MEDA Resource Team Assessment Working Group
Conference Call Summary
September 22, 2015

On the call: Gloria Hawkins, Kathy McLane, Sue Taylor, Mike O'Rourke, Paul Lachapelle, Kathie Bailey, Allison Mouch, Jerry Grebenc, Michele Archie, Anne Boothe, and Gloria O'Rourke.

1. **Introductions and Brief Background**
   Gloria O'Rourke welcomed everyone to the call and introduced Gloria Hawkins and Sue Taylor as newcomers to the group. Michele Archie provided a brief background on the Kettering Foundation and her involvement to date.

2. **Meeting Summary from June 23rd**
   In brief, there were two overall directions that evolved from the previous meeting: a. Concrete items to sharpen the process and improve conversations and outcomes; b. Consider gathering assessment criteria for multiple programs and use this process to obtain that data.

   Discussion:
   a. Paul Lachapelle brought forward the Seven Community Capital Model which looks at the community as a whole rather than the economic development piece only. Cultural Capital is the most important capital according to the model, (meaning how we identify ourselves as a community) as that is the glue that holds all other community sectors together.

      It was thought the Seven Community Capitals and a Resource Team Assessment are two different processes, with the capital process not possible to complete in the short assessment time frame. Yet if introduced prior to the assessment, the knowledge of the community's capital would be of help for both the community and the RTA team to have before it arrives. And community capital could perhaps be strengthened through the RTA process.

   b. Now that Tourism and Business Resources are under the same division within MT Dept. of Commerce, and working more closely with the Community Development Division, new insights could be obtained to expand and/or fine-tune the process.

3. **Focus A: Sharpen and Improve the Existing Process**
   a. Change the volunteer ask segment at the end of the town hall prioritizing session.
      i. Huddle up with local leadership as the team gathers and prior to the listening sessions. Meet once again just after the team work session and before the town hall meeting for a de-brief and to learn if there are already leaders at work on the identified issues.

   b. Better prepare the community for the team's visit and delve into the capital models **before** the team arrives. Prime the community so they are ready to go when the team visits.

      i. Ask questions prior to the team's arrival so the team has a sense of how the community is working together and where they are in the development process. Use the Heartland 20 Clues to Community Survival as a measure and have the community do this before the team arrives. MEDA could provide a SurveyMonkey format for people to take prior to the assessment. Michele noted that the Kettering Foundation and other organizations might have some examples to work from.

         Discussion:

Experienced team members felt this would be very helpful as they would have insight into how the community sees itself; sometimes there is a disconnect. One of the purposes of a Resource Team Assessment is to hold up a mirror so the community can see itself more clearly.

This information would be helpful when writing up the report as a community might, for example, think it is ready to go in a certain direction but has not first completed the preliminary steps to begin that direction.

c. Compile a Searchable Database for Report Resources
This database would save time and provide accurate and up-to-date information for a team's use. About ten years ago, MSU Extension created pro-bono for MEDA an online reporting process which then allowed the information to be searchable. The database could also be made available to communities seeking information and resources on current issues.

4. **Focus B: Create a Single Needs Assessment Process for Multiple Program Requirements**
A community may need a community growth policy, a park and recreation plan, etc., through which a lot of questions can overlap. The MEDA Resource Team Working Group could take on this challenge and determine if it is logical for the assessment process to be used, if a different database needs to be set up, etc. W2ASACT would be an excellent resource as to how this could be done as they created a Preliminary Engineering document that is used for multiple programs requiring the hiring of an engineer.

5. **Role of Kettering Foundation**
Michele described several ways the Kettering Foundation could be of help in assisting this working group, and noted Kettering's interest in engaging community members not just in identifying economic development issues, but also in discussing/considering them together as a basis for complementary community action. Michele will be meeting with the Kettering Foundation program staff soon and report back.

6. **Establish Meeting Schedule and Chairperson**
As time was running out to identify the best date and time for regularly scheduled meeting, a doodle will be sent to find the best date. A Chairperson will be selected at a later date.

7. **Resource Teams Pending**
Gloria reported several communities have expressed interest in holding a Resource Team Assessment with the one most likely to be scheduled soon is Sanders County.

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