

**COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes – June 18, 2020 at 3:00 pm**  
**City Council Chambers**

**Committee Members:**

Gene Merrill (Chair)  
Bryan Hawkins (Vice Chair) by phone  
Tripp Androy- Absent  
Shauna Bland- late  
Sam Engel- Absent  
Ron Goss- Absent  
Jon Bowen  
Kenny Houck – Absent  
Josie Molloy  
Colene Martin  
Cameron Camp  
Julie Thomas- Absent  
Paul Lonnquist  
Kim Dickson  
Vacant-Natural Resources

**Government Liaisons:**

Susan Seereiter – City Business Advocate  
Darin Fowler – County Commissioner- Late  
Jean Ann Miles – City of Cave Junction Absent  
Dennis Roler – City Councilor

**Guests:**

Jeff Houston  
Brain De LaGrange  
Bob Schaller  
Dan Mancuso  
Linda Bradley  
Steven Sabel  
Lora Glover

**1. Roll Call**

- a. Chair Merrill opened meeting at 3:04 and took roll, 8 members present for a quorum

**2. Public Comment:**

- a. Jeff Houston from LS Network stated they are the only Oregon owned and operated fiber company in the Northwest. Largest company in operation for 15 years. New fiber is being installed throughout region. Owned by shareholders bringing fiber to Southern Oregon

**3. Approval of Minutes:**

- a. Approval of minutes from February 3, 2020.

**Motion**

**Member Martin moved and Member Lonnquist seconded the motion to approve the minutes from February 3, 2020 as presented. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”:**  
**Committee Members: Dickson, Molloy, Lonnquist, Hawkins, Camp, Martin, Bowen and Chair Merrill. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None.**  
**Absent: Members Houck, Androy, Goss, Engel, Bland and Thomas. The motion passed.**

**4. Work Session Items:**

**a. Vision of Economic Future (Jon Bowen exit strategy suggestions)**

- Member Bowen expressed passion for economic development and his involvement since 2010. He expressed frustration with local government not understanding what economic development is and interfering with progress.
- When things become political nothing progresses. Bowen encouraged committee to investigate other city models where economic development and tourism operate as a separate non-profit entity. Successful models can be found in McMinnville, OR. and Ennis, Tx.

- Suggestions for true stakeholders in the community such as banking, hoteliers, etc. would make up the board and take pressure off politicians.
- Bowen spoke of current PAVE audit recently completed and they are also recommending the same model. The timing is perfect for this transition to take place where the City and the County can contribute to a non-profit separate entity that houses and provides tourism and economic development under one roof.
- Member Molloy thanked Bowen and shared her experience in Laramie, Wy. Where this same model of economic development and tourism were housed at the Chamber and it was very successful that existed as a 501c6 and a 501c3. Josephine County Chamber already does economic development.
- Member Camp believes that the relationship with the City of Grants Pass, Cave Junction and County already have the “ligaments” of a strong foundation.
- Lora Glover shared the results of the PAVE audit that will be reviewed by Council June 29<sup>th</sup>. Glover quoted the phrase “Tourism is the first date for Economic Development.
- Commissioner Fowler agreed with Bowen about the committees and frustration when they are not acknowledged. He praised Bowen for his contributions that he made to the City and the County.
- Member Martin sees this opportunity to work in collaboration with the City and County to move this non-profit idea forward.

**b. Vision and Focus for Economic Recovery (Gene Merrill)**

- Chair Merrill expressed frustration about not getting enough actionable items as a committee. He mentioned member Kim Dickson as a “firebrand” who is wanting to be boots on the ground and reaching out to business community.
- The time is now to be innovative. “We owe this to our Community”. Each member was appointed by a local agency; City, County, School District. These agencies recognize the expertise that each member brings to the collective.
- The committee is an important entity that needs to be recognized and not just attend meetings without any action. There is important work to be done. Chair Merrill mentioned childcare as an example of getting the word out to the businesses in need of those services.
- Chair Merrill talked about the importance of including a broader net of representatives including stakeholders from Williams area. It was noted that this would need to be put on agenda for next month in order to make a motion to the City Council and County Commissioners.
- Member Bowen mentioned that if the County were to add a position, the City might have to also have another appointment to balance the equity.

