

Southwest Michigan RPI Collaborative Committee

January 7, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Jill Bland, Barbara Craig, Ben Damerow, Michael Evans, **Michael Hoffner (delegate of Deb Miller)**, Lynn Johnson, Bridgette Jones, Ken Jones, Jan Karazim, Pat Karr, Jason Latham, ~~Deb Miller~~, Juanita Miller, Ron Reid, Richard Remus, Jon Start

Committee Members Absent: Dennis Berkebile, Corey Carolla, Therese Cody, Grant Fletcher, Luann Harden, Kenneth High, Shelley Klug, **Deb Miller**, David Reid, Barbara Rose, Rachel Wade

Also Present: Lee Adams, John Egelhaaf, Rebecca Harvey

Call to Order

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

Introduction of New Members

Introductions of Committee members and guests were made.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Remus, **supported** by Damerow, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion **carried unanimously**.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Reid, **supported** by Jones to approve the December 3, 2015 minutes as presented. The motion **carried unanimously**.

Citizen Comments

No citizen comment was offered.

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Financial Report

Egelhaaf referenced the RPI Income/Expense report dated January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015 and provided an overview of the income received and the direct/indirect expenses of the RPI. In response to questions, he explained that ‘indirect expenses’ include expenses related to bookkeeping, printing, rent, etc. It was agreed that details on these expenses would be provided in future reports. It was further noted that expenses related to dashboard development have not been invoiced so are not reflected in the report.

Egelhaaf stated that the ‘Direct Expenses’ reflect the first installments of three of the project grants awarded in 2015. The Committee requested that project budgets (ie. details regarding the project grant award and the expended/unexpended grant dollars for the project) accompany the monthly financial report.

Egelhaaf noted that future financial reports will incorporate 2014 and 2015 carryover funds and 2016 income/expenses into a single report for clarity and ease of use.

Regional Initiatives

Karr: referenced regional study efforts on senior mobility transit; final reports are anticipated to be completed by end of January.

Egelhaaf: explained that the (senior mobility transit) study was initiated to identify need vs. resources/services; the Region will be assisting MDOT in understanding the gap occurring due to county service boundaries.

Latham: added that next steps will be to develop strategies to address gaps; prioritize to identify the ‘low hanging fruit’; and apply available resources.

Bland: noted an important question – how to maximize the efforts of existing programs; are they too bureaucratic or simply not marketed.

Egelhaaf: to that question, the study may not have included the entire range of ridership options.

Bland: reported on ‘269’ magazine publication scheduled for end of January; developed as a mechanism for sharing information on business operations across the region.

Bland: reported that ‘internship website’ is operational and already providing positive results; receiving region-wide activity from both companies seeking interns and applicants.

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Bland: reported on two regional summits scheduled to be held in Spring, 2016; *March* – Department of Agriculture hosting summit on food systems; *May* – regional business to business summit (providing for business match-up opportunities).

Evans: the ‘Regional Initiatives’ agenda item is a valuable communication tool; it provides the RPI with the opportunity to ‘connect the dots’ and respond; reinforces the need to concentrate on our communication strategy identified in the Prosperity Plan.

Review of FY 2016 Grant Application Response

Egelhaaf reported that the 2016 Grant Application was completed and submitted in compliance with the State deadline. He stated that the application process had identified a required response by December 31, 2015 but that the Region was recently informed that the results of the applications will be determined and the regions advised by mid-January.

2016 Calendar

Adams referenced the ‘Region 8 Prosperity Committee Calendar’ and noted the following:

Funding to Local Partners:

- Consistent with the Committee’s 2016 goal to improve the project selection process, the RFP is scheduled to begin in January to allow for an April review and grant awards in May/June.

Bland inquired as to the activities of the other nine State Regions. Specifically, is it more common for regions to target funds to a single regionally-significant project? Egelhaaf noted that our approach was designed to be responsive to our identified priorities. Further, the process was refined for 2016 to encourage clustering projects for a targeted approach. Craig stated that the Committee and Region 8 as a ‘prosperity region’ are in their infancy and that we are still learning about ourselves - - over time these areas of focus will emerge.

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Egelhaaf stated that many regions have not applied funding received to any actual projects. The Committee agreed there is value to understanding what the other regions have accomplished to date. Adams and Egelhaaf will provide the requested update at the February meeting.

Evans opined that the Committee has the opportunity to develop a communication practice in this project selection process that will build a network of partners and help the RPI establish itself as that key regional resource. Karr agreed and advised that ‘regional impact’ should be emphasized to project applicants and in the review process.

Subcommittee Meetings:

- The Subcommittees are scheduled to participate in the project selection process throughout the February – May schedule.

Strategic Planning and Visioning:

- This is envisioned to occur through exercises at monthly meetings February – May.
- This element is designed to add substance to the RPI and help create a focus for the Committee.

Regional Organization Inventory:

- A scheduled focus of staff March – September to build the regional data base and identify gaps.

Moving to Tier 2:

- A concentrated Committee effort May – December to work towards developing an approach to meeting Tier 2 criteria.

Education Sessions:

- Scheduled to be held at each meeting throughout 2016.

FY 2017 Grant Application:

- The 2016 Calendar reflects starting on the application earlier (in September) to allow for Committee involvement.

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Education Sessions

It was determined that these sessions would be held at monthly meetings of the Committee and would be 30-40 minutes in length. The following session topics were identified through Committee discussion:

- Broadband gap analysis
- Workforce training and adult education strategies vs. industry needs
- How regional transportation projects are prioritized and funded
- How is economic development funding targeted
- Importance of internships (what is the return; how to do it; how does it forward regional prosperity)
- Community education initiatives
- Regional agriculture overview (regional food systems planning)
- Regional recreation and tourism
- Regional recycling
- Regional rail (freight/passenger)
- Public transit within the Region
- Homeland security within the Region (Battle Creek base)
- Energy supply, cost, production within the Region

It was noted that the education sessions should not just be learning about the topic but rather how that topic promotes/drives prosperity in the region.

Committee Policies

Adams referenced the draft Committee Policies developed for review. He noted that the document was driven by 2015 Committee discussions and is intended to help solidify staff and Committee roles.

General questions were raised regarding Section 5. Procurement, Section 6. Contracting, and Section 7. General Expenditures. Committee members agreed to review the draft document and provide comments to staff. A revised document will be prepared for Committee review in February.

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Committee Member Comments

No additional Committee member comments were offered.

Adjournment

There being no further items for consideration, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Next Meeting: February 4, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. – W.E. Upjohn Institute in Kalamazoo