

**Northern Maine Development Commission  
Executive Board Meeting Minutes of  
September 11, 2014**

**PLACE:** Northern Maine Development Commission, Caribou

**DATE:** September 11, 2014 3:00 p.m.

**Attendance:** Chair Don Guimond, Don Adams, Austin Bleess, Keith Brown, Mary Anne Buck, Tom Clowes, Larry Duchette, Ralph Dwyer, Norman Fournier, Jon Frederick, Jim Gagnon, Jim Gardner, Ray Mersereau, Jim Nadeau, Christy Sirois, Wendell Spooner, Patricia Sutherland, Christina Therrien, Jim Tweedie and Paul Underwood.

**Others Present:** Phil Bosse-Senator Collins' Office, Barbara Hayslett-Congressman Michaud's Office, Bob Clark, Duane Walton, Judy Dinsmore, Ryan Pelletier, Jon Gulliver, Alain Ouellette, Ruby Bradbury and Theron Larkins–Aroostook Republican.

1. Call to Order and Introductory Remarks:

Chair Guimond welcomed everyone and asked those who wished to receive travel reimbursement to pass their travel vouchers in to Ms. Dinsmore.

2. Appointment(s) to the Executive Board:

Chair Guimond read a letter of resignation from Jeff Packard. Mr. Packard has resigned due to his busy work schedule and the inability to make most of the Board meetings.

Chair Guimond announced the Officers affirmed the recommendation of Dan McClung-Van Buren Town Manager and Butch Asselin-Houlton Town Manager to the Executive Board of Directors

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Frederick, seconded by Ms. Sutherland to appoint Messrs. McClung and Asselin to the Executive Board as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

3. Approval of Executive Board of Directors Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2014:

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Tweedie, seconded by Ms. Buck to approve the August 14, 2014 Executive Board of Directors meeting minutes as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

4. Acceptance of the Agencywide Revenue and Expenditure Statement for the Period Ending August 31, 2014:

The draft of the Audit has been received and will be reported on at October's Executive Board meeting once it has been finalized.

The Agencywide Revenue and Expenditure Statement Report was provided with the financials for the Board's convenience.

Financial Summary:

The benchmark for the period ending August 31, 2014 is 16.7%.

Total Revenues are \$900,878 representing 12.8% or 3.9 percentage points below the benchmark.

Total Expenses for the period were \$1,185,717 or 15.5% of the budgeted expenses or 1.2 percentage points below the benchmark.

Agency Balance – (\$284,839). Just over \$346,000 of the COCMA fund balance was used.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Gardner, seconded by Ms. Sirois to approve the Agencywide Revenue and Expenditure Statement for the period ending August 31, 2014 as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

5. Report of the Loan Review Committee:

Loans considered under staff authority for the period of August 14 – September 11, 2014:

Myran Hale (Caribou) – Working Capital – purchase of Caribou Hot Spot (approved)  
 Little Tree Learning Center (Houlton) – Working Capital (withdrawn)  
 Desjardins Project Place, Inc. (Fort Kent) – Working Capital (approved)  
 Rusty Johnson d/b/a Rusty Crab (Mars Hill) – Purchase building, equipment and working capital for the Mars Hill House of Pizza (declined)

Loans acted on by LRC for period of August 14 – September 11, 2014:

Caldwell Auto (Limestone) – Balloon Renewal, Line of Credit (approved)  
 Northern Maine Distilling Company (previous location Houlton) – Release of guarantor Staci Dill (approved)  
 MMB Boutot d/b/a Coffins General Store (Portage) – Replacement of fuel tanks (approved)

MOTION:

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

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

6. Ratification of Service Contracts:

There were no contracts to ratify.

***Due to scheduling conflicts of presenter Ryan Pelletier, Chair Guimond moved to agenda items 10-12 to accommodate his schedule.***

10. Acceptance of Job Driven National Emergency Grant for Local Area 1 in the Amount of \$943,436:

Mr. Pelletier indicated Maine was awarded \$4.85 million. The monies will be used to train long term unemployed individuals (27 weeks or more). It is anticipated that there will be significant employer engagement with specific employers that have current, unfilled openings.

