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**EDA/EDC Joint Board Minutes**

**Thursday, March 12th, 2020 – 7:25 AM – 8:15 A.M.**

**Prescott Hall, Rocky Mountain College**

**1511 Poly Drive, Billings, MT**

***BIG SKY ED Mission Statement****: - Focused on sustaining and growing our region’s vibrant economy and outstanding quality of life,* ***Big Sky Economic Development*** *provides leadership and resources for business creation, expansion, retention, new business recruitment and community development.*

**EDA Board Members Present:** Bryce Terpstra, George Warmer, Greg McDonald, Jennifer Smith, Jennifer Owen, Ken Lutton, Paul Neutgens, Riley Bennett, Robin Rude, Shaun Brown (Ex-Officio), Katy Easton (Ex-Officio)

**EDA Board Members Absent:** Dana Pulis, Judi Powers, Don Jones (Ex-Officio), Greg Upham (Ex-Officio), John Brewer (Ex-Officio), Nick Altonaga (Ex-Officio)

**EDC Board Members Present:** Aaron Ramage, Andy Gott, Ann Kosempa, Bob Wilmouth, Kim Jakub, Mike Nelson, Mike Phillips, Mike Seppala, Scott Chesarek, Steve Loveless

**EDC Board Members Absent**: Craig Bartholomew, Dan Edelman, Dave Ballard, David Ellis, Denis Pitman, Doug Hansen, Eric Simonsen, Jon Stepanek, mac Fogelsong, Mitch Goplen, Nicole Benge, Spencer Frederick

**Staff and Guests:** Jack Nickels, Steve Simonson, Steve Arveschoug, Brandon Berger, Shanna Zier, Dustin Frost, Kevin Scharfe, Becky Rogers, Austin Trunkle, Dena Johnson, Lorene Hintz, Karen Miller, Dianne Lehm, Marcell Bruski, Johnna Jablonski

**Call to Order:**

Mike Seppala, EDC Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:25 A.M.

**Public Comment/Recognitions/Special Announcements** **and Introductions:**

Public Comment

None

**Agenda Changes:**

None

**Consent Agenda**

Approval of February Minutes and January Financials were deferred to April due to lack of quorum.

**Program Level Reports and Action Items**

BSTF Grant Applications – Lorene

**Alpine Aviation**

Alpine Aviation Express LLC, doing business as Alpine Air, is planning to expand its operations in Billings, MT over the next two years.

In 2018, Alpine Air finished its cargo conversion for the Beechcraft 1900D; it was then approved by the FAA. The Alpine Super Freighter is now the largest single piloted cargo aircraft in the world. The 1900D aircraft will haul large quantities of cargo while being extremely cost effective when compared to its counterparts. They can now ship more with less giving Alpine a competitive edge in our industry.

This extraordinary achievement is due to many years of engineering and planning to bring a conversion that was created with the carrier and client in mind. In 2020, Alpine Air will continue expanding their aircraft fleet and staff to meet the growing demand for services. In Billings, they anticipate creating 30 net new jobs comprised of: 17 new pilots, 3 parts clerks, 5 mechanics, and 5 mechanic helpers in the next two years. To accommodate the growing staff and fleet of aircrafts, they will be expanding their facility in Billings. The current facility is insufficient for current staff, so they have leased office space in downtown Billings until the new facility is constructed.

They gathered the needed funds for construction and are now ready to draw up plans for the new facility. Alpine aims to finish the planning portion of the project by fall of 2020 and finish construction by the end of 2021. Alpine is requesting a $25,000 planning grant from the Big Sky Trust Fund with the State Department of Commerce. This grant will help pay for pre-engineering and planning. The total planning costs are well over $200,000.

Motion: Paul Neutgens to approve the Alpine Air Planning Grant, as presented to the Board.

