**SeVEDS Agenda for March19th Meeting | 2:00-4:00pm**

**In Attendance:  Adam Grinold, Jill James, Dutch Walsh, Lisa Sullivan, Jodi Clark, Meg Streeter, Peter Yost, Martin Langeveld, Jeremy Haskins, Bob Stevens**

**Bobbi Kilburn (later in the meeting)**

**Regrets:  Ariel Brooks, Drew Richards, Anne Andreosatos, Cynthia Stoddard, Konstantin von Krusenstiern, Patrick Moreland, Laura Sibilia (was on the VT House floor)**

The Usual Business (30 min)

* Welcome and Gathering:

Jill James served as meeting chair  in place of Ariel.

* Approve Minutes:

Meg moved to approve the minutes.  Dutch seconded.  Approved unanimously.

* Review and Approve Financials

Reviewing both January and February simultaneously.  Funding from the State, including funding which has been promised for this year, is currently at risk.  The legislature is currently reviewing all funding commitments, including funds which have already been promised to us.

Lisa moved to approve both sets of financials.  Meg seconded.  Approved unanimously.

* Fundraising/Grant/Budget discussions – Executive Session

Executive session occurred.  Executive session concluded at 2:15pm

-Adam Introduced Bobbi Kilburn, BDCC CDBG/Grants Manager to the Board.  Bobbi sat in on the rest of the meeting to become more acclimated with SeVEDS scope of work

* + EDA – (Adam & Laura)

The application was submitted.  The tri-county partnership with Franklin and Cheshire County newly included with this application warranted an increase of our ask to over $500,000.  We engaged the assistance of an outside grant-writer, Jennifer Stromsten from Franklin County,  in order to accomplish the writing under such a tight deadline (March 12).  Given the guidance we were given from Senator Leahy’s office, we pushed forward with engaging the tri-county partnership for this grant.   By engaging the RDCs from all three regions, our grant proposal would further launch forward the partnership work which has begun around the VY closure and the impacts to our shared laborshed region.

* + WCEDP update (Adam)

Adam has done a lot of work bridging some of the tension between Brattleboro and BDCC around this funding.  (Windham County Economic Development Program WCEDP)

* + CEDF (Peter)

Clean energy development fund.  There was a meeting this morning to go through details of the project.  The final details are down to the Governor’s office deciding how to handle the announcement.  The press release event for the official announcement will likely occur in the next two weeks.  1.6 million dollar contract to provide assistance to towns and schools to move to biomass or pellet boiler systems.  There had not been guidance on how this money should be allocated within the scope of the work.  Towns had wanted the money directly.  However, the State felt that states did not have enough capacity or knowledge to implement the work well.  Thus, the creation of the program and the RFP.  This partnership includes SEON, Building Green, Windham Regional Commission, Ironwood Brand, **Jeff Forward, Forward Thinking and**

**Charlie Niebling, Innovative Natural Resource Solutions  Amended 5/20/15**

.  The SEON communication with Northern Forest and Laura was essential to making this happen.  The project is in fact a go minus the final word from the Governor’s office.  This work aligns very well with the Green Building cluster analysis and development.  SEON will go from being an unfunded, mission driven association to being a funded entity co-managing a large state project.

Because some of the types of companies that will be needed do not exist, there will be an urgent need to encourage new business efforts in the wood chip/pellet production industry.  This backs up our work with the Accelerator and further strengthens the case for having a Green Building cohort be the first cohort that runs through an Accelerator program.

In our efforts in collaborating with Windham Regional to support SEON, we also strengthened our relationship with them

* + Towns

Putney:  Full Funding as requested $8,106

Grafton:  Did not fund  (our representative was ill and could not go to present)

Londonderry:  Did not fund  (our own oversight in coverage for presenting, Adam and Laura will be visiting their Selectboard meeting in May after the Legislative session)

Rockingham:  Full Funding as requested  $15,856

Dover:  Full Funding at requested $3,372

Wilmington:  Full Funding as requested $5,628

Total Approved Funding in Town Meetings for FY16:  $32,962

* + State Funding

CEDS and FY ‘15 Board Priority Area Updates (35  min)  :

***This section was skipped, as per Jill’s recommendation***

* **General CEDS –**

* + - Planning for full CEDS meeting in May

* **CEDS Objective 1: Act Regionally**

* + - Board 2015 Priority: Communications Plan

* **CEDS Objective 2: Create an entrepreneurial environment and culture to enhance existing business and grow new business.**

