



## MINUTES

BRAED Board of Directors Meeting  
Virtual via ZOOM  
March 18, 2021  
4:00pm

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

**Communities:**

City of Camrose: Patricia MacQuarrie  
Daysland: Edward Kusalik  
Forestburg: Bob Coutts  
Holden: Mark Gieblelhaus  
Irma: Joan Green  
Killam: Ben Kellert  
Ryley: Brian Ducherer  
Viking: Debbie O'Toole  
Wainwright: Carley Herbert  
Beaver County: Kevin Smook  
Camrose County: Anjah Howard  
Paintearth County: Stan Schulmeister

Member at Large: Arnold Hanson

Alberta Jobs Economy and Innovation: Dawna Allard  
Alberta Jobs Economy and Innovation Robin Luni (Team Lead)

**Guests:**

Minister of Agriculture and Forestry: Honourable Devin Dreeschen

**Staff:**

BRAED Executive Director: Cathy Goulet  
Killick Leadership (Communications): Bobbi Menard  
Recording: Cindy Hurum

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## 1. Call to Order

Chair, Brian Ducherer called the Virtual Board of Director's Meeting to order at 6:05pm

## 2. Special Guest

Minister Devin Dreeshen, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry  
*Alberta's Agriculture Industry Investment development plans*

- We have introduced Bill 54, the Irrigation Districts Amendment Act, to allow irrigation districts to borrow funds for large-scale expansions of their projects. Bill C54 will help finalize the \$815 million investment to modernize irrigation. This legislation will pave the way for even more agriculture investments across the province, increasing our competitiveness and driving Alberta's economic recovery. He notes our farmers and ranchers are growing safe, high-quality food, not just for Alberta families but for families all around the world.
- Working on Investment Attraction, further support for Agriculture, aiming at building value added capacity. \$1.4 million targeted, this initiative will increase 2000 new jobs for the agriculture processing industry in emerging sectors.
- Due to COVID, packing plants were hit hard. There has been 150 on farm slaughter licenses issued. The penalties for on farm trespassing have been strengthened. Agriculture has remained the bright light, so we continue to work to improve it within the province.
- Lumber prices are through the roof. Record-breaking lumber prices are boosting Alberta's forestry sector

## Q & A

- M. Giebelhaus – The Federal Government is looking into AgriStability, what are they investing?
- Minister Dreeshen – AgriStability is flawed, and farmers are not enrolling in the program. The Federal Government is looking at the removal of the profit margin making it a more affordable program
- M. Giebelhaus – We need some kind of average payable
- Minister Dreeshen – We're looking into "margin-based insurance" where you could choose you level and government would subsidize your premium
- C. Goulet – BRAED has worked hard on "Plant Protein", how do you see your ministry working with us moving forward?
- Minister Dreeshen – BRAED has the right mindset, our Government has 20 different investment people with 100+ leads. Invest Alberta, David KnightLegg is the CEO. We want to work with BRAED and be a combo with Invest Alberta. Jamie Curan is the ADM in charge, please reach out to coordinate with him.
- C. Goulet – You are saying here that Agriculture and Forestry have set a target of \$1.4 billion in investment in the next three years, how does your ministry reach out?
- Minister Dreeshen – Invest Alberta is looking to be more aggressive and attract folks who we know are here. We are trying to make it easy to set up shop. If BRAED has ideas or people, please let us know. AFSC has upped their lending capacity, spaces are available, and lots of tools.

- Regarding Exports, we have doubled out international trade officers to 8 and 4 in Foreign countries trying to connect the dots between our producers and buyers. Singapore, Mexico City, Minneapolis, Europe
  - BRAED needs to continue their focus on plant protein and its role in value added agriculture. How do you see plant protein growing the economy in rural Alberta?
  - The Government of Alberta has identified 8 subsectors. The Federal Government provided money to Manitoba. Private sector investment of \$15 million in Pea Protein in the Calgary area. There are folks testing pea protein into pasta. It is on the Government of Alberta's radar and we're working on attracting investment in international markets.
  - I would like to have BRAED forward their recent work done on Value Added Agriculture to my office.
- C. Goulet – What are your thoughts on Rural REDA's
  - Minister Dreeshen – The Rural REDA's are important, I have met with lots and have seen the great work being done. Your goals are the same as what our Government has. We increase the economy in our own back yard.
  - B. Coutts – What are some key strategies we can focus on to attract opportunities to rural Alberta
  - Minister Dreeshen – Broadband, rural internet service needs to be reliable now more than ever with COVID. Increase cell service. There is a tremendous opportunity for big data with equipment. Ag will be even more dependant on tech in the coming years.

### **3. Approval of Minutes from Board of Directors Meeting December 17, 2020**

**Motion:** That the minutes from the December 17, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting be approved as presented.