The funds will be to develop soft skills and higher type skill training.

Mr. Pelletier will be the point of contact for the duration of this project.

Mr. Bless inquired if employers in our area indicated needing assistance. Mr. Pelletier indicated smaller employers have indicated welders are needed.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Mersereau to accept the JD NEG for Local Area 1 as presented and to authorize the Executive Director to execute all necessary documents pertaining thereto.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

11. Acceptance of Job Driven National Emergency Grant for Local Area 2 in the Amount of \$943,435:

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Tweedie, seconded by Ms. Buck to accept the JD NEG for Local Area 2 as presented and to authorize the Executive Director to execute all necessary documents pertaining thereto.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

12. Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot Award in the Amount of \$150,000:

Mr. Pelletier indicated this is an outreach to transitioning Veterans to help increase the coordination of health care and benefits and provide assistance to families of these Veterans

Local Area 1 (Aroostook & Washington) was selected as the only LWIB region to participate in this statewide pilot project. Intensive case management and referrals to 300 transitioning Veterans or qualified family members will be provided. Our responsibility will be to support the creation of regional workgroups of Veteran service providers in Aroostook & Washington Counties and develop regional resource fairs and job fairs for Veterans. This is a 2 year program.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Nadeau, seconded by Mr. Gagnon to accept the Rural Veterans Coordination Pilot Award as presented and to authorize the Executive Director to execute all necessary documents pertaining thereto.

***Chair Guimond then moved back to Agenda Item #7:***

7. Final Report of the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge Grant:

Mr. Ouellette indicated this is the final report of the \$2 million JIAC project focused on renewable energy, training for engineers, engineer techs, engineer manager, etc and continuing efforts in the renewable energy and forest product cluster.

He explained the grant had 3 funding sources: EDA, SBA ETA

This project was designed to Generate a Renewable Energy Economy for Northern Maine (GREENMe).

Six objectives:

- Promote and develop a grass pellet boiler for commercial and residential use
- Develop strategic plan for a regional venture development organization

- Expansion of renewable energy cluster in Aroostook and Washington counties
- Feasibility of commercialization of a wood pellet burner for fuel oil burner replacement in existing heating systems
- Evaluate the new growth small diameter trees as feedstock for expanded production of industrial grade pellets and or wood chips
- Entrepreneurial business development logger training.

Mr. Ouellette explained with the grass pellet boiler, switch grass and willow varieties can be grown, but we need to create an environment where it can be grown. It has a more aggressive burn.

He stated we are seeking funding to take these pieces to become a Venture Development Organization.

We have hosted 3 biomass fairs and conferences and co-hosted Southern Aroostook Development Corps alternative energy fair.

There have been 20 biomass boilers installed with a payback of \$34 million over a 20 year period. The residential payback is 10 years with \$2 million in heating savings.

Logger training was offered for business acumen. There were 39 logging professionals trained in business management.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Bless, seconded by Mr. Brown to accept the final report of the JIAC Grant as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

8. Authorization to Submit a Maine Technology Institute Cluster Initiative Application in the Amount of \$50,000:

Mr. Ouellette reported the Maine Technology Institute Cluster Initiative's mission is to support research and development in Maine to lead to commercial products. These monies will go toward a planning grant to create and support the Northern Forest Products Industry Cluster (NFPIC).

The NFPIC will include firms and organizations that support primary and secondary wood products manufacturing and a broad spectrum of forest ecosystem services. Participating organizations engaged in finance, forest resource management, education and research will also be involved. Attraction of capital, value-added processing, management training, joint R&D and technical standard setting will be a key focus of the NFPIC.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Mersereau, seconded by Mr. Fournier to authorize the submission of the MTI grant as presented and authorize the Executive Director to execute all necessary documents pertaining thereto.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

9. World Acadian Congress Economic Component and Cross Border Declaration:

Mr. Ouellette indicated NMDC has supported the Export and Economic conferences during the World Acadian Congress.

