

Southwest Michigan RPI Collaborative Committee

December 7, 2017 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Kim Bell (phone), Jackie Bibb, Jill Bland, Vince Carahaly, Michael Evans, Bridgette Jones, Ken Jones, Pat Karr, Bob Miller, Dan Peat (phone), Richard Remus (phone), Tom Richardson, Barbara Rose (phone), Jon Start (phone), Rachel Wade (phone)

Committee Members Absent: Barbara Craig, Ben Damerow, Grant Fletcher, Luann Harden, Kenneth High, Joanna Johnson, Lynn Johnson, Jan Karazim, Shane Kissack, Jason Latham, Deb Miller, David Reid, Sandy Standish

Also Present: John Egelhaaf, Lee Adams, Rebecca Harvey

Call to Order

Chair Evans called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Introduction of Members

Introductions of Committee members and guests were made.

Approval of Agenda

Bland stated that she was concerned by the Committee's discussion in November regarding the *Talent Anchor Strategy 2017* project proposal. She stated that the project was sponsored by SWMI First in partnership with WMU and that the project was designed with WMU to supplement existing efforts at the University. She expressed her disappointment that there was no communication prior to the meeting on the concerns/questions raised. Bland inquired as to when the Committee could discuss this matter further.

Chair Evans noted that the Committee acted on the 2017 project proposals in November and that the grants have been awarded. However, the 2018 grant application/work plan is primary to this agenda and will offer the opportunity to discuss the RPI's focus and process for 2018.

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Motion by K. Jones, **supported** by Carahaly, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion **carried unanimously**.

Approval of Minutes – November 2, 2017

Motion by Bland, **supported** by Carahaly, to approve the November 2, 2017 minutes as presented. The motion **carried unanimously**.

Citizen Comments

No citizen comments were offered.

Monthly Financial Report

Egelhaaf referenced and provided an overview of the 2017 Financial Report for the RPI – Region 8. The following was noted: the fiscal year extends to the end of December, but subtotals for each category have been shown to provide reference on total revenue/expenses to date; ‘Staffing’ and ‘Meeting Expenses’ are well under-budget; the ‘Talent Match’ project invoice is pending so is shown to be under-budget; receipt of invoices for the dashboard work has begun and will begin to show up on the financial report.

Egelhaaf reported that the RPI remains comfortably situated to complete the project grant awards (\$110,000) and is projected to have approximately \$50,000-60,000 to rollover to the 2018 fiscal year.

2018 Grant Application/Work Plan

Chair Evans extended thanks to the staff of the RPI for completing and submitting the 2018 RPI Grant Application on time. He also expressed thanks to those who provided letters of support submitted in conjunction with the application.

Egelhaaf and Adams provided an overview of the 2018 Grant Application and Work Plan using a Power Point presentation. The work elements, schedule and budget were detailed for the following RPI tasks:

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Priority Task #1 – Identify Persistent Regional Problem – Connect to RPI Goal

Priority Task #2 – Dashboard/Website Modifications

Priority Task #3 – Raise the RPI Profile

Egelhaaf noted that an inherent challenge in the process is that the budget is issued by the State in November; the application to the State is due by December 1; and, the previous year's budget is not complete until the end of December . . . which means that the application contains best estimates regarding the budget. However, this also represents a challenge for all of the Regions.

Robust Committee discussion of the 2018 Application/Work Plan ensued wherein the following was noted:

- It may be unrealistic for the RPI to endeavor to be the 'single' touch point for the Region; we do not operate in isolation and it would be better to strive to collaborate as touch points. It was agreed to remove 'single' from the statement.
- Discussion on the best location/facility to host the general meeting in May should begin.
- The general meeting in May represents a key opportunity to demonstrate the work of RPI.
- The future of the RPI is a good campaign discussion question to pose to gubernatorial candidates. Once candidates are announced . . . it would be beneficial for the RPI to develop a strategy to have this discussion.
- If the RPI could focus on a single issue . . . and make a difference on that issue . . . it would result in a more powerful message to the candidates.
- The 2018 Grant Application/Work Plan has been designed to accomplish this single focus approach . . . where the issue is the focus rather than the RFP (as compared with the 2017 process).
- The 2018 application addresses the shortfalls of the 2017 process identified by some members.

Chair Evans offered support to the 2017 process, noting that the RPI Plan establishes clear priorities and the 2017 projects in receipt of RPI grants clearly forwarded those priorities. He noted that the lag in the dashboard development which prevented a showing of progress; low meeting attendance throughout 2017; and difficulties regarding the project application deadlines presented hurdles.

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Adams agreed that the 2017 Application/Work Plan relied on others to identify the focus in implementing the Plan while the 2018 approach shifts the responsibility to the RPI to identify a single-issue focus.

K. Jones added that the 2017 process did result in several low-level opportunities for collaboration, but agreed that the single-issue approach of the 2018 application provides a better chance for major collaboration.

Chair Evans thanked Egelhaaf and Adams for the preparation of the 2018 Grant Application/Work Plan. He acknowledged it as a difficult undertaking with a very short time frame to complete.

Chair Evans stated that it will be the responsibility of the RPI to identify the single issue for 2018 and emphasized that Committee member participation and attendance will be required to be successful in this charge.

2018 Housekeeping Items

Meeting Locations:

Adams requested Committee direction regarding meeting locations for 2018. He noted that varying locations has the advantage of convening members across the Region . . . but has had the effect of discouraging attendance. A single meeting location seems to improve attendance but may not be a convenient location for all members.

Following general Committee discussion, it was agreed that the W.E. Upjohn Institute in Kalamazoo and the Lawrence Tech Center in Van Buren County represent two central locations that are easy to access and will be used as the meeting location options in 2018. It was noted that phone-in participation will remain an available feature through which to attend meetings.

Committee Member Reappointments:

It was agreed that letters will be sent to existing Committee members requesting a commitment to serve for another 1-year term prior to reappointment. Sitting Committee members wishing to serve will be reappointed.

It was further agreed that any sitting Committee member who has attended 2 or fewer meetings in 2017 shall be required to reapply.

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It was noted that attention to sector membership requirements will be necessary if new appointments are considered.

Kim Bell announced that she intends to step down from the RPI Committee at the end of 2017 due to scheduling conflicts.

Election of Officers:

Chair Evans stated that the Committee's Bylaws requires the election of officers in January. It was noted that members wishing to run for an officer position should submit their letter of interest to Adams in preparation for the annual election.

Adult Literacy Symposium

Chair Evans provided highlights of Kalamazoo's Adult Literacy Symposium, detailing the following:

- attendance and survey results
- what is a 'literacy center'
- 14 centers in Kalamazoo County - - most near the urban center
- 22 centers in the region - - most are near Kalamazoo (but cover 6 of the 7 counties)
- tutoring strategies and extension services
- Work Force Literacy Curriculum (instruction materials; delivery through distance learning; instructors/tutors)
- importance of work force literacy to RPI goals

Committee Member Comments

Karr - ~~BCATS~~ **Battle Creek Transit** will be updating the area's transit plan with a completion date of July, 2018 estimated. She noted that the ~~update~~ **Battle Creek visioning activity** will have a focus on workforce transportation.

Bland – the regional transportation system is being reviewed in response to an increase in millennial employment in the area and increased interest in multi-modal options.

K. Jones – the Urban Alliance project started Monday.

Peat – introduced the Incremental Development Alliance; will keep on radar as a fit w/ RPI goals

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Adjournment

There being no further items for consideration, the meeting was adjourned at 4:04 p.m.

Next Meeting: *TBD*