

**Northern Maine Development Commission  
Executive Board Meeting Minutes of  
December 12, 2013**

**PLACE:** NMDC, Caribou  
**DATE:** December 12, 2013 12:30 p.m.

**Attendance:** Chair Don Guimond, Don Adams, Jim Bennett, Austin Bleess, Keith Brown, Mary Anne Buck, Tom Clowes, Gene Conlogue, Ralph Dwyer, Norm Fournier, Denis Gagne, Max Lynds, Ray Mersereau, Barb Pitcairn, Christy Sirois, Wendell Spooner, Patricia Sutherland, Christina Therrien, Jim Tweedie, Paul Underwood and Terry Wade.

**Others Present:** Phil Bosse-Senator Collins' Office, Barb Hayslett-Congressman Michaud's Office, Bob Clark, Duane Walton, Judy Dinsmore, Ryan Pelletier, Bob Dorsey, Jon Gulliver, Jay Kamm and Ruby Bradbury.

1. Call to Order and Introductory Remarks:

Chair Guimond called the meeting to order and asked those who wish to receive travel reimbursement to pass their vouchers in to Ms. Dinsmore.

2. Approval of Executive Board of Directors Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2013:

MOTION:

Motion made by Ms. Sutherland, seconded by Mr. Gagne to approve the Executive Board of Directors meeting minutes of November 14, 2013 as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

3. Acceptance of the Agencywide Revenue and Expenditure Statement for the Period Ending November 30, 2013:

Per the request of the Executive Board's Vice-Chair, Ms. Sirois, the Agencywide Revenue and Expenditure Statement Report will now be attached to the financials for the Board's convenience.

Financial Summary:

The benchmark for the period ending November 30, 2013 is 41.67%

Total Revenues are \$3,357,040 representing 44.4% or 2.7 percentage points above the benchmark.

Total Expenses for the period were \$2,585,810 or 34.4% of the budgeted expenses or 7.3 percentage points below the benchmark.

Agency Balance - \$771,229.

MOTION:

Motion made by Ms. Pitcairn, seconded by Ms. Buck to approve the Agencywide Revenue and Expenditure Statement for the period ending November 30, 2013 as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

4. Report of the Loan Review Committee:

Mr. Walton presented the report to the Board. A copy of which is attached and made a part of these minutes.

H.A.H. Inc. d/b/a Harry's Motor Sports, Presque Isle: renewed loan – approved

Shelly Murphy (PNP): working capital – approved

Virtual Managed Solutions: extension on current loan – approved

Andrew and Roxanne Tardif, start up costs for fiber mill in Ashland – approved

Request: interest rate on the community advantage loan to be changed from 6% fixed to Prime plus 2.5%.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Conlogue to accept the Loan Review Committee's report as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

5. Ratification of Service Contracts:

There were no contracts to ratify.

6. Community Guided Planning and Zoning Steering Committee Update:

Mr. Kamm presented this to the Board.

The Steering Committee decided that Aroostook County needed to be broken into three sub-regions – i.e., Northeast, Northwest and Southern Aroostook.

The Steering Committee developed a list of data they would like to review. The list includes: CLUP, transmission lines, regional structure, workforce investments and workforce needs, conserved lands, industrial facilities, North Maine Woods user information, public lands development and management plans, information on wildlife corridors, agricultural information, zones and zoning information to name a few.

They held their second meeting on December 11<sup>th</sup> in which they reviewed the Mobilize Maine project and would like to utilize the expertise from the 4 core focus groups: Agriculture, Forestry, Manufacturing and Renewable Energy. They also reviewed the barriers to those industries in the Unorganized Territories and felt there is a possibility of development of new districts and standards. We will be working with the LUPC to determine how the process works.

Future meetings of the Steering Committee will be held the second Wednesday of each month – next meeting January 9, 2014 at NMDC offices (9:00 a.m.). Website: <http://www.nmdc.org/planning/CGPZ.html>

Mr. Fournier asked what the timeframe will be. Mr. Kamm stated it will be done in 1.5 to 2 years. Mr. Underwood stressed we need to find out what makes the most sense for Aroostook County and define the adjacency rule in Aroostook.

7. Authorization to Apply for USDOL ETA Youth Connect Grant:

Mr. Pelletier announced many high school graduates lack exposure to learning that links their work in school to college and careers – especially in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

In 2013 the President proposed funding to scale up innovative high school models and partnerships with colleges and employers so that all students graduate better equipped for the demands of a high-tech economy.

USDOL is collaborating with the Department of Education to make \$100,000,000 available for Youth CareerConnect grants to provide high school students with the industry-relevant education and skills they need for a successful future. These revenues

are from the H-1B visa program. The range of funding anticipated to allocate per applicant is \$2-7 million with 25 to 40 awards nationally.

