The Economic Alliance
Board Meeting
July 22, 2026
VIA Zoom

Attending Board Members:

Maria Lassila, 1st Chairman, Tourism Rep. Omak Chamber
Kurt Danison, Secretary, City Rep #1, City Planner
Jord Wilson, South County #1, City of Pateros
Jordan Ruiz, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #2, NNDF
Crystal Gage, Central Co. #1, Confluence Heath,
Rocklyn Culp, City Rep #2, Town of Winthrop, Planner
Steve Quick, Central Co. #2 Okanogan School Super
Cindy Simpson, Finance Rep, WA Federal Bank
Brent Timm, No Co #1, Tonasket Chamber & TranGO
Lisa Bauer, City Rep. #2, City of Okanogan

Absent Board Members:

Anthony Popelier, 1st Vice Chair, North Co. #2, Reman & Reload
Sarah Jo Lightner, 2nd Vice Chair, Arts Comm Rep, Methow Arts
Nick Timm, County Commissioners Rep., Rep. #1, Treasurer
Anna Dalbey, Past Chairman, So. Co. #2, Keller Williams Realty
Lanie Johns, Ok Co Commissioners Rep. #2, Ck of the Brd
Andy Bertapalle, At-Large #1, Chief Admin Mid Valley Hosp
Vacant - At Large #5
Rikki Whipple, Nespelem/Coulee Dam Area #1, NNDF
Beth Stroshane, At-Large #4,Applied Bldg Infor
Cal Cross, At Large #A2, WVC
Monica Garza Acevedo, At-Large #3, WorkSource
Jon Brown, Methow Valley #1, Twisp Works
William Marchand, CCT Rep., CCT Planning
Vacant - Colville Tribal Federal Corp. Rep.

Guests/Staff:

Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Ex. Director, Economic Alliance
Leonel Marcial, Business Outreach Specialist, Economic Alliance
Breanna Sollender, Comm/Outreach Specialist, Economic Alliance
Mason Duke, E. Dev. Specialist, Economic Alliance
Carolyn Davis, Project Assistant, Economic Alliance
Jessica McCarthy, Okanogan Co. PUD

Maria Lassila, Chairman, called the meeting to order and asked everyone to sign in to the chat room.

Agenda: No conflicts with the agenda items and one change to the agenda, add 990 Tax Return approval.

Consent Agenda: Minutes from June 24, 2026, were emailed out and financials as of July 15, 2026, were sent. Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about the financials and that the Department of Commerce provided an additional grant for the ADO contract for $10,000. This will include very minimal "extra" work attached to our contract. Kurt Danison made a motion to approve the minutes, and the financials as presented, Jord Wilson, seconded. Motion passed with no one opposed or abstained.

Presentation: Roni Holder-Diefenbach spoke about the 990 2025 Tax Return that was emailed out to the Board this morning. KP Accounting in Twisp now does our tax return. Beginning 2025 balance was $463,807 and ending balance was $463,167. Total revenue for 2025 was $469,479 and total expenses were $468,633. There were pages that showed that we were compliant with getting our Board members to sign the Conflict-of-Interest Statement and the Code of Ethics Statement. These statements are important and we need to have the Board member's signature every year. Brent Timm made a motion to approve and authorize Maria Lassila to sign the 2025 tax return. Jordan Ruiz seconded. Motion passed with no one opposed or abstained.

Motions

Lease agreement with Okanogan County: Our current lease for our office space expired and the county has asked for a 5-year lease for the Hancock Building with rent to remain the same at $813.46 or .445 per sq. ft. There will need to be a public hearing (scheduled for July 27th) and if no one objects, then the commissioners can sign. Kurt Danison made a motion to approve doing a 5-year rental lease with Okanogan County for the current office space. Brent Timm seconded. Motion passed with no one opposed or abstained.

Reports

Executive Director Report: (see attachment #1)

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she and Mason Duke met with the Loomis Fire District on Monday to discuss the SOQ's submitted to do the NEPA and project administration for construction of their new firehall. 15 entities were interested and six submitted proposals. The Fire District selected three consultants to interview. The Community Development Block Grant program (which the county administers) is a complicated funding source with lots of hoops to go through. It is hoped that once the consultants are on board, Roni Holder-Diefenbach will be able to step back and let them handle much of the project work. Kurt Danison asked if we were getting any admin fee for helping the Loomis Fire District. We will not get any admin fees. This project went through the prioritization process and as such is part of our monthly billing to the county. Lanie Johns (county clerk) is now working remotely and on a contract basis. She has suggested that the county hire someone to manage these types of grant contracts.

Roni Holder-Diefenbach also reported that she has scheduled a meeting with the Cannabis Growers. She will be facilitating this process to come up with a plan of the grower's top priority items/concerns to present to the county commissioners. The meeting with the growers is scheduled for Monday July 27th at 2:00 at Omak City Hall. She has also been invited to tour some of the "grows" and will schedule a time for this.

Infrastructure Committee: Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she met with the county commissioners and their Finance Committee to get a handle on how much would be available to allocate for projects this funding cycle. The commissioners asked her to contact all those with an outstanding balance on their current contracts to determine if they were going to spend the funding that had been allocated for their projects in the last funding cycle. If it isn't spent by the end of 2026, the funds will go back into the pot for reallocation. Projects must reapply and be prioritized again for funding. The county commissioners approved allocating $1.5 million for the Public Infrastructure Fund for projects (2027 – 2030). An additional $500,000 will be set aside for Emerging Opportunities projects. A press release will go out on August 27, 2026, and we will probably have a huge influx of projects for this prioritization process.

