

The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
October 22, 2025
Via Zoom

Attending Board Members:

Maria Lassila, 1st Vice Chair, Omak Chamber	Beth Stroshane, 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
Rocklyn Culp, Town of Winthrop, Planner	Lisa Bauer, City Rep., City of Okanogan
Lael Duncan, Partners for Rural WA, No. County #1	Monica Garza Acevedo, WorkSource, At-Large #3
Patrick Laws, Methow Valley #1, Twisp Works	Sarah Jo Lightner, Methow Arts, Sec., Arts Comm Rep
Cal Goolsby, WVC, At Large #A2	

Absent Board Members:

Anna Dalbey, Chairman, So. Co. #2, Keller Williams Realty	Cindy Simpson, Finance Rep, WA Federal Bank
Nick Timm, County Commissioners Rep., Rep. #1, Treasurer	Crystal Gage, Confluence Heath, Central Co. Area #1
Planner Kurt Danison, Past Chairman, City Rep. #1, City	Steve Quick, Central #2 Okanogan School Super.
Lanie Johns, Ok Co Commissioners Rep., Ck of the Brd Co Rep #2	Michael Porter, At-Large #1, Omak School Dist. Super
Scott Graham, South County #1, 3 Rivers Hospital	Jordan Ruiz, NNDF, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2
Rikki Whipple, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #1,	Vacant, CTFC Representative

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	Rachel McClure, Representative for Rep. Dan Newhouse

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

Agenda: No conflicts with the agenda items and no additions or changes.

Consent Agenda: Minutes from September 24, 2025, were emailed out. Financials were sent out as of October 16, 2025. Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that some of our contracts are paid on a quarterly basis and have been billed as of the end of September. We are expecting an additional \$44,243.96 to be coming in the next couple of weeks, which will change the net balance on the Profit & Loss. Lael Duncan made a motion to approve the minutes as presented and the financials as of October 16, 2025. Cal Goolsby seconded. Motion passed with no one opposed or abstained.

Motions

990 Tax Return – Review & Approval: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reviewed the draft 990 tax return prepared by our CPA, Clifton Larson Allen. This return outlines our year-end 2024 income and expenses, as well as list accomplishments over the year, our mission, and list our Board members. Since we have received an extension to file, this return needs to be filed in November. Cal Goolsby made a motion to approve the 990 Tax Return as presented. Beth Stroshane seconded. Motion passed with no one opposed and no one abstained.

Move Board Member to South County Representative Position #1: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she has been reaching out to Board members that have not been able to attend our Board meetings on a regular basis. Scott Graham, current South County #1 area representative, has been busy dealing with hospital issues and would like to resign his position. Roni Holder-Diefenbach suggested moving the current At-Large #5 representative, Jord Wilson from Pateros, to the South County #1 position. Beth Stroshane made a motion to move Jord Wilson to the South County #1 position to finish that term and

declare the At-Large #5 position vacant. Lael Duncan seconded. Discussion: Lael Duncan also stated that it is her intention to not run for another term at the end of 2025, so her position as North County Representative #1 will need to be filled. Roni Holder-Diefenbach stated that she has spoken with Andy Bertapelle, CEO at Mid-Valley Hospital, and he is interested in filling the vacant At-Large #5 position. Motion passed with no one opposed or abstained.

Reports

Executive Director Report: (see attachment #1) Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that we now have a contract with the DOC for the ADO. Because of the reduced contract, we have also reduced the reporting outcomes for this contract. It is a reduction in funds of about \$10,000 per year for the next two years. July 2025 to June 2027. Roni Holder-Diefenbach and Mason Duke attended the IACC in Wenatchee last week. Two of our communities received recognition. Tonasket's Perfect Passage project received a Community Impact Award and Brewster was recognized with an award for the successful completion of a major water quality project. The town of Winthrop also was able to present to the "Tech Team" on one of their infrastructure projects.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she has been having conversations with the county and the PUD about our contracts for 2026. She is also working with the SBDC for a contract for 2026. We also received notice that our grant application to USDA was approved and will start on November 1, 2025. She needs to change the budget and scope of work a little bit. We were awarded \$100,000.

Infrastructure Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she received letters of intent, and the Committee felt all 24 projects are ready to submit an application. This is a non-funding year, but projects can be evaluated and ranked for possible funding from other funding sources. The Committee will meet on November 12 at the Omak City Hall for presentations by each applicant. The Committee will score each of them and they will be ranked according to their scores. The Executive Committee will then approve the rankings, and it will then be taken to the county commissioners for approval and included in the CEDS.

