



## **Executive Director's Report**

### Update: One Big Sky District – Steve

Steve began by speaking about the 406 Impact Districts Legislation. The bill stalled in committee and did not make it to the floor for a vote. There was then an attempt to “blast” the vote to the floor the following day, but the committee again deadlocked, and SB 340 officially died. Steve would like to do a debrief with our elected officials to discuss the outcome of this effort. Steve would also like to know their commitment level as we move forward. Steve informed the Committee that he intends on speaking with the Executive Director of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN and inviting her to visit our community to speak to our community leaders and educate us as to how projects, especially in our medical corridor, can impact our local economy.

Moving forward, Allison spoke to how the Civic Leadership and Community Leaders need to align their visions to incentivize developers to invest in our community. Another component we would look at improving is community education and how we can get the correct information in the hands of those we are working for. Many of the Committee Members spoke about their own experiences with the misinformation throughout this process and offered their takeaways. Steve added that we will brief the Board on what we've learned throughout the process before the planning session next week

### Update: Economic Development Legislative Work (MEDA Priorities) – HB52

HB 52 is the existing suite of economic development tools which includes the SBDC .The bill would eliminate the sunset that is due this year and renew the funding for another 10-years. The bill has been passed by the House but there was an amendment made that will sunset the program in two-years. There will be an amendment offered to re-introduce the 10-year sunset to the Senate. The Congressman who proposed the two-year sunset amendment felt that there should perhaps be better tracking of the program's impact by the Department of Commerce.

### School District 2 High School Mill Levy for CTE Programs

An information piece was provided to the Committee that gives an overview of the School District 2 High School Mill Levy. Todd Buchanan will speak to the Board next week and request the EDC and EDA take a position on the Levy. Melanie mentioned that any social media posts forwarding this effort have been put on hold until the Board takes a position. Steve also mentioned that we must be very careful how we back the initiative if that is the direction the Board decides to go.

Motion: Ken Lutton to approve and forward to the full Board, the request for the EDA and EDC Boards to take a position on the SD 2 Mill Levy as presented to the Executive Committee.

Second: Steve Loveless

Discussion: None

Motion: Carried

## **Program/Organizational Directors Updates**

### Operations/ Future Facility – Becky

Becky began with a Future Facility Taskforce update. Mitch and his team are working on a cost estimate for the two buildings we are considering. They conducted site visits, rough block designs of the space, and have given a deep level of analysis. Becky will be able to see the full costs of each renovation this Friday. Becky anticipates that both will come in over our budget. Becky, Jim and Steve are sitting down next week to review the numbers and the budget. The EDA Grant deadline has been extended as it was initially on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Another next step will be to negotiate our lease with our current landlords. Steve has given an internal deadline for this process of April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### Board Planning Session Agenda Review

Becky moved on to the agenda for the Board Planning Event next Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. Karen Grosz will be facilitating the event with goals of getting to know one another, continuing to be a high functioning Board, Develop

Board Members as Ambassadors, and identify opportunities for sustained excellence. Becky gave a rundown of the agenda and activities throughout the day.

#### Executive Director Performance Review Process

Finally, as part of the budgeting process, Becky asked for volunteers to serve on the Salary Review Committee. This Committee gives approval for the wages and salaries set for staff before they are plugged into the Final Budget. In addition, Becky reminded the Committee the Board Chairs will conduct a performance review process for Steve as Executive Director.

#### Recruitment Program Update

Allison gave a recruitment update to the Committee. The first item was One Big Sky District. The second is the Air Service Provider Taskforce. Allison mentioned that we had met with United Airlines and Airport Director, Kevin Ploehn, had met with the balance of airlines who fly in and out of Billings. Next was the Economic Pulse research piece that compares several economic metrics of Billings to that of multiple peer communities. This year, Allison went to the effort of asking Billings natives why they chose a community other than Billings to live in. Finally, there is on-going work to revamp the ThinkBillings website and subsequent messaging of the initiative. With respect to general recruitment endeavors, Allison attended the Site Selector's Guild Conference in SLC and there was a heavy emphasis on civic leadership and how towns arrive at what the community's identity should be. Allison will also be attending the Select USA conference this June and will have an emphasis on Foreign Direct Investment and how Montana is positioned for such an investment. There was also an update regarding the GE to Zoot transition. With respect to the TEDD, Allison is assessing how she can best market the plots in the TEDD and one of the biggest issues is the lack of consistent infrastructure though out the area. Allison spoke about the Tech Sector Partnership she is involved in and how their aim is to make Billings attractive to tech focused firms. Finally, Allison spoke about the agricultural component of recruitment and the potential for a "value-added" processing center instead of immediately shipping crops or ag products to a different region.

Steve and Allison mentioned that the proposal we had offered Stix Fresh had be turned down as they are pursuing a strong partnership in the state of Washington.

**Executive Session:** None

**Public Comment:** Cory mentioned the David Marquet Leadership Talk was very well done and that everyone who worked on making that a reality deserves kudos.

Ken mentioned there was a STEM event this past weekend and the turnout was very good. Ken thinks there was about 150 kids in attendance.

Steve said that the Community Development team made a presentation to the City Council about sewer service in the TEDD and the Council will need to agree to allowing Lockwood Water and Sewer to extend into the TEDD. This is merely a boundary issue rather than a capacity issue.

Finally, Melanie said that yesterday was the first mandatory career fair for high school seniors in Billings and that Karen was in attendance at the Metra yesterday.

**Adjourned:** Cory adjourned the meeting at 9:03 AM.