April 13, 2010

Sweetgrass Development – Conrad

In attendance: Tony Sitzmann, John Shevlin, Doug Embody, Cheryl Curry, Llew Jones, Brett Doney, Jerilee Wilkerson, Larry Bonderud and Lorette Carter-recording.

MINUTES: It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

TREASURY: Larry presented the financial statements. It was suggested that a separate bank account for the Revolving Loan Fund be shown on the financial statements…updating these documents on the payments received from RLF participants. John moved and Doug seconded to approve the financial information with the recommendation for future documents. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

EDA Extension Agreement: Chairman Tony has signed and sent the extension agreement to EDA. Sweetgrass Development will not be responsible for a quarterly report until a new director is on board.

CRDC Update: Jerilee reported that the yearly report has been completed and accepted at the Department of Commerce. Commerce Director, Tony Preite and Deputy Director, Andy Poole are reviewing the report at which time it is approved, Sweetgrass Development will receive approximately $31,000 in approved funding.

SDC RLF Report: Brett reported on a loan request from Pondera County. High Plains Financial approved a $15,000 loan as part of a financing package to retain the business and restructure debt.

Hiring Committee Update: Llew reported that the hiring committee has been meeting via conference calls weekly. The job description is complete and position published. The committee is in the process of completing the scoring criteria prior to the review of candidates. It is anticipated that the committee will have the initial scoring completed by May 10 with 6 applicants selected to move forward in the selection process. After reference checks, the committee will select 3-4 for interviews. It is the hope of the hiring committee to be interviewing by the last week of May and potentially hiring a new director before July 1.

NEW BUSINESS:

GFDA Accounting Proposal: Brett recommended Sweetgrass Development wait until a new Executive Director is on board before moving forward on re-working the accounting system. Great Falls Development Authority has offered to work with the new director at no charge to establish the accounting system.

Confirmation of Strategic Plan: Larry moved and Brett seconded to confirm the Strategic Plan. Motion carried.

Membership Commitment: A vacancy is still within the Board of Directors under Stakeholders Organization Representatives. Larry suggested we ask Corlene Martin of Choteau to serve on the board. Llew seconded with the motion carrying.

greatfallsprospector.com: Brett reported on the economic development website sponsored by the Great Falls Development Authority which identifies available sites. GFDA would like to invite the other counties within the Sweetgrass Region to link with this site for a $5000 fee. Great Falls Development Authority will send out information on the site, benefits and costs to Sweetgrass members to bring to their county commissioners and city leadership for consideration.

OTHER BUSINESS:

The group acknowledged Jerilee's hard work on behalf of Sweetgrass Development.

Community Economic Development Activities:

Glacier County: Commissioner Sitzmann reported with the 100th Anniversary of Glacier National Park, park concessions are reporting a tremendous increase in room reservations within the park. Numerous events are planned in the park throughout the summer. The Two Medicine Bridge project is slated to be let in May.

Cut Bank: Mayor Embody reported that the Glacier Co. Commissioners have given the city $100,000 for the Central Park construction. They will also be using CTEP funds for sidewalk projects near the football field in Cut Bank. The city is working on Phase II of the water line replacement. The Cut Bank overpass is scheduled to be let in January of 2011. The city is also working on an Adopt–A-Block Program as part of their beautification projects. They are also working on constructing a Veteran's Memorial Park. Cut Bank and Glacier County also received Energy Efficiency monies for work on several public facilities within the community.

Pondera County/Conrad: Cheryl reported that Valier and Conrad also received EECG monies. The Interstate 15 overpass is set to be let at the end of April. John also reported that the Conrad wastewater system will go on-line at the end of April. He also reported that the company awarded a local project will have their batch plant in Conrad this spring if other communities are interested in purchasing hot mix for paving projects within their communities.

Shelby/Toole County: Larry reported that the Port Authority is working on a rail-sighting project for the Industrial Park. They will be calling for bids in the next few weeks for sighting and concrete pads for the Industrial Park as well. The city will be working on a $2.2 million sewer project shortly. The city is also working on a water project to double the water treatment capacity and storage at the well sites. The Northern Transit Interlocal is working on the Hub with a $500,000 MDT grant. The city and county also received Energy Efficiencies funding for Historic Shelby High. The city continues work on the FBI complex. City officials have been working with Homeland Security whose goal is to employ 75 agents in Shelby; 75 in Sunburst; and 75 in Sweetgrass in the near future. Sunburst is working on a new subdivision near their new border facility. The city has sought planning grant funding to design the infrastructure. Mayor Bonderud also invited everyone to celebrate his 60th birthday at Shelby's Cinco De Mayor, Saturday, May 1st at 6:00 pm at the Elks Club.

GFDA/Cascade County: Brett reported they are working on Phase I of the Agri-Tech Park, working to complete a financing package. The Nuclear Posture Review held a hearing in Great Falls. Reports suggest Malmstrom could lose 10-20 missiles in the coming years. Cascade County has been awarded an EDA Grant to do a market analysis of Expo Park. Through appropriations funding, construction will soon begin to widen Highway 87 and improve transportation routes in Black Eagle. The bonds have been sold for construction of the Highwood Generating Station. Construction is set to begin in August. The south arterial road project has gone by the wayside. Renovations at Centene Stadium continue with the planned completion of June 24th. The OEA joint land-use study looks like it will be fully funded for the transportation component. The Great Falls Airport Board will be interviewing for a new director soon. Great Falls Development Authority has issued its first loan for a 21 unit condominium development in the downtown area of Great Falls.

In general conversation, Llew reported that it looks like the MATL line will be initiated from the Marias River - north in the 3rd and 4th quarters of this year. Brett also reported on MATL II.

NEXT MEETING: May 11th in Cut Bank.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.