**Motion**

**Member Camp moved and Member Dickson seconded the motion to bring up topic of an additional member recommendation from Williams. The vote resulted as follows:**

**“AYES”:**

**Committee Members: Dickson, Molloy, Lonquist, Hawkins, Camp, Martin, Bland, Bowen and Chair Merrill. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None.**

**Absent: Members Houck, Androy, Goss, Engel, and Thomas. The motion passed.**

**c. Merlin Town Council recommendation (Bryan Hawkins)**

- Member Hawkins discussed his integration in the Merlin community and observes a miscommunication, misinformation, and lack of communication.
- Merlin community needs to have a town council to get the facts to the people and listen to the needs of the community.
- Better communication is needed for the area.
- If we can get Economic Development in Merlin it would be another opportunity for students.
- Member Hawkins wanted to make a motion and Josie seconded the motion and then member Bowen made a comment that this was an example of a bigger picture.
- Bowen recommended a sub-committee for the outlying areas and meet with stakeholders and then formulate an action plan.
- Member Bowen feels a sub-committee would be better. Member Hawkins still felt the Town Council was a better way to proceed.
- Merlin doesn't want to be taken over by the City of Grants Pass. Bowen clarified that more needs to go into the plan before it goes before City Council.
- Member Martin was adamantly opposed to the idea and that it was taking away the Commissioners duties.
- Commissioner Fowler commented that many of the smaller communities feel left out including Cave Junction. He approved of Williams Town Council and their structure is as land use consultant to the Commissioners. They have a specific function and it is nice for commissioners to have someone to talk to.
- Commissioner Fowler likes the idea of a Town Council, however, from an economic development standpoint, he agreed with member Bowen. Having a larger picture of representatives from all the outlying areas.
- After further discussion of motions, it was determined more deliberation was needed.
- Member Hawkins has strong feelings and concerns for Merlin and would like to continue to work with Commissioner Fowler to find solutions. There needs to be more industry and business in Merlin, the problem is infrastructure.
- Member Martin suggested the already existing Sheriff's department that already has liaisons and regular meetings are being held.
- Chair Merrill recounted the motions and potential motions on the table.
- Member Camp wanted more information before a motion was made.
- Commissioner Fowler would like to work with Hawkins to flesh out more information.

#### **5. Information Sharing:**

- Chair Merrill explained membership and information about Rogue Workforce Partnership and that there was not enough rural Josephine County representation.
- Chair Merrill asked Commissioner Fowler for his advocacy as an Executive Board member.
- Commissioner Fowler mentioned that the County grant was not getting as much attention that he was expecting. Commissioner believes that indicates people do not want government help.
- Chair Merrill asked member Bland about the School District and it is still unknown.

- Discussion followed about the impact of COVID-19.
- Councilor Roler updated the committee on the City Grant Program, Parklets, a new 58-unit development that Council approved and the 220K from State CBDG.
- Councilor Roler also mentioned funding for the Grants Pass Airport.
- Councilor Roler recommended inviting more people to the meetings instead of asking for more members since there was concern for quorum.
- Several members shared updates; Member Camp talked about the Flying Club in Illinois Valley, pipeline to pilots.
- Member Dickson shared outreach to retailers and found the #1 issue was homelessness, economic impact of fires and competition with big box stores.
- Member Bowen encouraged the non-profit economic development/tourism model going forward.

**6. Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting:**

- Economic Recovery planning
- Youth Labor Development
- L S Network Presentation \* ½ presentation
- RCC update
- Spalding update

**7. Adjournment:**

- Meeting adjourned at 4:22 pm

**Next scheduled meeting:**

**Monday, July 16, 2020 at 3:00 pm, City Council Chambers**

*Minutes prepared by Susan Seereiter, City Staff Liaison.*