



MINUTES

BRAED Board of Directors Meeting
Virtual via ZOOM
December 17, 2020
6:00pm

Board of Directors of the Battle River Alliance for Economic Development (BRAED) was held virtually via the ZOOM platform.

Communities:

Bittern Lake: Angie Lorente
City of Camrose: Patricia MacQuarrie
Coronation: Shelley Cook
Daysland: Edward Kusalik
Edgerton: Wendy Belik, Wes Laporte
Forestburg: Bob Coutts, Dwight Dibben
Holden: Mark Gieblehaus
Irma: Joan Green
Killam: Ben Kellert
Ryley: Brian Ducherer
Viking: Debbie O'Toole
Wainwright: Carley Herbert
Beaver County: Kevin Smook
Camrose County: Anjah Howard
Flagstaff County: Jordyn Prior
Paintearth County: Stan Schulmeister

Member at Large: Arnold Hanson

Alberta Jobs, Economy & Innovation: Dawna Allard

Staff:

BRAED Executive Director: Cathy Goulet
Recording: Cindy Hurum

1. Call to Order

- a. Chair, Brian Ducherer called the Virtual Board of Director's Meeting to order at 6:00pm

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion: That the agenda of December 17, 2020 be accepted as presented

Moved: B. Kellert

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion: That the minutes from October 20, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting be approved as presented.

Moved: A. Hanson

CARRIED

4. New Business

a. Election of Executive Officers

There are seven members of the Battle River Alliance Development's Executive Committee. Terms are two years and are staggered to ensure continuity of governance. Elections to vacant positions are held annually at the Board of Directors' December meeting, which allows for each municipal member to complete its own organization appointments. At this time there are two available openings for members at large, one of whom may be an Economic Development Officer from a member municipality.

Cathy Goulet, at the request of the Chair, opened nominations for two Member at Large member of the Executive Committee.

Stan Schulmeister nominated Arnold Hanson to be reinstated on the Executive as a Member at Large. Arnold Hanson accepted the nomination.

Kevin Smook nominated Mayor Ben Kellert from Killam to sit on the BRAED Executive as a Member at Large. Ben Kellert accepted the nomination.

There being no other nominations, nominations ceased.

Chair B. Ducherer welcomed the members. "Congratulations Arnold and Ben, you are now on the Executive Board for BRAED".

b. Draft Payments Policy

The current COVID 19 pandemic travel and gathering restrictions have presented an opportunity to revise BRAED's policies for payment of receivables. A change

from a cheque-based system to online payment will be more efficient. Also being considered is the need to have monthly recurring payments approved by Executive Members once approved by the Board of Directors in the annual budget.

Staff has drafted a new policy for consideration and presentation to the Board of Directors on December 17, 2020. This draft was reviewed by the Executive Committee.

K. Smook said "it moves us into today's world and is necessary to operate business".

Motion: K. Smook moved to accept the policy change for recurring invoices.

CARRIED

c. BRAED Future Focus Discussion

In support of a developing a future direction for BRAED, ten interviews were held with members. Of those, six were represented by municipal staff. Five questions were discussed. This discussion was carried over to this BRAED Board of Directors meeting.

▪ **Current Economic Development services in the community? Gaps and Challenges?**

- E. Kusalik (Daysland) "Business and Entrepreneurs don't like to look outside the box, they're just content. There is no growth focus". He also mentioned "limits on Broadband and how to put reports together for presentations to industry".
- B. Ducherer (Ryley) "our opportunity for a processing plant diminishes due to no water".
- B. Coutts (Forestburg) "when preparing information, we need statistics on our capacities for water, gas, power, sewer".

▪ **What needs more work? Dreams and Wish lists for Economic Development.**

- W. Laporte (Edgerton) "there's been a lot of studies but, is that what BRAED wants to be?" He'd like to see business owner education, training, boots on the ground. "Studies are useful but not necessarily helpful".
- D. Dibben (Forestburg), "we need inventories, water, sewer, broadband."
- D. O'Toole-Balaban (Viking) "Business and education needs, maybe we need businesspeople on the board, we just assume we know what they want".
- K. Smook (Beaver County), "The region needs collective partners for networking, this helps extend and advocate for businesses in the region. Having industry may help attract more complimentary business".

▪ **Can a regional approach help?**

- W. Laporte (Edgerton), MCS Net came into small areas and have tied in for better broadband service. We need to have staff involved and elected officials are volunteers. Staff can carry derivatives forward.

