



Eastern Oregon Border Region Economic Development Board

September 15, 2022

Ontario, OR

Attendance

Members Present: Bill Johnson, Stuart Reitz, Andrew Maeda

Members Present Via Zoom: Ron Haidle, Roberto Gamboa, Melissa Drugge

Staff Present: Emily Conlon, Board Coordinator; Shawna Peterson, Executive Director

Guests Present: Jim Maret, City of Nyssa

Meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm.

Welcome, Introductions, Minute Approval

Bill Johnson opened the meeting. Board members, guests and audience members made introductions.

Andrew Maeda made a motion to approve the July 11, 2022 meeting minutes. Stuart Reitz seconded the motion and all present board members voted in favor.

Public Comment

None.

Fiscal Report

As of September 8, 2022 the Border Fund has a total of \$2,533,582.01.

The new \$6 million appropriation is not yet reflected in the fiscal report. Executive Director Shawna Peterson noted that the Investment Returns reflection is still not updated, and has requested an updated or timeline for the reflection of this from Oregon Community Foundation.

Bill Johnson noted showing a month-to-month comparison of the budget. Executive Director Shawna Peterson will come to the next meeting with a month-to-month template to refine and then move forward with.

Executive Director Report

Executive Director Shawna Peterson submitted an executive summary and reported her activities since last month's meeting. She is attending the next Chamber meeting to present an update on the Border Board. Executive Director Shawna Peterson spoke on her participation at the recent Board of Agriculture meeting; she sat on two different panels covering the topic of local workforce

development and economic development. The meeting was very interactive and she was able to showcase the Border Board and what it has accomplished so far.

Executive Director Shawna Peterson spoke on the three grants currently open for applications, the Scott Fairley Memorial Edge Grant, the Ready Workforce Mobilization Grant, and the Community Improvement Planning Grant. Board Staff has received one Edge grant application. Board Staff has encouraged re-application to previous applicants not awarded or eligible to re-apply.

Executive Directive Shawna Peterson continues to work with legislature to fix the Senate Bill 16 definition error (“High-value farmland”), and that the plan is to use a different statutory definition for high-value farmland that will better fit Senate Bill 16.

Executive Director Shawna Peterson introduced an upcoming Ontario Recreation District project for the Board to consider supporting. Andrew Maeda will be further discussing the Project at the October Board Meeting.

Bill Johnson complimented Shawna on her work as Executive Director and her outreach across the state.

City of Nyssa Update

Jim Maret attended the meeting to provide an update on the City of Nyssa and to discuss obstacles faced by Nyssa. Jim Maret has worked for the City of Nyssa since 2015, and has been the City Manager since 2017.

Jim Maret spoke on various projects that the City has been proud to execute. Projects discussed that contribute to the city’s growth included: continued work on the waterline expansion, completion of a Parks Master Plan to improve the city’s parks, completion of a Wastewater Master Plan (with funds granted by the Border Board), grant award to the Fire Department for funding full time employees, and the development of the Treasure Valley Reload Center. Jim Maret also spoke on the development of new businesses in the City as well as a the development of a large RV Park in town. The City is working on development of a new and improved Public Works building development.

Jim Maret presented to the Board some challenges that he feels interfere with the region’s economic development. He spoke at length on the decriminalization of drugs in the State of Oregon, and how the accessibility to drugs as well as the lack of resources has created an epidemic of homelessness in our state and in the region. We are hit even harder because individuals in Idaho who abuse drugs and/or are homeless come into our cities and stay here. This burden is felt by Law Enforcement, Department of Human Services, and other resource facilities for the homeless and mentally ill. Jim Maret encourages bringing these issues to legislature to discuss receiving funds in our area to build shelters, facilities, and rehabilitation centers for the homeless. He discusses building a Mission in the city of Ontario for the homeless. Jim Maret expresses the need for finding sustainable solutions to rehabilitating the mentally ill and the drug addicted, and how these solutions can work to better support our local law enforcement.

Jim Maret also spoke on wage, tax, and permitting issues and the challenges we face in getting businesses to open in our region rather than in Idaho.

Jim Maret continues to look for funding to complete potential and future projects in the City of Nyssa. He expressed that state grant awardees are more often on the western side of the state, and it is harder for organizations in the Border Region and our side of the state to receive state funds for economic development. He spoke specifically about a state parks and recreation grant that was not awarded to the City of Nyssa. Board Member Andrew Maeda spoke on the importance of city parks as economic development, and that providing safe, clean, public places for kids to go to promotes people moving, living, and staying in the region. The Border Board and Jim Maret discussed possible solutions to helping organizations in the Border Region be successful in the state grant application process.

The City of Nyssa received the Community Improvement Planning Grant from the Border Board for their Wastewater Master Plan, and because of this, the City is able to move forward with this Project. Jim Maret expressed to the Board that the master plan is a crucial piece of the project, and that without the master plan, they would not be able to be competitive in the next phase of grant funding for the project. Board.

Incentive Program Application Approvals

Ron Haidle made a motion to approve one Competitive Housing Incentive Program application in the amount of \$6,000. Andrew Maeda seconded the motion and all present board members were in favor.

Border Fund – New Appropriation Discussion

Executive Director Shawna Peterson's vision is to move quickly and thoughtfully on what the board wants to do with the new \$6million. She encouraged the Board to take stock and develop new programs and/or spends to fund a project. The Board discussed the level or risk they are willing to take with the new appropriation. In their discussion, the board emphasized partnerships with other organizations in the region.

Ideas and topics that the Board would like to see further developed include:

- **A Business Center / Business Incubator.** Executive Director Shawna Peterson discussed the need for support and retention of small business in the region. Bill Johnson drafted an idea of what this concept could look like, a "Business Incubator" that offers small business physical spaces to network, marketing resources, and other tools and support to succeed. Executive Director Shawna Peterson and Bill Johnson will continue to work on this concept.
- **Leadership Program.** Civic organizations are not confident that the region has a lot of strong leaders. Organizations across the state are desperate for board members and engaged individuals. There are under-represented members of the community, and a huge need to bring up leaders who will represent these groups. The Boarder Board discussed funding or partnering with other organizations in programs that teach parliamentary procedures, public speaking, and other leadership programming to create leaders in the community to push initiatives for economic development.

- **Land Inventory and Infrastructure Survey.** A “Last Mile” type analysis, this would include identifying how lands are zoned, what services (power, water, broadband, etc) are at the property, how close services are if not actually on the property.
- **Mental Health / Substance Abuse resource coordinator.** The Border Board discussed partnering with the City of Ontario to fund a Coordinator position for 2-3 years to pursue federal funds to address the growing problem of homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health in the region.

Next Meeting/Agenda Build

The next meeting will be Monday, October 3rd, 2022. The agenda items will include a fiscal report from Oregon Community Foundation, an executive director update, guest speakers, and continued brainstorming for the new \$6million appropriation.

Meeting closed at 5:09 pm.

Approved by: _____
Tiffany Cruickshank, Board Chair
Eastern Oregon Border Economic Development Board

Date