

Southwest Michigan RPI Collaborative Committee

December 3, 2015 Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Dennis Berkebile, Jill Bland, Therese Cody (phone), Barbara Craig, Corey Carolla, Ben Damerow, Michael Evans (phone), Grant Fletcher, Bridgette Jones, Ken Jones (phone), Pat Karr, Shelly Klug, Juanita Miller, Richard Remus, Jon Start, Rachel Wade

Committee Members Absent: Luann Harden, Kenneth High, Lynn Johnson, Jan Karazim, Jason Latham, Deb Miller, David Reid, Ron Reid, Barbara Rose

Also Present: Lee Adams, John Egelhaaf, Rebecca Harvey

Call to Order

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

Introduction of New Members

Introductions of Committee members and guests were made.

It was noted that the new membership process was completed in November and the Committee membership was expanded from 17 members to 25 members. The following new members were again welcomed: Therese Cody (MDOT Rail), Grant Fletcher (Bronson Healthcare), Bridgette Jones (Battle Creek Unlimited) – replacing Jan Frantz, Ken Jones (WMU), Shelley Klug (Cornerstone Alliance) – replacing Greg Vaughn, and Deb Miller (KRESA).

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

In consideration of the November 5, 2015 Committee meeting minutes, it was noted that the comments made by Bland under ‘Regional Initiatives’ (Page 3) should be revised to read: ‘Bland: review of efforts in Cass and VanBuren Counties that are focused on ~~identifying internship opportunities~~ **developing an economic development strategy plan for each county;**

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update on a Southwest Michigan focused internship website called MIINTERNISHIP.com that SMF has launched - - a Priority Project Area in the Prosperity Plan - Volume 2.’ Motion by Carolla, **supported** by Start, to approve the minutes as corrected. The motion **carried unanimously**.

Citizen Comments

No citizen comment was offered.

Financial Report

Egelhaaf referenced the RPI Income/Expense report dated January 1, 2015 – November 30, 2015 and provided an overview of the income received and the direct/indirect expenses of the RPI. He noted that the ‘Balance Remaining of Grant to be Spent’ of \$143,699.00 does not reflect the \$120,000 awarded in project grants in October, 2015. He stated that a balance of \$23,699 of unencumbered funds exists.

Regional Initiatives

Egelhaaf: will be speaking to the regional MTA Chapter on the RPI and the adopted Prosperity Plan - Volumes 1 & 2.

Egelhaaf: agreements for all 6 projects awarded funds in 2015 have been received and are ready to be executed; the Committee agreed that a review/update of the 6 projects should be a monthly agenda item.

Berkebile: reported on presentation of study completed on the major accident on I-94 in January, 2015; no road problems reported; driver error (driving too fast for conditions) determined as the cause of the pile up.

Berkebile: reported that study further determined that traffic volumes on I-94, as it extends from the State line to Jackson, do not warrant a 3-lane roadway.

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Carolla: update provided on the status of the ‘Rising Tide’ Initiative implemented by Talent and Economic Development (TED) in the Village of Paw Paw (selected community in Region 8) and related redirection of funds by MDOT and Habitat for Humanity to promote redevelopment; update on Target Market Analysis (TMA) project involving 11 communities in Region 8.

Evans: update provided on the literacy initiative recently awarded funding; first research/training activity to be attended by over 70 people from 5 counties within Region 8.

K. Jones: WMU has recently reached out with opportunity to collaborate around Bronco Force.

FY 2016 Grant Application Review

Egelhaaf provided an overview of the elements of the draft 2016 grant application. The following was noted: (*reference power point presentation*)

- 2016 Grant Application deadline is December 1, 2015
- Grant application is being developed by RPI staff in conjunction with the RPI Executive Committee
- 2015 Successes outlined . . and include: Prosperity Plan – Volume 2; RPI dashboard; funded projects; timely completion of grant deliverables; formalization of Committee structure (bylaws, minutes); expanded sectors; initiation of regional communication framework.
- Challenges/2016 Actions outlined . . and include: project selection process; Tier 2 status; refinement/growth of RPI dashboard; regional knowledge base; sector connectivity.
- Tier 2 Status requires development of an Economic Development Blueprint – could be developed through synchronizing Prosperity Plan and Transformation Agenda.
- Concept of a statewide prosperity plan – could be created through linking of regional plans.
- Preliminary budget developed and tied to noted priorities; includes 2014 unexpended funds.

FY 2016 Work Plan

Egelhaaf provided an overview of the differences between Tier 1 and Tier 2 status in the RPI.

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Lengthy Committee discussion ensued regarding the 2016 action items set forth in the Grant Application and how they relate to moving toward Tier 2 status. The following points of consensus were noted:

- A cost/benefit analysis of Tier 1 and Tier 2 operations is necessary.
- A review of existing shared administrative service arrangements would provide understanding and lead to greater support.
- The merger between Albion and Marshall school districts may be a good example to study.
- A study would allow for an identification of existing areas ripe for collaboration and what that could look like.

Role of Staff and Committee Members

Staff was directed to develop a draft policy document on staff and Committee roles for distribution at the January, 2016 meeting.

Committee Member Comments

Berkebile: requested that the RFP lists used in the 2015 project selection process be provided to Committee members for review and input.

Corolla: a helpful webinar on communication strategies and trends is available; he will provide to Committee members to start the conversation on a regional communication strategy.

Adjournment

There being no further items for consideration, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Next Meeting: January 7, 2016 at 2:30 p.m. in Marshall