

MEETING MINUTES LANGLADE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Monday, February 19, 2024

Members Present: Thomas Bauknecht, Tammy Walrath, Steve Maier, Dillon Gretzinger, Andrew Hessedal, Terry Brand

Members Present by Conferenced: Fred Westphal, Joel Zalewski

Members Excused: Warren Wagner, Sarah Koszarek, Lynn D'Amato

Others Present: Angie Close, Keri Beck

Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by President Thomas Bauknecht.

Introductions:

Public Comment: Bauknecht recognized Gretzinger for being named the new CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of the Northwoods.

Minutes of Previous Economic Development Board Meeting: Motion by Brand, second by Walrath to approve the minutes from November 27, 2023. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Consent Agenda: Motion by Walrath, second by Brand to approve the Consent Agenda. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Economic Development Corporation:

a) **Approve LCEDC Budget vs Actual and Financial Report:** Close reviewed the LCEDC current budget vs actual report and financial statements with LCEDC Board. Close reported the carryovers for the fund balance, Entrepreneur Grant, and Dream Up Grant, expenses for were normal for January, and the 2023 reserve account transfer was made.

Motion by Gretzinger, second by Maier to approve the LCEDC budget vs actual and financial statements as presented. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

b) **LCEDC Revolving Loan Fund Recipient and CWED Update:** Close reviewed the LCEDC Revolving Loan Fund recipients with the LCEDC Board. One loan recipient is looking at selling the business. The loan will need to be paid in full upon the sale. CWED has created a pilot startup fund for new businesses. Loans will be between \$5,000 to \$35,000 at low interest rates. After two years of business success, a portion of the loan could be forgiven if the business meets certain criteria. New businesses seeking the startup fund loan will have to go through LCEDC to be forwarded on to CWED. LCEDC will not pursue USDA funding as it is the same concept. CWED has also increased their Microbusiness Loan amount from \$50,000 to \$75,000. The Microbusiness Loan requires no financial institution funding. Information Only.

c) **LCEDC Business Tours:** Close informed the LCEDC Board that business tours of major employers are restarting. Business tours will coincide with the Langlade County Board Meetings in June, September, and December.

d) **Non-State Grant Application:** Closed updated the LCEDC Board that LCEDC assisted the Antigo Recreation Foundation in applying for the Non-State Grant. They are using their nonprofit status to apply for the grant for a 24,900 square foot indoor recreational facility. Support letter was written by LCEDC. The Wisconsin Land Commission is reviewing the applications with no announcement date available.

e) **Update on Economic Development Corporation Pillars**

a. **Business Development**

i. **Entrepreneurial Hub:** Close updated the LCEDC Board that LCEDC was designated by WEDC as an Entrepreneurial Hub. The \$62,000 grant will provide one-on-one technical assistance and expanding entrepreneurial programming by working with SBDC, SCORE, and WWBIC. The match funds will be from the Suick Family Foundation contributions and Close's work hours on entrepreneurship efforts. The goal is to assist 40 individuals with three people starting businesses in 2024. The Spring ETP Class starts February 27. There is eight people signed up for the ETP Orientation Day on February 20. LCEDC has noticed that younger people are looking at opening business. They are looking for mentors and round tables to share information.

ii. **Business Retention Visits:** Close will be starting business retention and expansion visits with the City Administrator the second week of March on Tuesday and Wednesday.

iii. **Locate In Wisconsin:** LCEDC works with local realtors for information on Langlade County commercial properties that are for sale or lease to be listed on Locate in Wisconsin. Links to Locate in Wisconsin is on www.langladecountyedc.org website. WEDC uses Locate In Wisconsin to share the property information outside the area.

b. **Workforce Development**

i. **Dream Up Langlade County Childcare Taskforce:** Close updated the LCEDC Board that the Dream Up Taskforce made up of 11 people have been meeting every other week. The taskforce is working on a roundtable event to be held on April 11 at 6-7:30 pm at NTC – Antigo Campus. The event will have a panel discussion with child care providers, share the data, and asks going forward to sustain funding for child care. The goal of the Dream Up grant was to increase child care slots by 20. So far there have been 7 slots created from the \$45,000 grant money given to Childcaring for grants to new and existing child care facilities. Through the grant efforts, five people are interested in starting a daycare.