- B. Coutts (Forestburg), A regional approach for smaller communities, what do they need to be doing. Perhaps a regional coach.
- BRAED could facilitate best practice sharing. CAEP has a roaming Economic Development Officer.

▪ **Examples of working collaboratively, when does it make sense?**

- W. Laporte (Edgerton), the ICE Villages are a good example of economic development collaboration. They did a project where they worked together and did not duplicate costs.
- E. Kusalik (Daysland), our CAO spotted an application grant in partnership with the County of Flagstaff. Up to \$200,000, the County is looking to smaller towns and villages for tangible things.
- K. Smook (Beaver County), the Town of Viking and Beaver County are looking to work together in the spirit of collaboration. Beaver County already works with Ryley.

▪ **Describe your “ideal” economic development alliance?**

- S. Schulmeister (Paintearth County), BRAED is an organization that covers a large region, working to enhance that region. We need a regional approach to bring in the large fish. Bringing all of that together works best.
- J. Prior (Flagstaff County), Collaborating is tough for staff to effectively communicate among the municipalities, we need more boots on the ground.
- W. Laporte (Edgerton), The municipal measurement index took numbers from financials, this is creating a race to the bottom.
- D. Allard (Alberta Jobs, Economy & Innovation) Don't consider it a race to the bottom but rather highlight what puts you at the forefront.
- W. Laporte (Edgerton), There is a historical lack of staff. Steering is rowing. Council needs to enforce with staff that Economic Development should be a prioritynow more than ever. There needs to be support at the council level. Nine out of ten communities do not have an Economic Development Officer. If BRAED is going to be a success, they need to become a top priority on all CAO's desk. BRAED could be acting as an EDO at some level for communities.

5. Management Report – Cathy Goulet

a. Report to Operational Plan – provided as information

- i. Value added agriculture project update
 - Update – On November 26, Research FDI requested approval to amend the scope of the project. After meeting with BRAED's project team (P. MacQuarrie, A. Hanson and C. Goulet) the change was approved. The team felt that the recommendations improved the project outcomes. In summary, Research FDI will develop one single prospectus which is processor-focussed as opposed to input focusses. It was agreed that this

approach would better reflect the strength of the region and acknowledge that a processor facility is able to handle a variety of crops.

◦ On December 3, BRAED facilitated a roundtable via ZOOM to provide further industry information to Research FDI. It was a very productive meeting. On the call were:

- Dr. Lars Hallstrom, University of Alberta
- Aarij Bashir, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
- Bob Beck, Beaver County
- Carley Herbert, Town of Wainwright (and covering MD of Wainwright)
- Brian Ducherer, BRAED Chair
- Jenalee Waring, Flagstaff County
- Anjah Howard, Camrose County
- Dan Brewin, Plant Protein Alliance of Alberta
- Patricia MacQuarrie, City of Camrose
- Arnold Hanson, BRAED Executive
- Shelley Cuthbertson, WD

The project is slightly behind schedule but will still complete by the grant deadline of December 31, 2020

Comments:

- A. Hanson is pleased with Research FDI. The timeline was shortened up and Research FDI has done more than we thought.
- P. MacQuarrie too is pleased with what Research FDI has done and likes the template that will go out to all the Community members and how adaptable it is. Research FDI can bring together investors that might be looking at areas like ours.

ii. Santa Trail 2020

- At the Board of Directors' Meeting on October 22, 2020, BRAED was asked to create a small program to support the local retail sector through the Christmas buying season.
- BRAED used the FACEBOOK, ONE LESS TRIP resources built in 2019 to support the program. With COVID restrictions and lock downs in place, the majority of content was re-sharing the posts of our Community members.

b. Communications Update – provided as information

- The KNOTice was delivered for November /December. The open rate was very high but the click through rate has dropped significantly

- TWITTER is showing results that reflect the need for active, local content. The more community members that engage in tweets with BRAED, the more visible we become.
- Facebook, One Less Trip initiative is seasonal and was off to a good start reaching the existing audiences prior to COVID restrictions.
- BRAED Website: BRAED has developed an action plan to clean up the website for early 2021. A priority workplan has been agreed to, within the budget that remains during the current fiscal. Some of the priority items include user experience, content re-ordering and cleaning and some technical pieces with forms and user interactions.

MOTION: E. Kusalik moved to accept the operational report as presented

CARRIED

6. Financial Update

A decision to fund a web maintenance function has added a line to the budget, which is being recovered with under-spending in other categories.