Business Education/Outreach: Mason Duke reported that he attended the Harvest Fest in Okanogan and handed out information and spoke with businesses about the Economic Alliance. He attended the IACC and learned a lot of great information. He has been meeting with clients and has also been going through the SBDC certification process. He and Leonel Marcial have been shadowing SBDC counselors. Upcoming workshops include "Developing Your Business Plan" with Lew Blakeney on October 29th, and "Intro to Canva" on November 13.

Leonel Marcial spoke about his upcoming class, about pricing and about the clients he is currently working with. He has been doing outreach at various chambers and with individual businesses, as well as working on his SBDC certification process.

Breanna Sollender reported she is working on getting the next Economic Alliance newsletter put together and working to make the web site more "user friendly". She still needs bios and pictures for each Board member so she can do social media posts and use in the newsletters. She also recently attended the River Walk Craft event in Coulee Dam and share information about workshops and the Economic Alliance.

Discussion

Port District: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that they are still trying to determine the benefits of having a non-taxing Port District.

Technical Training and Arts Education Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she is scheduled to meet with Sarah Jo Lightner next week.

Broadband Funding – BEAD funding: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she still doesn't know about contracts that are moving forward, but the committee has continued to meet and will be sending out a press release about the work the committee has been doing.

Contracts/Grant Updates – Already covered under Executive Director's Report. We now have a signed contract with the DOC and Roni Holder-Diefenbach has been working with the county and PUD to get signed contract for 2026.

Other Business/News/Member Updates

Maria Lassila reported that Omak will be having it Halloween Harvest Festival & Zombie Fun Run on Saturday. The Rotary Steak Night, auction, fund raiser, and Halloween Party will also be happening on Saturday. There will also be a watch party for two local people that competed in the Amazing Race.

Brewster will be having a Halloween Costume Contest on October 31 and a Best Tamale Contest on Saturday.

The new Diamon's Pizza had a ribbon cutting ceremony on Monday and they recorded record breaking opening day sales.

Meeting adjourned, 12:09 p.m. **Next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. in person at the county commissioners hearing room. (No meeting in November).**

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis

Roni Holder-Diefenbach Executive Director





ECONOMIC ALLIANCE Executive Director Report

October 2025

This month was notably shorter due to my participation at the IACC conference and being sick for a week.

At the end of September, we received a call from USDA that we were awarded our RBDG Grant that we applied for back in February. This grant is awarded in June with a start date of July 1, but the local office had not been notified until the last week in September that they had permission to contact awardees. We had a 2 day turnaround to accept the contract and complete all the required documentation. We accepted and set a start date of November 1st. I am now working on an amendment to the budget, due to scope of work changes due to the EA receiving other grants that now crossover so that needs to be updated and changed.

September 30th is also the end of the quarter, so staff have been diligently working on quarter-end reporting for most of our contracts. This is our first time billing out for CDBG so I am working with Lanie to ensure that we have everything needed for compliance with the program. We also did not get our ADO contract until the day before the “normal” due date, so the DOC is allowing us a few days to complete the required documents for billing now that we have access to them.

This month I have also been following up with board members who have not been to meetings for a while to determine if they want to continue, or to step down. I have also been reaching out to potential new board members to gauge their interest. We hope to have a full board and slate of officers at the December meeting.

Mason and I had the opportunity to attend the IACC conference along with EA Board Member Kurt Danison. The event was great as usual; we attended several breakout sessions that spoke about updates and changes from the different funding sources that were there. Unfortunately, USDA and EDA were not there due to the Federal Shutdown. There was information that we learned about funding for libraries, pools and other types of projects that we are working on. It is always exciting to go and network with the communities that we don't get to see all the time. This year 2 of our communities were recognized and received awards for their infrastructure projects, Tonasket got the community impact award for their Perfect Passage Project and Brewster got one for their water/sewer project! It was great seeing our communities getting recognized for the work that they do!

This month I will also be assisting the Department of Commerce as part of the interview team for the CW Regional representative position. This will occur during the week of the 20th. I am excited to be a part of this process and am hoping that we find a great replacement for Soo, who has big shoes to fill!

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

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

Community Economic Revitalization Board
Washington Economic Development
Partners for Rural Washington