

**VOYAGE FORWARD**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MARKETING PARTNERSHIP**  
**OCTOBER 27, 2016 MEETING MINUTES**

The Voyage Forward Economic Development Marketing Partnership met at 10:00 A.M. on Thursday, October 27, 2016 in the Littlefork Community Center, Littlefork, MN.

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.

KEDA Executive Director Paul Nevanen called the meeting to order at 10:08 A.M.

Members Present: Paul Nevanen, Sonja Pelland, Marta Lindemanis, Shawn Mason, Bob Anderson, Pete Schultz, Mike Wellcome and Ken Anderson.

Members Not Present: Sue Natysin, Sherril Gautreaux, Eric Johnson, Jerry Struss, Alysa Hackenmueller, Sue Natysin, Tammy Riley, Carol Helland, Dale Johnson, and Leif Larson.

- a. Team Guidelines: A copy of the Team Guidelines was included in the written packet of meeting materials.
- b. Note Taker: Ken Anderson volunteered to prepare the minutes for this meeting.
- c. September 27, 2016 Marketing Partnership meeting minutes: Chairman Nevanen briefly discussed the meeting notes from the October 12, 2016 Coalition meeting regarding Christa Hiebel's comments. He pointed out and clarified that no decisions were made on the series of recommendations she discussed, but there was agreement on the outline of the basic information.

MOTION made by Shawn Mason to approve the September 27, 2016 meeting minutes of the Voyage Forward Economic Development Marketing Partnership. Motion seconded by Mike Wellcome and carried unanimously.

II. USE OF VOYAGE FORWARD LOGO/TAGLINE.

The Marketing Partnership members requested at the last meeting that each city and organization adopt the Voyage Forward logo for use on their letterhead and websites. Using the Voyage Forward logo was intended to create a unified brand and message for the government agencies and business organizations located throughout Koochiching County. Sonja Pelland explained that the Littlefork City Council has already agreed to add the Voyage Forward logo to the City of Littlefork letterhead as requested. Mike Wellcome indicated that the City of Ranier has agreed to do so also. Marta Lindemanus reported that the City of Big Falls City Council wanted to view the logo before they make a decision. Shawn Mason said that the City of Northome has already approved and is using the logo.

Bob Anderson questioned whether he would do so because this is a program that may go away. He further explained that the City of International Falls has maintained joint powers partnerships with KEDA, with Koochiching County for the Airport Commission, and others. It was his view that those organizations may have a higher priority than Voyage Forward and we do not include their logos now, so he would not see putting the Voyage Forward logo on the City of International Falls letterhead. Marta discussed the comments at the last meeting of using "A Voyage Forward Community" versus "Journey to Success." Shawn had stated that the Chamber of Commerce Board favors the idea and use of the Voyage Forward logo. Bob reiterated that he sees there are less people participating and he sees the effort waning. He was very complimentary of the survey and study information that has been gathered and that stated it will be very helpful. He noted this group has half the people attending as compared to the previous meeting and there are duplications of effort, such as the Tourism Driver and the CVB efforts to promote tourism. Moreover, he said there is no legal entity or legal status to Voyage Forward, whereas the CVB, for example, does have such status. Other members countered that there has been much energy and enthusiasm shown by new people who are getting involved at many of the Driver meetings. There are now 60 to 70 people active on various Destiny Drivers. The momentum is not being lost, but is just getting started. The CVB is currently supported by three separate jurisdictions with taxing districts. The VNP is the most recognized attraction in the Koochiching County area so a unified theme for marketing and tourism promotion is very valuable. It was noted some Drivers may have a "life-cycle end," whereas others may be ongoing. Further discussion ensued.

In summary, Mayor Anderson said he would not have this item on the agenda as yet. He said he would put other joint powers organizations and their logos on the City letterhead and web site first. Mayor Lindemanis said she will present the branding philosophy and request to the Big Falls City Council for discussion on November 14<sup>th</sup>.

### III. REVIEW OF NEWMARK GRUBB KNIGHT FRANK AND RESULTS.

Paul Nevanen discussed at length the Newmark Marketing Recommendations that were identified in their study and reviewed the highlighted items he had shown on his handout. He explained it is recognized that the "Regional Economic Development Partnership (EDP)" is KEDA. Paul enumerated many examples of economic development activities that KEDA has undertaken in response to various inquiries presented to his office. He emphasized that KEDA has many basic documents that are customized and tailored to specifically address a prospective businesses needs based upon the nature of their inquiry. He distributed several one page marketing sheets that are available in paper or digital formats and include a

consistent color theme that matches the KEDA web site. KEDA also keeps certain industry specific persons or groups available on an as-needed basis to meet with prospects and be responsive to their needs. Paul also distributed several magazines in which advertising could be focused in strategic publications for site selectors or other industry specific groups. He said it is critical to know who your audience is and who you are trying to reach. The issues of common interest to most businesses include the availability and cost of the work force, tax climate, real estate costs, utilities, transportation, redundancy in broadband, etc.

Much discussion followed on the need to focus on the positives in Koochiching County such as clean air, abundance of water, a rural environment, no traffic congestion, good schools, etc., and the need to encourage past residents of the County to return and contribute. Mike was encouraging the group to develop a positive theme and common message to be used as a “10 second elevator speech” that anyone could use when meeting potential prospects and future residents. It was generally agreed that Marta, Sonja, and Mike will work to create a positive message and come back to the group to review, modify or amend. Paul was asked to participate as he is available.

Ken voiced his concerns about the availability of a regional workforce and suitable housing options. He said it will be necessary to attract additional workers to the area to meet the needs of any existing businesses that are expanding or to recruit new businesses. Bob noted the importance of the Airport for business use and cited how the Falls International Airport was vitally important for Wagner Construction, as an example. The group also recognized the need to expand opportunities for improving communication about these activities internally within and throughout the County.

#### IV. NEXT MEETING

Sonja Pelland was complimented on the nice newspaper article recently published about the proposed infrastructure improvements in Little Fork and bonding to finance the work. She was also thanked for her hospitality by providing water, coffee, and cookies for those in attendance.

The next meeting was scheduled for **10:00 A.M., Thursday, December 15, 2016** in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building, 600 4<sup>th</sup> Street, International Falls.

#### V. ADJOURN

Chairman Paul Nevanen adjourned the meeting at 11:51 A.M.

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Respectfully submitted by Ken Anderson