The Export Conference discussed trade relations, exploring business opportunities, custom regulations and brokerage houses.

The Economic Summit presented regional international profile, free trade, B2B, local governance and cross border declaration.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Tweedie, seconded by Ms. Buck to accept the World Acadian Congress Economic Component and 'Cross Border Declaration as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

13. Report of the Finance/Audit Committee:

Ms. Therrien reported the Finance/Audit Committee met on September 4 to review employee compensation. They met with the Executive Director and Director of Operations and reviewed employee compensation increases for employees who have been employed by NMDC for the past five years as well as employee compensation adjustments from the other 6 Economic Development Districts and the Maine Municipal Association for the past 3 years.

The Finance/Audit Committee recommends by consensus to proceed with employee compensations as adopted in the 2014-2015 budget (up to a 3 percent increase) based on merit and not cost of living adjustments.

MOTION:

Motion made by Ms. Therrien, seconded by Ms. Sutherland to accept the Finance/Audit Committee's report as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

14. FHA/FTA Proposed Rule Docket Pertaining to Rural Transportation Planning Organizations:

Mr. Clark discussed his comments submitted to the Federal Highway Commission and drafted by Jay Kamm. In 2002 MDOT formed Regional Transportation Advisory Committees (RTACs) in each of Maine's Counties. RTAC's included the development of long range transportation plans and prioritized regional transportation investments. When the RTAC process was disbanded in 2008, NMDC felt the process was important and maintains a transportation committee (RTPO) today. The RTPO continues to provide input to the statewide transportation planning process in Aroostook County.

He indicated his comments requested funding be included for RTPO as it has been for MPOS in the past.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Mersereau, seconded by Mr. Bless to ratify the comments provided in response to the proposed rule as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

15. Other Business:

- A. Establish Board Meeting Time for the End of Daylight Savings Time on November 2, 2014:

Chair Guimond reported in 2013-2014 the Board conducted joint lunches with the LRC at noon and the meeting started at 12:30 p.m. for the months of November and December, 2013; and January and February, 2014.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Bless, seconded by Mr. Frederick to establish the 12:30 meeting year-round.

Motion was not carried.

MOTION:

Motion made by Ms. Buck, seconded by Ms. Sutherland to establish the 12:30 p.m. meeting for the months of November, December 2014; and January and February, 2015.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

16. Executive Director's Report:

- NMDC has been awarded its third Brownfields Assessment Grant. This initiative is to conduct community-wide brownfield assessments for sites potentially contaminated by hazardous substances in Aroostook, Washington and a few Penobscot communities. It will designate up to 15 sites for environmental site assessments (ESA's), designate up to 6 sites for Phase I and 6 sites for Phase II ESAs and make recommendations for mitigation, remediation, and effective re-use of the properties. With this information, NMDC will also assist municipalities in eventual cleanup and redevelopment of these sites for creative, new and varied uses and/or to increase greenspace. RFP's are due September 25, 2014.
- The Board was reminded to return their Standing Committee forms so these can be taken up at the October meeting.
- Willy Taylor-Philadelphia Regional Director for EDA and Alan Brigham-EDR for Maine and New Hampshire were in the County on August 19-21. They visited projects in Van Buren, Presque Isle, Madawaska, Loring Commerce Centre and Louisiana Pacific in New Limerick.
- NMDC staff created an ROI for the town of Island Falls. Mr. Clark met with the Selectmen and they were very pleased and friendly.
- The IMCP application did not get funded. A debrief will take place on Monday with the Washington office.
- APP/LEAD annual meeting will be held on October 1, 2014 at NMCC in the Edmunds Conference Center. This will be a breakfast meeting beginning at 7:30 a.m. Interested Board members are to let Ms. Dinsmore know and she will register them.
- Irving Mill grand opening will be held on October 2.
- The Aroostook/Washington and Tri-County LWIB Boards will be meeting on October 2 in Millinocket.

17. Adjournment:

There being no further business to conduct, Chair Guimond declared the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin Bless  
Secretary

AB/jd