

Town of Swanzey, New Hampshire
Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC)
Meeting Minutes – May 9, 2016

CALL TO ORDER:

The regular meeting of the Swanzey Economic Development Advisory Committee was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chairman Steven Bittel.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Steven Bittel, Greg Johnson, Beverly Bernard, Lynn Rust, and Don Skiba.

ABSENT: Alternate Bill Hutwelker, Arthur Boufford, and Guy Pronesti

OTHERS PRESENT: Director of Planning & Community Development Sara Carbonneau, Town Administrator Michael Branley, Mollie Kaylor, Business Resource Specialist for Southwestern New Hampshire (NH), NH Department of Resources & Economic Development (DRED), State Representative Jim McConnell

APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES:

- The minutes of January 11, 2016 were considered. Skiba moved to accept the minutes of January 11, 2016. The motion was seconded by Johnson and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**
- The minutes of April 11, 2016 were considered. Skiba **moved** to accept the minutes of April 11, 2016. The motion was seconded by Bernard and all were in favor. **Motion passed.**

DISCUSSION:

Mollie Kaylor, Business Resource Specialist for Southwestern NH, NH Department of Resources and Economic Development

Kaylor introduced herself and spoke about her role at DRED. She said she is able to assist with access to State resources and she is responsible for business retention. She noted that there are two recruiters now working for the State of New Hampshire and they work to encourage business to come to New Hampshire. She spoke about the confidentiality of the process. She spoke about an online tool with demographics that they hope to ready for use in July of this year for recruiting new business – site selection software. She noted that the GIS planning website – shows states already using the tool. Recruiters work for the whole state. State Industrial Representative Michael Bergeron can now travel out of state.

McConnell spoke about the lack of service for the counties of northern and western New Hampshire and he noted the tax advantages of other states and he asked Kaylor how the State could address these issues. McConnell spoke about the business enterprise tax and business profit tax bill he proposed but without support from DRED with the Ways & Means Committee, he could not get any attention for the bill.

Bittel spoke about unifying state representatives for Cheshire County, which Coos County seems to have been able to achieve. Rust mentioned the energy costs of the region. There are no natural gas pipelines and high electric costs. Discussion occurred regarding the Kinder Morgan pipeline.

Kaylor spoke about encouraging Canadian businesses to open satellite offices to reduce distribution costs. Bittel asked Kaylor about the ideal candidate for Cheshire County and if smaller companies are on her radar. She noted that ideal candidate for moving to the area would be supply chain vendors who support manufacturing already here such as the medical manufacturing businesses. Carbonneau asked if local businesses have been expressing needs to Kaylor. Kaylor responded that finding skilled work force is #1 challenge. She noted the aging population –

hard to attract younger talent to this area when competing with the Boston area. She spoke about educational path to develop more skilled workers.

McConnell spoke about apprenticeships being coordinated with college credits in South Carolina in order to develop skills needed by businesses. He expressed the need for the State of New Hampshire to focus on tax incentives for businesses.

Kaylor said her goal is to prevent existing businesses in the region from moving out of the State. McConnell said DRED approach the Ways & Means Committee encouraging review McConnell's bill that important to bringing business to the State. Carbonneau said there is strength in numbers and getting representatives from a variety of towns to work together would help visibility for the area at the State level. Bittel said the market for this area would be viable small businesses, not Fortune 500 companies.

Johnson spoke about businesses that are going out of business – there is a problem retaining business. He also asked about the importance of the airport and Kaylor said it is an important asset. Johnson said he felt that it is a waste of time to spend time and money on the airport. He said he didn't think that it would ever be a driving force for the area. Skiba said that the airport could be used as a distribution center.

Bittel thanked Kaylor for coming to the meeting. Kaylor said she would bring our concerns back to the office. Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI) is a resource available to the Town. There is no cost to the Town but would have to work with Kaylor since she is the subscriber.

NEW BUSINESS:

Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce Renewal

Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce - \$100 is membership renewal.

Motion was made by Johnson to expend \$100.00 to renew membership in the Greater Keene Chamber of Commerce. There was a second by Skiba and no further discussion. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Arthur Boufford Resignation

Bittel informed the members that Arthur Boufford is resigning from the Committee due to health issues.

Motion was made by Johnson for the Committee to produce a letter of thanks for Boufford's service. There was a second by Rust and Carbonneau offered to draft a letter from the Committee and the Selectmen. All were in favor. **Motion passed.**

Next scheduled meeting: June 13, 2016

Adjournment:

A **motion** to adjourn was made by Skiba with a second from Johnson and all were in favor. Adjournment occurred at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Bernard, Recording Secretary