* + - Board 2015 Priority: SoVT Business Accelerator

* **CEDS Objective 3: Improve wage parity with the surrounding laborshed**

* + - Board 2015 Priority: Green Building

* **CEDS Objective 4: increase the size and quality of the workforce**

* + - Board 2015 Priority: Workforce Development and Internship Program
      * Slew of data collected from middle and high schools

* **CEDS Objective 5: Retain and attract younger talent through engagement linkages, lifestyle amenities, and meaningful career opportunities**

* + - Board 2015 Priority: SoVT Recruiting and Marketing

* **CEDS Objective 6: Develop immediate, VY-specific workforce and site impact mitigation strategies prior to its 2014 closure.**

Substantive Discussion Moving to Action Steps (40 min)

* Budget and fundraising build out for major projects for the next three years

Discussion about project funding vs. organization funding.  Lisa would like for us to look at our operational budget as well as the project budgets.  Private fundraising is easier for specific projects rather than for the overhead of SeVEDS.  Town funding currently would be supporting the workforce work.  However, we need more stakeholders who are more deeply invested in SeVEDS.

The WHEC is something that we can offer for an investment opportunity.  Keene State College is an organization to consider approaching for collaboration.  What do we have to sell?  What is the service we offer to businesses which they might invest in?  There is a need to have a robust partnership with a college in order to support our efforts with the Accelerator.  The WHEC will be reassessing their charge with the Presidents meeting on April 8th.  Showing the value of the internship program for their enrollment, and having them understand their role for economic development and workforce development.  Transportation is a huge barrier which impacts many aspects of workforce/economic development.  The transportation issue is definitely something we should be engaging in further conversation with community partners.

Time was given to explore the model of 1Berkshire.  It is a model for an innovative collaboration between tourism, business development and arts sector.  Businesses were led by Berkshire Bank which said they would like to fund these organizations on a multiyear basis.  These entities need to move together and look for efficiencies in how they operate as well as mutually reinforcing activities in economic development.  Berkshire Bank donated a building for them to all move into (co-working space).  The funding came together from all the major employers, including major arts entities such as the Clark, MassMoCa, manufacturers, etc.

If there is leadership in the business community to form a consortium to fund projects on a multiyear projects such as SeVEDS, is there a way we could create a form funding entity/partnership that commits to funding economic development in our region?  Is this something we want to explore?  Who would we we explore this with?

Perhaps start with talking with the local banks.  The banks are fearful of the current economic climate and the economic sustainability of the region.  There has not yet been a conversation with all of these entities with the economic development leadership.  If the banks sit and commit to this conversation, they can then engage their clients in the conversation, who are large corporation.  Southern VT Marketing project could be the common denominator/linking topic for them all.  We might want to consult with a fundraising expert to help us think about raising the money for the Southern VT Marketing staff person.

Is there a way to have the businesses buy into services?  Can we charge fee for service for them to have them better understand what their dollars will pay for?  Internships, workforce development, etc.

Dutch would be happy to meet with Ken Noble, the Director of Fundraising at Keene State who might be a good resource for thinking about the fundraising topic.  Dutch will do this before the next board meeting.

Other Business / Announcements (15)

Bob Stevens:  Went to a dinner at Redevelop Springfield, MA.  At the forum, he met the leader of their business mentoring/accelerator program.  Valley Venture Mentors  <http://www.valleyventurementors.org/>  Martin and Jodi have also been looking at this group as a model for our Accelerator.  There is a strong desire to look more closely at them, take a field trip down/invite them up to learn and network with them.  (another Accelerator that Jodi & Martin have been looking at is AlphaLoft based in Manchester, NH  <http://alphaloft.org/>)

Martin:  There are 65 participants in the Business Plan competition.  There is a strong need for business mentors.  If anyone would be willing to serve, please contact Martin.  They are currently in their phase one, business model description.  They now need to test their ideas and talk to others about it.  By April 30th is the due date for this process to be complete.  The finalists will present their final presentations to the panel and the Governor on June 24th.

Adam:  There will be a motorcycle “Road Pitch” happening again in the summer through Fresh Tracks Capital, Cairn Cross is the founder.  BDCC will partner with the Stroll on the application.  The location could be River Garden.

Adam moved to adjourn at 3:40pm.  Meg seconded.