Second: Robin Rude

Discussion: Above

Motion carried

**Meadowlark Brewing**

Meadowlark’s creation came about like any other American dream, it was just that, a dream. Our founder, Travis, an avid craft beer “researcher”, moved home to Sidney, Montana in 2010 to help with the other family business Sidney Red-E-Mix, which is when the real encouragement from his parents came into play. Sidney, a small town in Eastern Montana was ready for some locally made beer. As with the rest of the country, the people of Sidney, were becoming more aware of and thirsty for craft beer. Travis and family saw this new “thirst” very inline with their new goals and dreams, and so the journey began.

Meadowlark has now outgrown is brewing space and is looking for better distribution and more space in Billings. They have 20,000 square foot building planned out on Zoo Drive. They were approved for a $25,000 planning grant will help them with the planning a feasibility around the layout of the facility.

They are currently planning to hire 13 employees at the facility in Billings and are applying for a Job Creation Grant to help with building materials, furniture & fixtures, and wages.  Positions include Front House manager, Head brewer, brewery manager, assistant brewer, servers, and sales reps.

The job creation grant would provide $5,000 per job created for a total of $65,000.

For more information on the company you can visit: <https://meadowlarkbrewing.com/>

Motion: Robin Rude to approve the Meadowlark Brewing Job Creation Grant, as presented to the Board.

Second: Jennifer Smith

Discussion: Above

Motion carried

Member Investor Program Update – Melanie

Melanie updated on the 2020 Board Member Challenge. Mel has about 70 potential prospects on the list and considers half of those in the “High Possibility” category. The goal is to have 30 new member investors for our 30th anniversary. Scott Chesarek will be treating everyone who participates to lunch.

Big Sky Finance – Brandon

**SBA 504 Loan Requests**

Brandon read the loans he has up for approval but the vote was deferred to April due to lack of quorum.

By-Laws Changes

The SBA has made changes to their corporate governance laws and that will impact our By-Laws. Brandon had BSF’s lawyer propose the necessary changes. Brandon then went over the changes with the Board.

*The vote will be held electronically due to lack of quorum.*

Big Sky to Sky Point Project – Becky

Becky updated on the Big Sky to Sky Point project. Becky and Shanna are still finishing up the financial transactions related to the closing which will be completed in the next few weeks if all goes to plan.

Also, an update was provided that some of the tenants at the Bank Building were unable to move out by our closing date on February 28th, so we have allowed them to stay on an additional month in order to aid in their transition. The Billings Symphony, however, will stay in the building until this summer. The U.S. EDA gave approval for these temporary arrangements.

Becky submitted a revised RFQ draft to the U.S. EDA yesterday and is waiting to hear back from them. The draft is now going through the EDA’s legal review. We plan to release the RFQ as soon as they approve the draft. She’s hopeful to hear back soon.

**Executive Director’s Report** – Steve

Steve covered the Board Committees openings and asked Board Members to lend a hand where they’re able.

Steve also mentioned that with the pandemic virus going around, we will be placing travelling staff persons on a work-from-home status as they return, which is consistent with the guidance we’ve been given from partners and healthcare institutions.

MEDA decided to cancel TIP Meetings this month out of caution.

**2020 State of the Workforce Report** – Karen

Karen gave a quick State of the Workforce presentation highlighting growth trends, educational attainment, employer feedback, and projected exits and growth.

**Public Comment**

None

**Adjourn**

Mike Seppala Adjourned the meeting at 8:10 AM

Next Meeting – April 9th, 2020

C:\Users\Austin\Pictures\Signatures\Ann Kosempa Signature.PNGRespectfully submitted,

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Ken Lutton, EDA Secretary/Treasurer Ann Kosempa, EDC Secretary/Treasurer

When approved, minutes and meeting materials will be filed electronically in the Big Sky EDA office.

*Big Sky Economic Development Board of Directors will make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities that may interfere with an individual’s ability to participate. Persons requiring such accommodations should make their requests to Big Sky Economic Development as soon as possible before the meeting day. Please call Big Sky ED at 256-6871.*