MEDA BOARD MINUTES
October 2, 2013 * Sidney Country Club * 16 Highway North * Sidney, MT

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Tracy McIntyre, Brett Doney, Leslie Messer, Jim Davison, Jim Smitham, Andy Poole, Ken Richardson, Chris Cerquone, Jim Atchison, Martin DeWitt, Jason Rittal, Brian Gion, Linda Kindrick, Anne Boothe, Kathie Bailey, Paul Tuss, and Gloria O’Rourke. Members/Guests: Mike O’Rourke, Julie Foster, Liz Ching, and Chris Mehus.

1.0 Previous Minutes August 6th
Following introductions President Tracy McIntyre requested approval of the August 6th minutes. Martin moved to approve the minutes, Leslie Messer seconded the motion; motion carried.

2.0 Financial Reports – Mike
Mike O’Rourke reviewed the financials. Linda Kindrick moved to approve the financials, Jim Smitham seconded the motion; motion carried.

3.0 Committee Updates
3.1 Scholarship – Anne
Anne reported seven excellent applications were received and funding was disbursed accordingly. $3,200 was spent in total. Jim Davison will return his scholarship as he was able to receive EB5 training at no cost.

3.2 Fall Conference – Leslie
Leslie updated the board on changes to the agenda and was thanked for her efforts in organizing the conference. Liz Ching said GOED is looking to MEDA to share ideas on addressing some of the issues brought up from roundtable sessions held across the state. Tracy asked the board to step up for Ignite Montana! and the MEDA 20th Anniversary dinner interview segment.

4.0 MEDA Board Web Portal Task Force Update – Chris, Julie
Chris provided an update on progress made to date on the MEDA Web Portal that will provide an online gateway for Montana’s economic development entities. This project will fill a gap that currently exists on the state site. A firm was selected to work with Montana to move forward and will be opening an office in Montana. The amount needed for this phase is $50,000. Chris requested board action and/or support on the following:

4.1 BSTF Endorsement. Beartooth RC&D would serve as the applicant for a $25,000 grant for this project. A $25,000 match is needed; NorthWestern Energy is willing to contribute $10,000. Jim Smitham moved MEDA move forward with a BSTF through Beartooth RC&D for this project; Kathie Bailey seconded the motion. Motion carried with Brett Doney voting in opposition. All board members were asked to submit a letter of support upon request.

4.2 MEDA Financial Support. Jim Davison moved to commit $5,000 from MEDA’s account balance for the project. The motion was seconded by Linda Kindrick; the motion carried with Brett Doney voting in opposition.

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* Leslie Messer, Sidney * Anne Boothe, Malta * Andy Poole, Helena * Martin DeWitt, Wolf Point * Chris Cerquone, Missoula *
* Stuart Leidner, Bozeman * Dr. Christopher Shove, Helena * Steve Arveschoug, Billings * Ken Richardson, Missoula * Linda Kindrick, Helena *
* Kellie Danielson, Kalispell * Kathie Bailey, Lewistown * Paul Tuss, Havre *
4.3 Membership Financial Support. Andy Poole moved for the MEDA Web Portal committee to send the MEDA membership a brief email asking for their financial support of the project. Jim Davison seconded the motion; motion carried.

Brett Doney moved for the Board Web Portal Task Force to administer and manage the project and include the original Web Portal Committee as well. Paul Tuss seconded the motion. Motion carried.

5.0 MEDA Legislative Strategy Update

5.1 Meeting with Gov. Bullock – Tracy
Tracy reported on her meeting with Governor Bullock in conjunction with Tagen Vine, President of Montana Ambassadors. The focus of the meeting was to learn how MEDA could be involved with the Governor’s Office efforts. One topic was to improve the connection to MEDA with business leads generated from GOED and Montana Ambassadors. Ken Richardson spoke on behalf of Montana Ambassador’s efforts and noted two businesses that came through Prospera because of the Montana Ambassador outreach bringing the business to Prospera for expertise. Tracy and Governor Bullock also discussed the importance of partnership in spite of occasional differences coming to light.

5.2 Report on MACo Presentation – Jim Davison
Jim Davison, Chris Shove, and Rick Edwards recently presented to the MACo Economic Development Committee on key economic development tools and TIF districts. Jim said there was an excellent exchange of information and MEDA needs to continue to grow its relationship with MACo. Ken Richardson suggested MEDA attend the MACo conference and perhaps conduct a workshop on TIF’s. A committee to work with MACo and League of Cities and Towns to track their meetings and workshop opportunities includes Kathie Bailey, Jason Rittal, and Brian Obert, Jim Davison (Chair). Tracy will assist.

5.3 ROI Team – Tracy, Paul
Paul said this team continues to look in to the means of reporting program impact analysis. This group will do an RFP to request an impact analysis report on MEDA’s key economic development programs. Andy said MDOC does its own impact analysis and has a third party to verify and confirm the numbers. This approach would save on the cost of the impact analysis.