Business Education/Outreach: Mason Duke reported that he has been assisting Roni Holder-Diefenbach with the Loomis Fire Hall Project for the past two weeks. He will also be updating the scoresheet for the prioritization process. He has also been working with a new contractor to get his license and bonding in place so he can start taking on clients

Leonel Marcial reported that he is working with businesses and trying to understand their problems. He has been doing some research for clients and sharing information about the Economic Alliance resources. He also attended several local chamber meetings and listened to businesses speak about their problems and concerns.

Breanna Sollender reported that she and her daughter made the move to Spokane. She will be working remotely and is currently working on social media posts about grants for ranchers/farmers for farm equipment. She is still in need of Board member's Bios from some Board members, please send to her at Breanna@economic-alliance.com

Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that she received a thank you card from True North Book Store, which recently opened. They thanked the Economic Alliance for their assistance to help get their business started.

Discussion
Board Member Recruitment: Still have two positions on the Board that are vacant. The At-Large Position #5 and the CTFC.

Port District: No updates.

Technical Training & Education Committee: No report. Will meet again in September.

Broadband – Next meeting is scheduled for September 26th. Some of the Nespelem area was impacted by the fire. The PUD also discussed turning back the $30 Millon grant funds since they were unable to make an amendment to the contract.

Contract/Grant Updates 2026
Roni Holder-Diefenbach reported that we did receive the WEDFA contract and are subcontracting out with TwispWorks, Methow Arts Alliance, and Business Impact NW to do some of the work for this contract.

She will start negotiating 2027 contracts (county, PUD, OCTC, etc.) soon.

Other Business/News/Member Updates
Lisa Bauer reported that they will be holding a poverty simulation event in Omak on September17th. They will run simulation of realistic activities and identify gaps and duplication of services. All Board members are invited to participate.

Maria Lassila reported that Omak Chamber Business After Hours will be hosted by the Omak Stampede on August 12, 5:30 at the Stampede Office. Pizza will be served.

Lisa Bauer reported that the city of Okanogan is working on doing a workshop about "13 Ways to Kill Your Community" and on August 5th the Okanogan Chamber of Commerce will be speaking about this.

Methow Arts Alliance will present Summer Beats at the Loup Loup Ski Hill on August 1. Enjoy music, wander through the Okanogan Vendor Village, camp under the stars and settle in for a full weekend. Methow Arts is teaming up with Micahlee from Y'alls Yoga Studio and Evergreen Mountain Bikes for activities the morning after the show. Adults $45 / Youth $10

Meeting adjourned, 12:10 p.m.

Next meeting is scheduled for August 26, at 11:00 a.m. via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Davis

Roni Holder-Diefenbach Executive Director

ECONOMIC ALLIANCE
Executive Director Report

July 2026

We are now in the middle of the summer months and there has been a lot going on the Economic Alliance office! As you heard from our last months report, we continue to work with those impacted by the recent Disasters that have hit Okanogan County from those in retail to orchardists, farmers, ranchers and others in agriculture. We have continued to look for available resources and attend the Horticulture, Farm Bureau and Food policy meetings on a monthly basis. Staff continue to attend Chamber of Commerce meetings throughout the county as well.

I have been meeting with the County Commissioners to discuss several projects that we are involved in. The most recent meeting was to discuss the funding for this year's prioritization process. We will be meeting on July 21st with the Counties Finance committee to discuss this more in depth. In the meantime, the county asked me to contact all those with outstanding balances to determine if they were going to spend the funding that had been allocated to them. As if they had not spent it by end of 2026, it is supposed to go back into the pot for reallocation and that could impact our final number available for 2027 projects. I contacted all those awarded and it sounds like all projects but two plans to have the funding fully used by that time, which is great news!

At the meeting with the Board of County Commissioners, I also brought up that our lease was up in August, so it was time to renew. We are currently going through the process, have a draft lease (that you will approve at the July mtg), and a public hearing will be held on July 28th as that is the counties final part of the process. Once approve we can sign it and it will be for another 5 years.

Our contract with PRWA is in progress, we continue to work with them on projects, and they are busy submitting grants on behalf of several different organizations within the county.

On July 8th was the deadline for the RFQ responses for the Loomis Fire District project. We received 6 responses, and on the 13th Mason and I went to the Fire district commissioners mtg and assisted them in going through the process to select who to bring in for interviews. They chose 3 consultants, and we will hold the interviews at the Economic Alliance office on Monday July 20th in the afternoon.

I have also been working to schedule the meeting with the Okanogan County Cannabis Growers Association that I will facilitate with the goal of identifying some common concerns/issues that the growers have, while discussing potential solutions for them. The meeting will be on Monday July 27th at Omak City Hall. Once we go through this process, we will schedule to meet with the BOCC to present those ideas to them. The goal is to have an open line of communication between the two groups and focus on items that they can come up with solutions for that benefit both entities.

I also will be attending the CERB Board meeting in Olympia this week!

Community Economic Revitalization Board
Washington Economic Development Association
Partners for Rural Washington
CCT & Okanogan County BAT