

SeVEDS Agenda for June 18, 2015 Meeting | 2:00-4:00pm

In Attendance: Alex Beck, Ariel Brooks, Martin Langeveld, Peter Yost, Patrick Moreland, Lisa Sullivan, Bill Colvin, Adam Grinold, Laura Sibilia, Jill James (via conference call), Konstantin von Krusenstiern, Drew Richards, Dutch Walsh, Ann Andreosatos, Susan McMahon, Meg Streeter
Regrets: Bob Stevens

The Usual Business

- Welcome and Gathering
- Approve Minutes, seconded by Peter Yost, approved unanimously
- Review and Approve Financials

Internship grant, should be able to start putting in for the DOL. We are holding that until FY2016. Everything else on track. Set to come in slightly over budget.

Konstantin moved, Lisa seconded, approved unanimously.

- Fundraising/Grant/Budget discussions
 - EDA - Laura

Preliminary funding award notification occurred. Received feedback that we needed to extend our timeline out to 24 months rather than 18. Resubmitted revised documents. We will be able to move forward with state money as soon as the EDA money is approved. The total value of all of the projects (Tri-Regional, Green Building Cluster Analysis and Accelerator) with State and EDA funding is \$541,000

- WCEDP update - Adam

Worked closely with Town of Brattleboro, Rockingham, provide access for rolling application for VIDA loans. Becca Balint, Pat Moulton, and Gov. Shumlin met with Adam to discuss the importance of building capacity to fully implement. \$50,000 a year for four years, 2 ½ day staff to 5 day staff in Small Business Development Center. We don't have anyone hired yet to get the first round of funding out. In the end, it is a loan program, and we now have the capacity to create a more robust program. Having a staff member to guide this process will create much more stability and accessibility to the program. Once we sign the memo, we will have the funding, then launch a search for the staff position to cover it.

There is a rolling loan program. You will take a class, write a letter of intent which will be approved by the council (BDCC, Windham Regional Commission, Town of Brattleboro & Town of Wilmington). Looking to meet the CEDS, grow jobs, etc. Application then moves to ACCD. From there, it goes to VPC board, then VIDA. Nonprofits will have an RFP to define what kind of programs they are seeking created. The council will be feeding the RFP parameters based on the CEDS. BDCC would be an eligible applicant for those funds, but it is not our intent to apply.

- Towns (Laura) - WF position discussion

Town funding is where we typically fund a WF position. Our FY16 budget does not have a position listed. The current work is spreading the WF priority between Laura, Jan & Jodi with our other funding sources.

Brattleboro has not given SeVEDS space to address the Selectboard regarding a request for funding. There had been an unstated desire to wait for the landed Town Manager to arrive before allowing SeVEDS to come to them. There is skepticism about economic development from individual Selectboard members. Patrick feels there will be a time for having a direct conversation with the Selectboard. Historically, the Town of Brattleboro started SeVEDS and started the tradition of towns contributing funding to SeVEDS.

Ariel: How can the board best support the staff in implementing our mission. There is a desire to have some dedicated time discussing SeVEDS relationship with BDCC, which impacts our role as a board. This conversation has shown interest from other board members and has not had time dedicated thus far. Perhaps our July annual meeting can have time for this? What structure and legal status is going to allow us to achieve our goals best? There are also conversations which the board would like to have about the Green Building value proposition and/or the Accelerator. Can there be sub-groups which address those topics?

A key responsibility of a board is ensuring the organization has the resources to complete its mission. Do we see ourselves as a board who will do fundraising?

Further Discussion of Board Role in Org. Development and Fundraising:

SeVEDS is still a relatively young organization. The board should build and nurture partnerships with other organizations/companies, financial institutions to explain the importance of SeVEDS and the work it is doing regionally. Other orgs. need to understand that their financial picture will not improve unless econ. development work is supported.

Different opportunities have been presented to the board in the past for fundraising, but the board may not have been ready at that time.

Fundraising is challenging. We have to make a very strong case for how SeVEDS work benefits businesses. We need to recruit partners from the businesses. Financial institutions are potential partners. It needs to happen individual to individual.

We knew this moment was coming of looking at our financial sustainability. Fundraising should not be the only income. We need see if our priorities are also BDCC's priorities as well. We are starting to hit a crossroads right now. The BDCC discussions are important to find out where our priorities overlap and are we in fact one entity with them.

We need to discover how we feel as a board if we feel that way and what outside community members might feel about that.

We need to ensure that we can sustain the work we are currently doing. What is the sustainability picture?

One of the most important things that happened was that SeVEDS formed and created federally recognized CEDS. The reality is we won't be able to do everything we want to do. What can we fund now? What is manageable? What is working? Who values it?

What is economic development? What do we all tell people about it? Could each one of us go out into the community and convey what that is? Who goes out each morning to do it? If we can't answer these questions, we'll never be able to convince others to invest in our work.

What is the gap to get the Workforce going? We need \$50,000 additional in order to fund a staff position. How is this sustainable?

The people who value it will fund it. The municipal fundraising has worked when we've been able to make the case well. Employers are highly concerned about not having enough of the right qualified people right now to fill the jobs they have.

Having every town funding us is a build, it is education about what we are doing. We need to work at this and it will not happen immediately.

