

WOOD RIVER VISION 2020
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 25, 2016

The quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors of Wood River Vision 2020 was held Monday, January 25, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Wood River Civic Center. Board members attending were Tyler Doane, Greg Cramer, Joyce Willoughby, Pam Kjar, Brian Hayes and Jason Rotter. Members of the public in attendance were Sara Arnett, Rhonda McGuire and Esther Rickert. Lori Ferguson, a representative of South Central Economic Development District and Kelly Gewecke, Business Development Consultant with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development were also present.

Doane inquired of Kjar if Vision 2020 was now in possession of the Holiday Lights from Library Park. Kjar stated that the lights are currently stored in the basement of the Civic Center. She requested that the \$150.00 saved on storage be used the coming holiday season to replace several broken plug ends damaged this past season.

President Doane opened the meeting and presented the first item of business, approval of the October 26, 2015 meeting. Willoughby moved and Cramer seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried with all ayes.

Doane and Cramer indicated their willingness to extend their terms for another three years.

Rhonda McGuire attended the First Impressions-How Does Your Community Rate conference presented by SCEDD on November 5, 2015. There were 3 key speakers: Derek Clark, City Planner, City of Superior; John Madsen, VP and Sales Manager of Krotters Home and Auto Center, Stuart, NE; and Jim Scott, VP Bank of Broken Bow and Treasurer Custer Economic Development. A summary of her notes is attached to these minutes. Items of specific interest that she took away from the meeting include:

- Local business leaders help new businesses succeed by funding from their own money.
- Capitalize on locations strategic to your area that need services your community provide.
- Utilize grant money to assist housing shortages and blighted areas with TIF financing.
- Utilize hometown volunteers who desire and are willing to make a difference.
- Motivate and encourage young people to work on fund-raising projects.
- Promote a sense of pride in the appearance or first impression of your community.

She stated that other attendees added the following suggestions: utilization of 2nd story buildings and a train viewing deck.

The city of Superior had been dealing with the issue of abandoned or dilapidated buildings within the community and Doane questioned who bore the cost associated with this. Ferguson informed him that Superior had invested funds in the hiring of a City Planner and formation of a Code Enforcement Department. SCEDD had provided assistance when necessary. Superior is now a recipient of downtown revitalization funds and has been named a Leadership Community. Doane thanked McGuire for contributing her time to attend the meeting and report on the conference.

Sara Arnett, who had volunteered at the last meeting to begin the application paperwork to be named a Leadership Community, reported on the current status of the application. She indicated that quite a few of the items addressed in the application could be completed from the OOR grant fund application. One

area that was not covered is a Business Retention and Expansion Program. It is her findings that the Vision Board form a Business and Industry Committee to attract and retain viable businesses in support of the local economy.

Goals for the BIC include:

1. Establish 1 yr. and 3 yr. plans for what the BIC will do to help retain and expand existing business and recruit new business to the community.
2. Prepare an annual budget. (Zero budget for now, as there are no income and expenses).
3. Send representatives to 2 business development conferences, workshops or trainings annually.
4. For working relationships with business development professionals including, but not limited to:
 - a: Kelly Gewecke, DED
 - b: Sara Bennet, NE Business Development Center
 - c: Deena Beck, Rural Enterprise Assistance Program (REAP)
 - d: Sharon Hueftle, SCEDD
5. Create Wood River's Community Profile on the city's website, as well as on the LocationOne Information System (LOIS), and update annually.
6. Create a B & I Assistance Program. Work with Kelly Gewecke of DED to visit at least four local Businesses per year to assess how things are going and see what resources we can pair them with to help overcome any obstacles they're encountering. Gewecke will submit the DED visitation program documentation to the state.
7. Maintain an accurate listing of local businesses, logging new business openings and business closures throughout the year.
8. Promote educational programs being offered that may be of benefit to local businesses.
9. Create and maintain a list of financial resources available to area businesses.
10. Generate attention for local businesses and/or B & I week. This may come in the form of business spotlights in the local paper and city website, new business open houses, recognitions of expansions, etc.
11. Identify businesses that the community lacks today, and look for ways to fill those voids through expansion of existing businesses or by start-ups from within or outside Wood River.

