meeting and incorporated the requested changes to it. I will be getting on the BOCC agenda to present the final document to them for approval.

This month we received an Emerging Opportunity Application from the Okanogan County Commissioners to complete an Economic Impact Study on the Cannabis Industry. The EO process is a fast track to funding through the Infrastructure, EA Executive Committee and the BOCC for approval which I facilitated. All of whom approved the application for the county to do the study with funding up to \$75k.

This month I attended several meetings including the County Commissioners Mtg, BAT Committee Mtg, SBDC Funding Mtg, ADO Mtgs on 2026-27 numbers, CERB Board Mtg in Olympia, EA Executive Committee.

The Economic Alliance's Executive Director is currently representing the Economic Alliance on the following boards:

NCW Economic Development District
NCW Workforce Development Council
CCT& Okanogan County BAT

Community Economic Revitalization Board
Washington Economic Development Association