Moved: A. Hanson

**CARRIED**

### **4. New Business**

#### **a. Proposed change to Executive Officer Criteria**

- The Executive requests that the Board of Directors consider a change to the present criteria for appointment to the Executive Officer positions of BRAED
- The ask is to amend Article 45, to remove the requirement which states The Executive Committee positions of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson must be elected officials.

**Motion:** That the Battle River Alliance for Economic Development shall amend Article 45 of its Articles of Association date June 2012 as presented.

Moved: E. Kusalik

**CARRIED**

#### **b. BRAED Future Focus Discussion**

- Form follows function: From consultations and conversations, it appears that the BRAED members, in general, hope that BRAED will continue to provide regional based economic development services. Some members expressed a need for services that

are more closely aligned to municipal economic development. Things like business capacity building and entrepreneurship supports. Another recurring theme is the need for a stronger investment attraction presence for the BRAED region. This included building tools and relationships internally to market the region aggressively.

- How to get there? Executive Director C. Goulet has been interviewing experts in rural and regional economic development and has not found a model that is sustainable without significant government funding. She is in discussions with a researcher who is addressing the challenge. C. Goulet will help the researcher connect with the Alberta REDA network and she will be sharing her research with BRAED.

**c. Operational Plan 2021-2022**

- **Focus Areas**
  - Economic Diversification – investment attraction focused on value added agriculture, energy, and tourism
  - Economic recovery – support member municipalities in their efforts to reignite local and regional economies
  - Sustainability – build and test a model for long term sustainability of BRAED
- BRAED has started working with TravelAlberta, not marketing but instead how do we increase consumer ready projects in the region. Moving forward with a Santa Trail platform and working hard to keep the projects that benefit the region.
- Operational funding is a problem for REDA's across the region. BRAED does have some reserve funds and members feel there is a role for BRAED

**Motion:** To approve the Operation Plan 2021-2022 as presented.

Moved: M. Giebelhaus

**CARRIED**

**5. Management Report – Cathy Goulet**

**a. Report to Operational Plan**

- i. Value added agriculture prospectus
  - The completed regional prospectus was reviewed by the roundtable of regional economic development officers and BRAED's Executive.
  - BRAED is working with the regional economic development roundtable to discuss the level and type of work needed to be done to take this program to the active phase of investment attraction.
- B. Ducherer - "this is one of the best pieces of documentation we have ever gotten from our consultants.
- K. Smook – "This is very detailed and very impressive, how's this getting out?"
- C. Goulet – "We need to be very targeted; our action plan will be unveiled in June at the Annual General Meeting."

**b. Communications Update**

- KNOTice Highlights – Next issue is March 26, transferred to a new platform and maintained a successful open rate. Cleaning up a few minor technical details.
- Twitter – Twitter is trending up; we have average to really good engagement. Our followers are up 125-130 in the past 24 months
- BRAED Website – Facebook / One Last Trip – scoping a plan for 2021 - 22 to reignite the Santa Trail on a limited budget.
  - K. Smook – “In regard to updating the municipal pages if we we’re aware of something in the community, how do we do that”?
  - C. Goulet – “There’s an editable template, you can make your changes and send this back to us and we will update”.

**Motion:** To approve the Management report as presented.

Moved: K. Smook

**CARRIED**

**6. Financial Update – Cathy Goulet – provided as information**

- a. February 28, 2021 Statements**
- b. Variance to Budget**
- c. Cashflow projections**
- d. BRAED memberships 2021-22**

- BRAED is on track to realize a small operational surplus in 2020-21. Due to 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 than originally anticipated.

**Motion:** To accept financial statements as presented.

Moved: P. MacQuarrie

**CARRIED**

**7. Regional Round Table – Members.**

**◇ Alberta Jobs Economy and Innovation: Dawna Allard**

- Dawna Allard is part of the Regional Relations South Unit, Industry and Regional Relations Branch in the Ministry of Jobs, Economy and Innovation (JEI). Names have changed with in the department but not her role of supporting BRAED operations. She noted the department remains committed to the 3 year REDA Grant Agreement and noted Year one is almost complete.
- JEI’s current focus is recovery and growth of the economy; creating jobs for Albertans; and being globally competitive.
- Applications close March 31, 2021 for the Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant. <https://www.alberta.ca/sme-relaunch-grant.aspx>

- Applications open mid April 2021 for the Enhanced COVID19 Business Benefit. Details of the program can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/enhanced-covid-19-business-benefit.aspx>
- You are always welcome to contact Dawna with any questions on these or other Government of Alberta programs including the newly formed Invest Alberta Corporation who works closely with JEI
- Dawna introduced the new South Unit Manager Robin Luni who has a strong tourism sector background with the Government of Alberta.

