

AGENDA
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JULY 16, 2018 – 6:30 P.M.
Lowell City Hall, 107 East 3rd Street, Lowell, Oregon

- 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**
- 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
 - a. June 4, 2018
- 4. OLD BUSINESS**
 - a. Consider Rural Development Initiatives Proposal for Small Business Organizational Assistance
- 5. NEW BUSINESS**
- 6. OTHER BUSINESS**
- 7. ADJOURN**

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to the City Clerk, Joyce Donnell, at 541-937-2157.

**City of Lowell
Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 4, 2018
Lowell City Hall**

Call to Order: 6:32 PM by Committee Chair Bjornstad

Committee Members Present: Jerry Bjornstad, Michael Galvin, Robert Burr, Bill George
Committee Member Absent: Lisa Bee Wilson

Approval of Minutes – Robert Burr move to approve the amended minutes from May 7, 2018 second by Jerry Bjornstad. PASS 4:0

Old Business: None

New Business:

- **Discuss Rural Development Initiatives Proposal for Small Business**
Organizational Assistance – CA introduced Mary Bosch, Senior Project Manager who introduced the proposal for a 3-Phase Scope of Work: 1-Business Listening, 2-Research Examples of Success, and 3-Get Organized.

Other Business: None

Adjourn: 6:55 PM

Chair Jerry Bjornstad

Attest: Jared Cobb, City Recorder



April 17, 2018

Amended: July 11, 2018

TO: Jared Cobb, City Administrator
City of Lowell, Oregon

FROM: Michael Held, Director of Rural Economic & Policy Services
Mary Bosch, Senior Project Manager – Economic Vitality

RE: Proposal for Small Business Organizational Assistance

In follow up to our recent conversation about ways to encourage a business network in the Lowell area, this proposal outlines a straightforward approach for your consideration. It focuses on hearing from the business community, defining their needs and interests and the best fit in terms of an organization or network. It does not include implementation steps. This work can be completed in 8-10 weeks from the start. Once we agree on the approach, we will put together a budget.

Background and Purpose

- Lowell, Dexter, Pleasant Hill and Fall Creek exist as an interdependent cluster of communities along the Highway 58 spine, sharing school and fire districts among other services.
- The business base is small with Pleasant Hill and Lowell having the greatest concentrations.
- No chamber of commerce or other similar organization exists for business networking, entrepreneur support and development or business assistance. RAIN and Lane County have provided some services. Lowell has an Economic Development Committee that serves as an advisory group to the City and is interested in business marketing and support.
- The City of Lowell reached out to RDI to request assistance with 1. Determining the needs of local small businesses to help them remain vital and expand; and 2. Identifying the appropriate, best suited business network or organization (chamber of other) to provide a way for businesses to connect to and support each other and the residents/visitors they serve

SCOPE OF WORK

We've outlined a 3-Phase Scope of Work to explore the formation of a local business organization in the Lowell area.

1. Business Listening

- Engage with key members of the Economic Development Committee (EDC) to ensure their support for the approach outlined below and to secure their help in connecting to local businesses.
- This phase includes outreach to the Lowell area business community (about 40 including key home based businesses) through small group meetings in each community and interviews to ask about needs and interests. Assume approximately three meetings.
- RDI will organize the process but will depend on local contacts for introductions to and some PR assistance to create awareness and participation by businesses.
- Synthesize and summarize the results of this work will provide direction for moving forward.

Sample draft questions include:

- What does your business need from a business organization? (e.g., connect to customers, connect to businesses, technical assistance and training, promote the Lowell area business community, organize events to promote community, shop local campaigns, connect to resources, etc?)
- What type of organization would you be interested in joining and participating in? (e.g., Marketing, Networking, Tourism, Business Attraction, Learning, etc.)
- What is the most important value/outcome you'd like to receive to make your participation worthwhile?
- What would it take for you to make time to participate in a new network? Specifically, what types of 'get togethers' or services would be useful to you?
- What is your interest in participating at the ground level in a new organization?
- What's the best way to reach you?

2. Research Examples of Success

- Identify up to five case studies of how small towns are adapting to a changing business market with new iterations of old business networking models. E.g. Young Entrepreneurs and Professional Society of Umpqua Valley, Business Meet-up groups, Pub Talks, etc.
- Identify any best practices to guide a new organization, structure and approach given the limited local capacity of Lowell area.

3. Get Organized

- Summarize learning from Phases 1 and 2 in short report and PowerPoint presentation.
- Identify and map out one or more new organization models that appear to be a fit with the Lowell area business community.
- Pull together a small local core team who can serve as sounding board and launch group for next steps. Layout group purpose, leadership, structure, goals and actions for near future.

It is anticipated that a total of 4 trips are needed to Lowell/nearby communities to complete this assignment.

BUDGET

The total budget for the work outlined above is \$7,000 inclusive of all expenses. A proposed breakdown of funding sources is as follows:

\$5,000 – The Ford Family Foundation Technical Assistance Grant

\$1,500 – RDI Business Retention/Expansion Program

\$500—City of Lowell