

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AGENDA
August 13, 2013
Waverly City Hall – Civic Center
7:00 a.m.

A. Call to Order:

1. Members Present: Dan Beenken, Chairperson
Deb Schroeder, Vice Chairperson
Brent Jones
Rose Meyer
Patsy Reed
Brad Roling
Jim Willis
Shelley Wolf

Members Absent: Jere Vyverberg

Others Present: Brent Matthias, Economic Development Executive Director
Connie Tolan, Economic Development Office Coordinator
Dan McKenzie, Waverly City Council Liaison
Phil Jones, Waverly City Administrator
Bob Brunkhorst, Waverly Mayor
Ken Kammeyer, Bremer County Supervisor, District 1
Tim Neil, Bremer County Supervisor, District 2
Dewey Hildebrandt, Bremer County Supervisor, District 3
Duane Liddle, Waverly resident
Anelia Dimitrova, Waverly Newspapers *(Arrived B.4)*

2. Approval of Agenda:

Motion By: Willis

Seconded By: Schroeder

Move that the agenda be approved as printed.

Yes: 8

No: 0

Absent: 1

3. Approval of Previous Minutes:

Motion By: Roling

Seconded By: Jones

Move that the minutes of the July 9, 2013 Economic Development Commission Meeting be approved.

Yes: 8

No: 0

Absent: 1

4. Communication Items:

- Updated Commission Member List

B. Regular Business:

1. Economic Development Goals and Objectives for Waverly Area Economic Development and Bremer County

Brent Matthias stated that the Waverly Area Economic Development Commission's Strategic Business Plan states the goals of the Commission to be business retention, job creation, and capital investment in Bremer County and the surrounding communities. The supervisors expressed that they support these goals and have no criticism of what Waverly Area Economic Development (WAED) has been doing, but they feel that there is an opportunity for more to be done and the county would like to be a bigger partner in making things happen. The eastern part of the county needs assistance and Tripoli in particular has expressed that they would like more involvement. The supervisors do not have a definite plan for how to accomplish this, but have been considering hiring an economic development director for the county. However, they would consider working with WAED to accomplish this if there was a way for them to become more involved to better meet the needs of the smaller communities in Bremer County without creating their own position.

Bremer County currently contributes \$10,000/year to WAED to help cover the cost of serving the other communities in Bremer County, and a few of the communities also make contributions ranging from \$1,000-\$2,000/year. Brent attends City Council meetings in the other communities periodically to provide updates and to assist with projects as needed. Brent also attends the Bremer County Supervisor meetings once/month to provide updates. WAED also promotes the entire service area through a website, a job site, printed marketing materials and participation in the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership. The supervisors acknowledged that Brent's time is spread thin in trying to cover the entire County as well as Shell Rock.

One of the challenges encountered by Waverly Area Economic Development is that of branding. The organization was not named Bremer County Economic Development because they also serve Shell Rock in Butler County. But because "Waverly" is in the name, other communities in Bremer County have the perception that the organization is all about Waverly. It was suggested that the organization change its name to The Greater Bremer County Area Economic Development, but there are challenges and expenses involved in a name change, and perhaps educating the leaders in the smaller Bremer County communities about what the Waverly Area encompasses would be a better approach.

Discussion took place regarding the pros and cons of public vs private models for E.D. organizations. WAED is one of only a few public models in the state. Patsy

Reed gave a brief history of how WAED started out as private model E.D. organization with a large board. The challenges of having a large board led to the transition to WAED with a smaller commission providing oversight. It was noted that the public/private model has more people invested and involved. Tim Neil shared that Butler County E.D. is a public/private hybrid model which utilizes a per capita tax levy to provide part of its funding.

The Supervisors noted some new businesses that Butler County has landed and feels that Bremer County could be equally as competitive with their 4-lane highways and railroads. It was noted that Bremer County has also landed a couple of projects in the last two years, those being Midwest Plastics in Plainfield and the Ohler Pump expansion in Janesville. For both of these projects, as well as the Zimpro project in Butler County, the companies approached the economic development organization or city; they were not a result of recruiting. It was stated that quality leads are few and far between. Leads come through the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership in the form of regional leads, state leads, leads from trade shows, etc.