◊ **Alberta Jobs Economy and Innovation: Robin Luni**

- Glad to see you making connections with TravelAlberta
- I have been in your region and have done work around visitor centers
- Product development, visitor services, looking forward to hear what comes out of it

◊ **Beaver County – Kevin Smook**

- Beaver County has been promoting Wainwright's upcoming nursing program
- Going into a joint project with Very Berry Honey, announcement will come after Easter
- The County Campground survey, people want the County to keep ownership of both campground and contract out
- Reservations for Lindbrook Campground, Buzzard Gulch, Eastview park, Holden, and Tofield Campgrounds through <https://www.campreservations.ca/>
- Highway 834 and 14 exchange on South Side of Tofield for wide loads but North of Tofield is not in the plans at this time

◊ **Camrose County – Anjah Howard**

- Signed the ICF with the City of Camrose
- Very busy – development permits are triple
- Subdivision inquiries about small and large projects
- Gravel pits are all busy
- Bashaw concrete gets gravel from the County
- Augustana students are doing videos with local artisan, they will be on our website
- Economic Development finding their stride
- New Fire Hall will serve New Norway, Edberg, Bashaw
- Seed cleaning plant moving to east side of the city

◊ **City of Camrose – Patricia MacQuarrie**

- Council passed the budget with 0 increase
- Small business grants, matching businesses up to \$4000.
- Approved ICF with the County of Camrose
- Surprising number of new business license applications
- There is a high level of investment inquiry
- 2020 development permits were high (Peavy Mart doubled in size) and the Wings, Roaster Barn, Burger King development
- We have a new business development specialist, visited 150 businesses in the community, promoting the COVID Survey that's been put out. We have had close to 50 replies and hoping to get 200
- Lemonade Day coming this June

◊ **Forestburg** – Bob Coutts

- Planning some paving this summer
- Plan to have our pool opened for the May long weekend
- Area 53 has at least 7 weekends of racing planned for the summer
- The Golf Course is ramping up for a busy season
- We have a few irons in the fire for economic development but nothing official has happened

◊ **Holden** – Mark Giebelhaus

- Things in town are still slow
- The Holden complex hosted a steak night and sold 120 steaks, take out and dine in
- The Gallery is doing good with sales
- Restaurants are doing better
- There's possibility of one water line going in

◊ **Irma** – Joan Green

- In the process of a major main Street project – currently doing the preliminary work with the Engineer so it can go out for tender April 2021.
- Phase one will be replacement of aging sewer and water lines in 2022
- Phase two will be resurfacing and beautification of Main Street 2023
- Council members are getting laptops due to the frequency of Virtual meetings and conferences. We received grant funding for this.
- We have continued to work closely with the DEM to follow all COVID restrictions. This has been a hardship on our small businesses.

◊ **Ryley** – Brian Ducherer

- Not much going on right now
- Once the snow is gone, the three blocks of serer that was replaced last year will be paved
- Beaver Municipal, Claystone Waste \$3million dollar dividend shared with Ryley, Beaver County, Holden, Tofield and Viking

◊ **Viking** – Debbie O'Toole-Balaban

- It's quiet but we still have some projects
- Alberta Transportation gave money to upgrade the service road along gasoline alley
- Drainage systems have been done
- Carena is open and being used with COVID protocols in place

◊ **Town of Wainwright** – Carley Herbert

- The town is offering a 25% rebate promotion on all town-owned lots, residential, and commercial, until June 1<sup>st</sup>
- There have been some lot sales, both commercial and residential
- Circle K and EDO Japan are open

- New relocation and investment guide, distributing to the Military
- Canada Day celebrations will only include Fire Works this year
- Wainwright Stampede still hoping to go ahead in June
- The town is offering a rural registered nursing degree program in September 2021. This is in partnership with AHS and the University of Calgary. The program is open to Alberta residents within 120km of Wainwright. They are accepting 8 students in the first year of a 4-year degree. An information night is happening Wednesday March 24<sup>th</sup> from 6 – 7 pm, contact Carley at 780-842-3381 or [cherbert@wainwright.ca](mailto:cherbert@wainwright.ca)

◊ **Associate Member** – Arnold Hanson

- Calving is in full swing
- Looking forward to spring work

◊ **Workforce Consultant, Alberta Labour, and Immigration** - Jean Vidal

- **Canada-Alberta Job Grant** – is temporarily expanding program eligibility to help businesses access the training they need. The expansion is effective until February 28, 2022. Expanded eligibility includes
  1. Funding mandatory training
  2. Allowing employers to train employed family members
  3. Allowing some business owners to receive funding to train themselves <http://www.albertacanada.com/jobgrant>

**8. Adjournment** - Chair B. Ducherer adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm

- a. Next Meeting – Annual General Meeting, Thursday June 24, 2021 Location TBD

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Arnold Hanson, Secretary / Treasurer



Brian Ducherer, Chair

Date: May 21, 2021

Date: May 21, 2021