Mr. Pelletier stated NMDC will be the applicant and fiscal agent. Three of the 4 local Workforce Boards have signed on. Local area 4 will also be included, but they do not want to participate.

The majority of our proposal is to develop a bridge year concept statewide. We will be collaborating with secondary schools, career and technical education and an institution of higher education. Students will enter the bridge year in their sophomore and junior years. Expectation is to receive 30 credit hours of college by the end of their senior year.

Fort Kent is doing something similar called “Pleasant Street Academy”. This is already in place in the high school and is in all career fields.

We will be working with Fort Kent, Madawaska and Wisdom high schools. Students will enter in their freshman year and choose their career and will earn dual credit through UMFK. High school teachers will become adjunct faculty for UMFK. College professors will also teach classes in the high school.

Ms. Therrien asked if this would be opened up to other colleges and trade schools and is there specific fields for students to be enrolled in? Mr. Pelletier indicated it would and will be open to all community colleges and higher education programs. He stated the H-1B has a list of criteria to follow – science, technology, engineering and math fields.

Mr. Tweedie asked if the high schools are aware of this program and if not, how will they learn of it? Mr. Pelletier indicated some PR will be done.

#### MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Tweedie, seconded by Mr. Gagne to authorize the submission of the Youth Connect Grant as presented and to authorize the Executive Director to execute all necessary documents pertaining thereto.

#### VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

#### 8. AWWIB and TCWIB Five Year Strategic Plan Process:

Mr. Pelletier announced this was presented to the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB), Leaders Encouraging Aroostook Development (LEAD) and local leaders.

The purpose of the Workforce Center of Excellence (WCOE) is to:

- Create a strategic alignment and connection between the three key elements of workforce development – people, education and training, and employers
- Builds collaborative relationships to prioritize, implement and monitor the performance of the WCOE
- Provides a system model to address short and long term workforce quantity and skill factors for a regional economy
- Focuses attention and resources on targeted industry sector workforce requirements while addressing workforce needs of the entire regional economy
- Creates a single place to evaluate and apply innovative and best practice workforce development models
- Strategically targeted Aroostook and Washington Workforce Investment Board (AWWIB) funds can be an incentive for workforce training providers to collaborate in a WCOE model approach to workforce development

It is recommended that the Aroostook Washington Workforce Investment Board (AWWIB) be the owner and lead agency in the creation, coordination and implementation of the WCOE. The AWWIB will finalize a 5-year strategic plan linked to the AWEDD CEDS strategic plan, adopting the WCOE model for targeted industry sectors and budgets for implementation and funding policies.

No one organization or entity holds or owns the solution. It will take new, creative and aggressive region-wide actions including deeply engrained policy and cultural shifts. The WCOE must define its role in attracting and preparing a future workforce.

Mr. Clowes asked if the safety net offers any income. Mr. Pelletier stated having the right people involved is critical in order for this to be successful. Unemployment insurance is a partner and is an important player in this initiative. Jim Tweedie stated that this is a very important program for the area.

9. Authorization to Apply for the Blackstone Foundation Veterans Workforce Training Program for \$50,000:

Mr. Pelletier announced we applied for \$50,000 as a supplement to another project the State of Maine has applied for. The Department of Labor applied for a \$2,000,000 grant to fund workforce training for Veterans. This is for returning Veterans to help transition them to civilian employment. NMDC's WIA staff will manage this project and will be working with our service providers.

Leveraging resources is a major factor and we will be receiving referrals for case management. This is a basic job development program.

Partners will be: Maine Department of Labor, Maine Military and community network, Maine Bureau of Veteran Services and Easter Seals of Maine.

Mr. Bennett stated that secondary immigrants are looking for a safe place and developing a sense of community in which to live and work.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Underwood, seconded by Mr. Mersereau to authorize the submission of the Blackstone Foundation Grant as presented and to authorize the Executive Director to execute all necessary documents pertaining thereto.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

10. APP Legislative Briefing:

Mr. Dorsey indicated our manufacturing firms are leaving the state and the situation is not getting any better. He reviewed the regional goals which showed our population slipping.

The 4 sectors Mobilize Maine is working on are:

- Alternative Energy
- Forestry
- Manufacturing
- Diversified Agriculture

2017 Goals are:

- Increase 18-44 year old workforce from 29% to 32%
- Increase labor participation rate from 58% to 60%
- Grow 3,000 jobs
- Grow average wage to \$37,169

Mr. Dorsey discussed the mining potential indicating there will be 300 direct and 300 indirect jobs projected. This means a \$45,000,000 per year impact for Aroostook County's GDP. An \$800,000,000 initial investment is estimated in which \$100,000,000 will be for water purification. The mine is expected to operate for up to 25 years and will have a potential impact to the GDP in excess of \$1.1 billion over the 25 year period. The mining project could start as early as 2016-2018. Mr. Dorsey stated there is a potential for additional mines near the Bald Mountain site and will be an excellent potential to attract the 18-44 year old workforce.