It was further discussed that the economic development needs of smaller communities are different from the needs of larger communities. Specifically, Waverly typically is looking to expand and bring in larger employers, where the smaller communities are expressing a desire for growth in housing and smaller businesses such as convenience stores and grocery stores. This led to the idea that perhaps what the County needs is a Community Development position rather than an Economic Development position.

Additional thoughts were shared on how the county and smaller towns could become more involved with the Economic Development Commission and organization. Suggestions included expanding the commission to include a representative from each community and the rural area, rotating the location of meetings among all communities or meeting at the Courthouse, and creating a second organization that parallels the Economic Development Commission and focuses on the smaller communities or on community development. Phil Jones stated that there would be additional cost involved in expanding services and that those costs would need to be considered. Patsy Reed emphasized the need to create measurable goals and to know how success will be measured.

Next Steps:

- 1) Brent, Phil, Bob, Tim, Ken and Dewey will meet to continue discussions.
- 2) The level of interest of the other communities needs to be determined. A meeting will be scheduled with the Supervisors, the mayor of each Bremer County city (or their appointee), Phil, Bob, Brent and Chairperson Beenken to have this discussion. The invitation will come jointly from the Supervisors and Brent.

- 3) Brent will research how economic development is structured in other counties that are demographically similar to Bremer County.

2. Statement of Support for Broadband Study

Commissioner Jere Vyverberg is chairing the Waverly Broadband Task Force. The task force is working on an RFP and the goal is to have a final recommendation by the end of February 2014.

The Economic Development Commission unanimously stated their support for the Broadband Project and offers their assistance or involvement as needed throughout the project.

3. Business Updates from Commission Members

Deb Schroeder shared that with Bremer County transitioning some services to private entities, Bartels has expressed interest in taking on the home health services component and is working with the county on that.

Rose reported that new homes are going up in Shell Rock's new housing addition. Planning continues on the new fire station project in advance of the fundraising effort.

Patsy Reed shared that Meyer Pharmacy had a great 100th Anniversary Celebration in July in recognition of 100 years of local ownership.

Brad Roling is working with the City of Shell Rock on plans to build a new dealership in the east industrial park in Shell Rock. Their Shell Rock dealership has grown from 6 employees to 30.

Jim Willis reported that health care reform is a major focus at this time.

Bob Brunkhorst shared that the Waverly Area Small Business Incubator and Consultation Center Board is re-writing the contract for director Katie Warren, whose focus is on getting the incubator up and running. The incubator's focus will be on new retail development.

4. Business Updates from Economic Development Director

Terex laid off 54 employees in late July. Terex has a right to recall for 18 months. Brent attended a meeting that Iowa Workforce Development organized for laid off workers with Hawkeye Community College, the Veterans Administration, and

Terex Human Resources participating. There were 14 laid off employees who attended, of which 6 were veterans.

Brent distributed unemployment statistics for June. Bremer County's low unemployment can make recruiting of businesses challenging, but the benefits of having people employed outweighs the challenges.

The Waverly Area Economic Development job site received over 5,000 views in July. This site is free and all Waverly Area employers are encouraged to utilize it to post job openings. Feedback from employers is positive, particularly in terms of the quality of candidates referred from the site.

Brent and Phil continue to work on business park planning and will present information at the next meeting.

Discussions on public/private model are on hold until decisions are made about Bremer County's future direction for economic development.

C. Old Business:

None

D. New Business:

None

E. Next Meeting Date:

The next meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2013, at 7:00 a.m. (location to be determined).

F. Adjournment:

Motion By: Willis

Seconded By: Schroeder

That the Economic Development Commission meeting be adjourned.

Yes: 8

No: 0

Absent: 1