Gewecke explained the BRE process. She indicated that the information obtained from the interviews will be tabulated and returned to the committee for their use. It is the intent of the DED that individual businesses are guided to appropriate resources to meet their needs, so that communities do not lose businesses.

There was discussion whether the interview should be conducted by Gewecke and a representative of the Business and Industry Committee.

After discussion, Kjar moved to adopt the Business and Retention Expansion Program and for a Business and Industry Committee be established. Hayes seconded the motion. The motion carried with all ayes.

Greg Cramer and Sara Arnett will serve on the Business and Industry Committee.

The next item on the agenda was discussion of the Community Planning Session planned for February 8. Doane, Willoughby and Rotter are unable to attend on February 8. Doane asked for clarification on the proposed content of the meeting. Arnett indicated that Vision 2020 will need to have a strategic planning session and set new goals. This will be a town hall meeting. SCEDD will facilitate the meeting,

talk about the accomplishments of the Board, possibly have some break-out sessions to set goals for the future. It was decided the meeting will be held on February 17 at 6:00 pm in the Civic Center. Notices will be posted on the City website, Facebook page, newspaper and area businesses. Arnett will prepare the notice for distribution. Willoughby will submit for placement on the school sites and churches. Doane will prepare a mass email and place the notice on the Facebook page.

Doane will prepare a list of accomplishments of the Board since the last town hall meeting and send to the remaining board for review and comment. A slideshow presentation was discussed as a possibility for the meeting.

The next item of business before the Board was discussion of applying for a DED Community and Civic Facilities Grant. Arnett and Gewecke informed the Board that grant funds are not available for a "pool only" facility. Gewecke said if the facility were to be a pool/recreation center, or include specific types of programs for children or senior citizens, then the application could be submitted.

Ferguson presented an update on the Housing Committee activities. The OOR grant funds were released December 22, 2015. SCEDD is working with the Housing Development Corporation of Hastings to administer the funds and oversee the project. Of the initial 50 application prospects, 25-30 responded to a recent postcard from SCEDD to indicate they are still interested in receiving grant funds for renovation projects. SCEDD and HDC estimate approximately 9 individuals will receive funds.

Ferguson stated that the funds will need to be distributed by September 2018. HDC will contact the applicants and contact the general public as well. Discussion ensued regarding the distribution of funds, as early applicants were told they would be distributed on a first come basis. Doane questioned if grant funds were available for acquisition and demolition of buildings. Ferguson stated that the funds are for demolition only, properties slated for demolition would need to be acquired by The City of Wood River.

Arnett indicated that she had been in contact with Habitat for Humanity to consider building a habitat home on one of the acquired properties. She indicated they were not overly receptive to the idea, but she will continue to pursue the issue.

Doane informed the Board that we have been invited to meet with the Lincoln Highway Association on February 16 at 5:30. Arnett stated that the Association will be holding their meeting at noon, tour the Community and visit sites of interest. They wish to inform board members about the activities of the Association.

Jim Crandall will present a program regarding formation of a cooperative agreement to keep our grocery store open. The meeting will be held Tuesday, January 26 at 7:00 pm.

Kjar reported that the library park lighting ceremony was attended by over 200 individuals. Hayes reported that the family health clinic is now open and seeing patients. He also stressed supporting local business to keep them operating.

Prior to adjournment, Gewecke stated that the Board needs to find a way to show appreciation to our volunteers.

Willoughby questioned if an event has been scheduled to recognize and show appreciation to Larry and Rosemary Brannagan, owners of Mr. B's Grocery for approximately 35 years.

Rickert will bring up the subject at the Community Club meeting next week. Doane requested that Vision 2020 be informed of any event to be planned, so that we may assist.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm. The next scheduled meeting of the Board is April 25, 2016.

Approved:

Tyler Doane, President

Pam Kjar, Secretary