Mr. Dorsey reviewed the forestry initiative indicating the objective is to increase the value-added processing in the Aroostook timber industry to grow jobs and the County's economy.

The Forestry Goals are:

- Address/reduce Maine regulatory restrictions
- Reduce the high cost of energy
- Explore new value-added products and promote best
- Enhance the image of forest industry jobs
- Develop forest industry training programs
- Promote business education for logging industry

For agriculture, Mr. Dorsey indicated the objective is to increase the utilization and output of Aroostook's significant available acreage.

Agriculture Goals are:

- Explore the potential for beef raising and processing
- Explore the potential for natural and organic crops/grains
- Explore the potential for food co-ops
- Explore the potential for food hubs and the infrastructure needed to develop these items

Mr. Dorsey indicated manufacturing is a fast growing segment in Aroostook's economy. The objective is to ensure growth realized in this sector. He stated multiple growth/expansion/retooling plans are in progress for the following:

- Twin Rivers – upgrade
- Porvair – expansion
- Louisiana Pacific – expanding production
- CAM Manufacturing – expanding production
- Evergreen Manufacturing – expanding production
- Irving Sawmill – building new facility
- Ecoshell – building new facility
- Potential additional mill near Ashland

Mr. Dorsey indicated the objective for the Education to Industry initiative is to increase the availability and quality of Aroostook's workforce to meet growing needs.

Goals indicated are:

- Increase awareness of our workforce challenge
- Education and employers need to engage
- Increase student awareness of emerging County jobs
- Increase job awareness by offering job shadow/internship opportunities for high school and college students
- Emphasize the need for additional education/skills

- Increase retention of our students to fill the local jobs
- Attract former County residents to fill emerging jobs

In closing Mr. Dorsey explained Aroostook growth can be helped greatly by state level strategy/focus on these sectors. Maine must compete to survive and we must formulate a long term strategy, create policies to encourage and start growth and understand bill's economic impact. He stated it was stressed to the Legislators we need their help to advocate to colleagues in Augusta for a long range state economic plan, mandate economic impact analysis before considering major bills, vote down bills that hurt Maine businesses or kill job opportunities, balance technology with environment and ensure prudent mining rules are passed.

Discussion:

Mr. Underwood applauded Mr. Dorsey and APP's efforts. When businesses leave the County, there should be exit polls as to why they are leaving. This should be done by Maine's Commissioner of Economic and Community Development.

Ms. Sutherland stated legislative seats are being filled by warm bodies and they may not stay long. Term limits didn't help either. We need a lobbyist in Augusta. Mr. Dorsey stated politics are being put above progress.

11. Other Business:

Mr. Bennett discussed the letter to the Legislative Delegation from the Maine Municipal Association on revenue sharing reduction impacts in Aroostook County.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Underwood to send a letter to the Legislators indicating NMDC's economic stand and support the retention of revenue sharing.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

12. Executive Director's Report:

Mr. Clark discussed the Seven Point Plan for Maine Jobs created by Senator Collins. Legislation has been submitted on all of these.

Mr. Clark announced NMDC has submitted Form 990 to the IRS. It is a requirement this form be submitted yearly by non-profits.

Mr. Clark announced the appointment of Harold Clossey as President-CEO of the Maine Development Foundation.

Mr. Pelletier reported approximately three years ago, he submitted a letter for a grant for video conferencing equipment to be placed at Washington County ACAP, Houlton ACAP and Fort Kent and Madawaska town offices. Equipment will consist of TelePresence portable Cart, 55" LED Monitor, Cisco SX 20 Codec/Camera and miscellaneous cabling. In addition to this equipment the grant will cover the first year maintenance for the equipment, installation and additional teacher training (optional).

Mr. Clark reviewed the article on the regional planning commission in the St. John Valley. DECD submitted a 10 page report to the Joint Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development which included a model charter for the SJV regional planning commission. It now is up to the Legislators to move this along. Funding was not included in the latest legislative appropriations, and is unclear what will become of the concept at this point. Representative Ayotte who first proposed legislation for the creation of the new commission will not be running for another term next year because of term limits and redistricting.

Mr. Clark announced the Winslow case has been resolved. The County did settle, but NMDC did not. The summary judgment was in NMDC's favor. Ms. Winslow is required to pay all costs. An appeal from her was not filed within the allotted timeframe.

Mr. Clark played the Christmas e-card for the Board.

At this time Ms. Pitcairn discussed the upcoming informational meeting on Mining – Thursday, January 9, 2014 at Ashland Community School. This meeting will provide area residents an opportunity to learn more about the potential mining in the area of Bald Mountain and the processes that are required before mining can begin.

### 13. Adjournment:

There being no further business to discuss, Chair Guimond wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Board gifts were handed out.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin Bless  
Secretary

AB/jd