



MEDA Board Meeting via Zoom
January 27, 2021
3:30pm – 5:00pm via Zoom

Present: Marie Hirsch, Tori Matejovsky, Russ Fletcher, Christy Cummings Dawson, Adam Vauthier, Paul Tuss, Rick Edwards, Jason Rittal, Steve Arveschoug, Jim Atchison, Brett Doney, Toni Schneider, Paul Reichert, Tim Guardipee, Grant Kier, Tracy McIntyre, Joe Willauer, Carly Wheatly, Craig Erickson, Kirk Keysor, Dara Deines, Brent Donnelly, Mike O'Rourke and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes from December 17th
President Brian Obert welcomed everyone to the meeting. Rick moved to approve the December 17th minutes; Paul Tuss seconded the motion. Motion carried.
2. Presentation from Matthew Olson, Montana Chamber
Matt shared information with the board regarding the Youth Entrepreneurs program. The Prospects (as the program is named in Montana) is all about investing in Montana's future business leaders. The curriculum is being added to industrial arts courses, family consumer sciences, etc., to provide information for students; and also teaches soft skills. Matt has raised \$48,000 but is needing \$75,000 for prizes. Total purse cash prize is \$32,500. MEDA Board members challenged each other to contribute to the project.
3. Financials
Treasurer Rick Edwards reviewed the financial reports. The NextGen dollars came in before 2020 thus the expenses are recorded in 2021. \$28,000 is still restricted for the NextGen report. MEDA is about \$20,000 net income at this time. Tracy moved to approve the financials; Marie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Committees and Working Groups

4. Legislative Update
Rick Edwards, Legislative Committee Chair, thanked everyone who has been participating in the Legislative activities.
 - a. Review and Approval of Value-Added Ag wish list
A discussion was held on the Value-Added Ag list. Paddy explained the list came about as a result of a visioning/value definition exercise. Glenn Oppel requested ideas for value added ag ideas to assist the state.

Discussion:

- Remove # 4 as that is Federal. Program not likely to be supported.

- #5 could be legislative action.
- #6 – Tracy noted some laws are from 1920. MDCDC would be available to the 2023 session to address the laws.
- Regarding #3 – costs would need to be determined.

It was recommended that MEDA leadership meet with the new leaders of MT Dept. of Ag and MT Dept. of Labor.

- b. Testimony update for January 28 – Feb 5
MDOC will be presenting on key programs. Rick emphasized the need for testimony/public comment to be shared. Gloria is gathering letters to submit a package of support.
 - c. In lieu of Rotunda Day Feb 2nd
The board decided to provide Montana legislators and the Governor's Office with pasties in lieu of MEDA Rotunda Day. Gloria will compile the cost and handle logistics for delivering the pasties. Steve will write a message to go along with the delivery.
 - d. Misc. updates from Broadband, Value Added Ag, etc.
Letters did go out to sponsors of various broadband bills so they are aware of the MEDA NextGen Broadband Committee work. Press release was approved with these four key areas of focus:
 1. Mapping Coordination and Integration
 2. Defining Sufficient Level of Connectivity
 3. Encouraging investment in high-performance broadband by providers in unserved and underserved locations with a series of policy elements to be considered.
 4. Focus on closing Montana's Digital Divide
5. Happy Hour – Tracy, Joe, Toni
Happy Hour is set up for February 4th, 3:30pm. The meet and greet with new MDOC Director Osterman will take the first half hour; the happy hour will follow. A meeting needs to be held in the future regarding MEDA's contract and partnership with MDOC.
 6. Spring Conference Agenda Committee Sign Up
Tracy, Paul R., Steve and Marie volunteered as needed. Gloria was asked to reach out to the membership for volunteers. Grant offered a tool for large conferences.
 7. Nominations Committee Sign Up
The Nominating Committee, consisting of Paddy Fleming (Chair), Rick Edwards, Tim Guardipee, Marie Hirsh, Paul Tuss, and Craig Erickson will hold a meeting soon. Board seats up for renewal:
Toni Schneider, Cushing Terrell, Billings (2021)
Sarah Converse, Sweetgrass Development, Great Falls Region (2021)
Marie Hirsch, Lake County Community Development, Ronan (2021)
Tracy McIntyre, MT Cooperative Development Center (2021)
Chris Cerquone, New Fields, Missoula (2021)
 8. Sustainability Committee Update

Rick shared the information Mike and Gloria gathered regarding how neighboring states fund their membership organizations. The Sustainability Committee will meet soon and examine more options. There are many other options other than dues increase/options that MEDA can consider.

9. Professional Development and Scholarship

Chair Marie Hirsch encouraged everyone to sign up for the Two Minute Perfect your Pitch workshop, February 15 – 23, with Marc Moss, Tell Us Something. She also reported that there has been little interest to date on the NDC \$600 scholarships.

10. Misc. and Next Meeting

- a. Meeting with Director Scott Osterman February 3rd at 2:30pm.
- b. MACo midwinter conference will be in Butte the end of February. Some vendors will be attending February 25 – 27.
- c. New EDA funding may be on the horizon.
- d. Website for SBA updates: www.sba.gov/ppp