BRAED is still on track to realize a small operational surplus in 2020-21. With a reduced cost for the value-added agriculture project, there will be a smaller draw on reserve funds, leaving the organization in a slightly better cash position at yearend that originally anticipated.

MOTION: P. MacQuarrie moved to accept the financial update as presented

CARRIED

7. Regional Round Table - Members

◊ Bittern Lake - Angie Lorente

- Have updated our website
- Sewer lines have been inspected
- More work done at the skating rink, new shack, lighting, and security cameras

◊ City of Camrose – Patricia MacQuarrie

- Working on a mid year economic recovery action plan
- Come to Camrose campaign, released a video featuring some businesses, wearing masks, good numbers watching
- **New** Business Development Specialist, Supporting local business
- End of 2020 investment attraction, such high-water volumes required, makes it impossible at this time
- Water is something we will be looking at for investment attraction

◇ **Ryley** – Brian Ducherer

- At 54th avenue, there is 3 blocks where water and sewer have been replaced. Surfacing will take place in 2021. The cost for the three blocks, \$1.2million
- The outdoor rink will be opening soon, no washrooms at this time
- Santa Clause in town Sunday December 20th (Brian's yard)

◇ **Viking** – Debbie O'Toole-Balaban

- Putting in a new water line to the Cargill Elevator
- The town has four tax sale properties with reserved bids
- Highway 36 ditch rehab is underway
- Christmas light contest
- Outdoor rink is open
- On railroad avenue there has been a set of skeletons set up on for the Christmas season
Check them out on Instagram @skellytwins
#skellytwins1 #spreadjoy #spreadjoynotgerms #christmas2020 #lockdown2020

◇ **Wainwright** – Carley Herbert

- Town is offering a 25% Rebate promotion on all Town – Owned Lots – Residential, Commercial, Industrial
- Circle K next to Tim Hortons is close to opening
- EDO Japan has taken out a development permit
- Health Care Aide program with 16 students will be starting in Wainwright in January. This is in cooperation with Medicine Hat College. Coursework online with labs and practicums in Wainwright & District. Deadline to apply was December 20, 2020
- Working on bringing a Rural Nursing program in Wainwright for Fall 2021

◇ **Beaver County** – Kevin Smook

- Passed the budget with no increase in the mill rate
- Broadband, download speed is lousy
- Police funding is going up again
- Holding the line on taxes
- Industrial lots on the edge of Ryley have been serviced. \$62,500 / acre
- Partnering with Ryley and Viking to solve water woes
- County has two Campgrounds, sent out surveys to get opinions on what to do with them, how to run them

◇ **Camrose County** – Anjah Howard

- Survey to businesses to see what they are looking for
- Broke ground on new Seed Cleaning plant 2021-22 opening
- COVID cases at the landfill
- Industrial development of the edge of town
- Training with Artisan makers, meeting scheduled with M.P. Damien Kurek, partner with an Artisan Producer

◊ **Flagstaff County** – Jordyn Prior

- Relaunching the Flagstaff Region Succession Program
- Sci-Fi Hive initiative starting January 2021
- Partnered with the Town of Wainwright to offer the Youth Innovation Masterclass
- Expanding Flagstaff Crafted to include more support for Food Artisans
- Broadband
- Helping businesses access grants and professional service providers as they navigate through COVID
- Succeeding together initiative to launch in the New Year

◊ **Paintearth County** – Stan Schulmeister

- Round 2 of community engagement surveys are going out
- Balanced budget with no mill rate increase (expenses were reduced by 6%)
- \$440,000 write off on unpaid taxes
- 2 cases of COVID in the County
- Central Zone currently has the steepest incline (Red Deer, Ponoka)

◊ **Associate Member** – Arnold Hanson

- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all
- Grain trucks are rolling down the highways
- Grain cars are rolling down the tracks

◊ **Alberta Jobs, Economy & Innovation** – Dawna Allard

- Small / Medium Enterprises relaunch grant, email Dawna
- Healthy region wise
- Economic Development are long term gains and I hope the region sees some results from that
- The Recreation Facility, Cultural and Religious grants are retroactive to April 1st with two intakes, one September 15th and one March 15th


8. **Next Meeting** – 6PM, Thursday, March 18,2021 – subject to change

9. **Adjournment** - Chair Brian Ducherer adjourned the Meeting at 8:25pm



Arnold Hanson, Secretary / Treasurer

March 18, 2021
Date



Brian Ducherer, Chair

Jan 15, 2021
Date