5.4 Think out of the Box Team – Jason
Jason shared an update from the Think out of the Box team and noted changes were suggested to enhance the Primary Workforce Training grant criteria.

5.5 Research our Neighbors
NorthWestern Energy paid for additional reports to expand on information provided by Missoula Economic Partnership’s intern who studied tools neighboring states use for economic development. Jim Smitham noted MEDA members need to reach out to other state organizations more.

5.6 Non Traditional Tools – Anne
Anne reported a meeting has not been held since the previous report given in August.

5.7 Next steps
The MEDA Strategy Teams will report to the membership tomorrow and obtain ideas for moving forward. It was noted our statutory programs sunset in 2019. MEDA will have two opportunities (2015 and 2017) to address the sunset.

7.0 Report from Paul Tuss and Jason Rittal re Regional Gathering in D.C.
Paul and Jason said the clear message from their conference in DC had two main points: 1. Partner for funding and 2. Engage the private sector for funding. The days of individual organizations obtaining funding on their own are disappearing. Jason noted that rural in Washington, DC is 300,000 people. Paul and Jason met with Montana’s congressional delegation and represented MEDA. They also said the new buzzword within EDA is “resiliency” and simplification of the CEDS is coming soon. Jason was also able to share with officials that the EDA reporting template does not allow for accurate information to be included.

8.0 Requests from Dick King pending. Dick will soon be sharing with the board two items for the board’s consideration: 1. tax exempt financing for companies and a request that MEDA support 2. early childhood development and education
initiatives such as may be proposed by the Governor for the next Legislative session.

9.0 Working Group Updates – CRDC/EDD Meeting
Paul reported a great meeting was held in August. The Denver Regional Office was in attendance as they were doing peer reviews. Attendees shared best practices and issues with EDA reporting. A letter is being compiled and will be signed by all EDDs then submitted to EDA. In addition, a survey is pending to learn of insurance costs and other costs common to EDD’s and CRDCs.

10.0 Misc. Discussion

10.1 Visibility. Tracy opened a discussion regarding badges and/or shirts so that economic developers can more easily be identified. Chris Mehus suggested this discussion be incorporated with the MEDA web portal project as MEDA’s brand is being shaped. Chris said while most promote their own area or region, at times it would be helpful to represent the bigger picture of MEDA. Name badges and shirts will be explored by Tracy, Gloria and Jim Davison and sent to the board for approval.

10.2 Pre-Summit Social and Summit Feedback. Liz Ching said that should a summit occur in the future, LDO’s will be called on to bring forward more opportunities for one-on-one conversations with business contacts. Jim Smitham suggested MEDA request Senator Baucus continue the summit after he leaves office. It could involve MEDA, MT Ambassadors, Montana Chamber and others taking the role the Senator’s staff played in previous summits. MEDA could initiate the conversation to proceed with these key partners, talk with JJ, and consider having Sen. Baucus co-sign the letter. Jim Smitham and Tracy will investigate further.

10.3 Spring Conference - committee and location
Brett requested MEDA change its conference format to having one per year in Helena and bring in a lot of stakeholders, with the second conference traveling around the state. He suggested holding it in Helena in the fall in a legislative year and in the spring in a non-legislative year. Other suggestions:
- Request hosting applications be submitted from EDO’s interested in hosting the conference.
- Broaden the MEDA agenda to go beyond economic development to attract others; take on the flavor of the Summit and make special announcements, etc.
- Havre and Great Falls are interested in holding the next conference.
- One conference could be focused inward on MEDA business – another outward.

Conclusion:
The same committee that is investigating partner meetings is to gather dates for those meetings (MACo, League of Cities and Towns, Montana Chamber, etc..) to determine co-meeting opportunities.

10.4 Professional Development
Professional Development suggestions from the board included:
- Future professional development training involves soft skills such as fund raising, board management, etc.
- Re-create the Northwest Games model.
- Re-survey the membership for topics.
- Consider holding professional development at a non-central location.

Action Items:
1. Contact MACo about doing a workshop at their winter conference.
2. A committee to work with MACo and League of Cities and Towns to track their meetings and workshop opportunities: Kathie Bailey, Jason Rittal, and Brian Obert, Jim Davison, (Chair). Tracy will assist. This group will also explore spring conference opportunities in conjunction with a partner’s event.
3. Jim Davison to contact Chris Shove, Linda Kindrick and Brian Obert to see if they plan to go to MACo, League, etc.
4. Martin to submit a program review committee regarding Petrol.
5. Explore Professional Development options; add Anne Booth to the PD committee.
6. Name badges and shirts will be explored by Tracy, Gloria and Jim Davison and sent to the board for approval.
7. Jim Smitham and Tracy will investigate a future summit with key partners working together.