- ii. **Langlade County Human Resource Taskforce:** Close informed the LCEDC Board that the Human Resource Taskforce is meeting bi-monthly on the third Friday to share best practices. The partnership with NTC helps HR staff work on a topic each session.
 - iii. **Langlade County Manufacture Alliance:** Close informed the LCEDC Board that the Manufacturing Alliance meets quarterly to bring schools and manufacturing together to how each and help each other.
 - iv. **Inspire:** Inspire is paid by Grow North. Krissy from CESA 8 works with the Antigo School Districts to connect businesses with school councilors to be the mentor program for students' pathways.
- c. **Community Development**
- i. **Langlade County Broadband Commission:** Close recapped that LCEDC is the lead for the Langlade County Broadband Commission. The commission meets at 5 pm on the third Tuesday of the month. Meeting agenda and notes are on our EDC website. BEAD Funding applications are the big part of what the commission works on with the ISP providers. The Wisconsin Broadband Access Report, that was recently release, has 6,467 Langlade County residents that are underserved or unserved broadband access. Cirrinity has been working with the Commission to develop fiber routes to establish connectors. There will be a Broadband Regional Workshop May 22 with UW-Extension at NTC – Antigo Campus. The all-day strategy session will have updates from the Wisconsin Public Service Commission and the National Telecommunication Information Administration on the BEAD process.
 - d. **Langlade County Strategic Plan:** Close informed the LCEDC Board that Langlade County was declared a drought county by the Secretary of Agriculture this summer. The declaration includes the lack of snow, which means that businesses that are effected this winter by the lack of snow can apply for low interest SBA Disaster loan until May 13, 2024. Close has been in touch with lodging facilities that these loans are available. Wisconsin is still looking at other programs to help with the decline of winter tourism because of the lack of snow. LCEDC can still utilize the Emergency Response Loan Fund. The SBA has designated Langlade County as a Hub Zone, which means that the county is and underutilized business zone. Becoming a Hub Zone, opens opportunities up for business to get government contracts. The Wisconsin Procurement is holding an orientation on obtaining federal contracts from 10 am to noon on March 21. LCEDC is aligning their efforts, like the county wide marketing, with the Langlade County Strategic Plan. The City of Antigo is going through their comprehensive plan that focuses on net new construction. Aldi's will help as an attraction piece. LCEDC will be focusing on business retention. The Towns Counties Association meeting is on March 14 to share the County's Comprehensive Plan. Langlade County is looking for five volunteer members to serve on the Strategic Plan Implementation Committee.
 - e. **Tourism Report:** Beck updated the LCEDC Board on the following tourism items:
 - LCEDC's 2024 destination marketing plan was approved by the City of Antigo' Room Commission.
 - The Welcome Center Assistant resigned as of December 30, 2024. Beck has been working Mondays at the Welcome Center and stopping in before the weekend to stock. The Museum has been manning the Welcome Center when LCEDC staff is not present.
 - There was 3,230 people that came through the Welcome Center in 2023. There were 2,236 items taken, which is 69% of the people that came in took one item.
 - The 2024 Langlade County Recreation Map were received on January 23, in time for the Green Bay RV Show on January 25. Beck worked in the Northcentral Wisconsin ITBEC booth all day on Sunday, January 28. The 2024 Langlade County Visitor Guide were received on February 1. The social media post on both pieces were available generated 33 inquiries requesting over 92 items to be mailed out in 3 days!
 - Due to the unseasonably warm weather, social media posts have been adjusted.
 - In October 2023, there were 211 people that checked in at Antigo for the Mammoth Hike Challenge. Of the 7,757 people that registered for the Challenge, only 3,802 submitted completion information.
 - Travel Wisconsin is gearing up for Bravo's Top Chef premiere on March 20 that will be featuring Wisconsin's culinary scene. The trailer debuted on February 1st with more than 130 media mentions on the first day totaling an audience of 3.8 billion people. Travel Wisconsin is partnering with Bangwango to create a culinary tour. LCEDC has submitted 11 restaurants to be considered for the tour.

Old Business: No old business was discussed.

Future Agenda Items and set date for next meeting (action item): No future agenda items was brought forward. The next LCEDC Board meeting will be at the LCEDC Annual Meeting at 4:00 pm on May 20, 2024.

Adjourn: Motion by Brand, second by Gretzinger to adjourn at 5:13 p.m. All Ayes. Motion Carried.

Respectfully submitted, Thomas Bauknecht, President