We have both a great amount of success happening and an issue with ongoing financial sustainability. How much work can we ask for and how much resources can we ask for to get that accomplished. We need to have a much more achievable workplan based on what resources we do have.

If workforce development is what businesses are looking for, we should look at programatizing and what are partnerships we can offer to businesses.

Reality is proving a model. We are saying that people will fund what they get excited about. We can deliver a message that gets funded. How can more people be part of it. The compelling business need on how they can play needs to be more apparent. We have done really good work.

Grant fundraising has been successful. It has bought us some work. The EDA application is funding some very large initiatives from the CEDS. It feels like we are perhaps not staffing enough of the work that needs to happen. We have unfinished work with BDCC and looking at our corporate structure. Are we ready to address the economic development needs of the region as two different bodies? The answer may be no.

We do need to invest real time into discussing the organizational structure of SeVEDS and BDCC. What do we need in a mission driven way?

How do we put our logos together? In this building, we are all BDCC. It is a first step to look at this. Should we use both logos on a card or just the BDCC logo?

Years ago, no one was doing economic development. Now, everyone is and may or may not be doing it well.

CEDS and FY '15 Board Priority Area Updates

- **General CEDS -**

- Report on CEDS Meetings

All very positive. Good conversations and buzz. More engagement and understanding in each community. The presentations were clear and inspiring.

- **CEDS Objective 1: Act Regionally**

- Tri Region/State Meeting - action items resulting from (Laura/Susan)

Also robust conversations. We have a lot of areas where we can work together, such as looking at the shared laborshed and support for it. We have ongoing meetings to help align our CEDS regions.

- SoVermont Economic Development Zone in S.138 (Laura)

Windham and Bennington Counties are in the Zone. There is representation from each of the RDCs. The governor is going to make an appointment to that committee. Report from the committee due November 1st with implementation plan for the SoVT Sus. marketing plan. Also expanding internship and workforce development programs. Matthew at EDA sent the recent editorials from the Reformer supporting our work to the Federal office and has suggested that there could be support for forming an Economic Development District. There are three census tracks which justify additional support. Bennington has received several calls from individuals seeking to support them forming an application for this.

- Moving our meetings around the region (Ariel)

In the spirit of acting regionally, we should meet elsewhere. Quarterly, could we meet in Rockingham, Wilmington, etc.? Yes, let's do this. We will need to establish a quarterly rotation and determine locations. Jill offered the Chroma for meeting in Rockingham.

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

- Board 2015 Priority: SoVT Business Accelerator (Jodi)
- Biz plan Comp (Martin)

Competition is in final stretch this week. As of last night, we have 20 completed finalists. Next Wed. all will present at Marlboro Grad. Next Wed. at 4pm at the River Garden will be the final awards ceremony.

- Makers Space/Coworking - 5:30 pm Estey Organs (Jodi)

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

- Board 2015 Priority: Green Building, Healthcare, Tech Driven Manufacturing

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

- Board 2015 Priority: Workforce Development and Internship Program
 - Workforce Committee refocus - Dutch/Laura
- **CEEDS Objective 5: Retain and attract younger talent through engagement linkages, lifestyle amenities, and meaningful career opportunities**
 - Board 2015 Priority: SoVT Recruiting
 - Get On Board Windham County - continued support? (Ariel)

Other orgs (Youth Services and United Way of Windham County) do fund the program, SeVEDS is only a nominal sponsor. Do we want to give funds?

- Next YP event

Brattleboro Independent Film Festival in July. The June event was at the Gleanery about Gardening for Renters. There were attendees from Brattleboro and Wilmington. Wilmington Soup & Wine event in September. Talking with Bennington Bike program for the July event. Roughly 20 attendees per event.

- **CEEDS Objective 6: Refine and implement VY-specific workforce and site impact mitigation strategies related to it's closure.**

Substantive Discussions

- SeVEDS workplan 2016 and EDA/WCEDP scope to 24 months (Laura)

The draft presented. The plan will be approved at the annual meeting in July.

Questions about the scope and board responsibilities. For the fundraising piece, there needs to be real commitment from the board. Private sector needs to understand the scope of the work and what directly impacts them. Making the case to them for private fundraising will be key.

Question: Is Workforce work still happening? Yes, but it is spread over current staff. We are still determining what the staffing picture looks like exactly given Laura's service in the legislature.

In general, the scope is ambitious. For July, can staff weigh in on who will do what and are there enough people to accomplish the workplan as proposed?

- FY 16' Budget Review (Laura)

Presentation on status of each line item.

- Board Development - Brainstorm wish list of new members (Ariel)

Other Business?

- 501c3 Status Update (Adam/Laura)
- Board discussions moving forward - balancing organizational development and project development (Ariel)
- July meeting specifics (Ariel)
 - Approve budget
 - Officers
 - New Board members
 - Celebration!

- First Impressions Program (Ariel

Adam mentioned that Friday, June 19th is Robin Sweetapple's last day with BDCC. Gabby Cieufreda will be stepping into the property management aspect of Robin's position. Please send Adam, Laura, and Ariel suggestions on board members to consider to fill vacancies.

Meeting adjourned at 4pm

Next Meeting will be Annual Meeting. Please Note the change from our usual schedule: SeVEDS July Meeting (Annual Meeting) on **Thursday, July 30th at 2pm at the BDCC**