

## **Upper Valley Economic Council**

Meeting Minutes: November 16, 2020

***Next Meeting: Monday December 14, 2020 at 4:00 pm.***

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The meeting was brought to order at 4:00 pm.

**Present:** Alvin Theriault, Julie Johnston, Steve Gould, Chris Smith, John Qualey and Jeff Packard.

**Guests:** Fred Michaud - Policy Development Specialist, Scenic Byways Coordinator, Bureau of Planning, Rep. Chris Johansen and Trisha House State Office Representative for U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins.

**Minutes:** It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the minutes of October 16, 2020.

**Treasurer's Report/Sign Warrants:** Office Manager Packard presented the Treasurer's report for November 16, 2020. The Board voted to approve the report as read. The Board signed the warrants. A total of \$2,075.00 was donated to the UVEC Food Pantry in memory of Peter Qualey.

**UVEC Chairman:** No update. Chris Smith agreed to represent Stacyville no the UVEC Board replacing Brian McQuarrie.

**Millinocket Lake Project:** Fred informed the Board that they are working to separate the Federal Funds from the State Funds. Of the \$250,000 Funds, \$18,000 is Federal Money and Federal Rules apply to the \$18,000. The State will use the Federal Money for the Well and Septic System. This will allow the remaining money from the State will be unencumbered for the construction of the Bathroom Facility without the same constraints. The Federal Funds requires detailed reporting. Eldon Doody a retired Great Northern Engineer living in Millinocket, is going to be trained as a Local Project Administrator. He will oversee the project and handle the paper work. Eldon will take the 1 day training course so the Maine DOT can hire him to be the Project Administrator. Eldon is also on the Board of the Katahdin Tourism Partnerships. Fred explained the process of another entity taking the project over and ownership of the property. Local businesses near the proposed facility will form a 501 © 3 organization as soon as the Maine DOT makes a 100% commitment. The project will proceed under UVEC and once completed be transferred over to the new Organization and they will be responsible for owning and maintaining the Facility. Fred has lined up approximately \$150,000 to \$200,000 for maintenance for the next 20 years. Fred informed the Board that there is another project he would like UVEC to be involved with. The Scenic Turnout on Ash Hill in Patten. The Maine DOT owns 20 acres of land on both sides of the Turnout with 1100 feet of road side footage on both sides. Fred has been exploring no how UVEC or another entity could do a project there. The State of Maine DOT will not sell or gift the property but would issue a license for 25 years to an entity or UVEC to so a project. The Town of Patten would not have to take the project over. The project would consist of finding funding for long term maintenance. Fred has made some inquiries for funding. There is some potential funding from the National Scenic Byway from Congress. Fred has also contacted the organization 1% for the Planet about

possible funding. The project is in the exploratory stage. Fred has a booklet he wants to share with the Board, Rep. Johansen and Trisha House State Office Representative for U.S. Senator Susan M. Collins to see what the concept for the project would look like. The booklet was designed by Larry Johannesman - Sr. Landscape Architect. For this project to happen a sponsor is needed. If the Board Agrees to sponsor the project, once it is completed the project /license would be transferred to another entity. The license holder would be responsible for maintenance which would not require much work. Fred would not proceed with this project if he cannot find funding for the maintenance. After a discussion the Board will look at the concept plan and hold future discussions on the project.

**Office Manager's Report:**

**Food Pantry Report: October: 72 Households Served, Sherman – 31 Households Stacyville – 12 Households and Other Towns - 29 Households for a total of 166 people.**

**Business up-date:** Dave Fowler of Swift Current Energy, contacted Office Manager Packard and informed him that his company is looking to do a major solar project in our region. They need 1,000 acres of land and the land does not have to be adjoining. Dave gave Jeff his contact information for any interested landowner.

**1. Scenic Byway Update:** The Katahdin Partnership received a letter from the IRS asking for more information on their 501 © 3 application. Fred and Jeff will be working on that this week. As soon as the designation is given to the Katahdin Partnership the Millinocket Park Project/ Property will be transferred from UVEC to them. As soon as Fred hears about the National Scenic Byway application he will let UVEC know if the Katahdin Woods and waters Scenic Byway was successful for this designation.

**2. KRDB Update 10-'20:** In September, I worked on multiple applications for the new mill site. I continued to work with businesses that needed funding either through the EDA revolving loan fund, and through the Economic Recovery Grant through the state. I have also been building partnerships with other organizations in the region, which is an ongoing practice I have done to lead efforts to collaborate and find opportunities to add capacity where possible with other projects that KRDB would otherwise not be involved with. This is resulting in new partnerships, trust, and opportunities that are being forged, which is starting to pay off. On 9.22.20, I'll be meeting with the collaborative, our Katahdin, and the chamber of commerce to review existing projects that are currently in flight and look for ways to combine efforts where there is overlap. By increasing efficiency this way, everyone can share wins and be pulled toward a regional perspective, which is so important.

**National Guard:** Mike and I met with officers from the 133rd and did a site walk through to strategize on which projects they could help with, ultimately leading to a narrowed scope that could be completed in 2022, with the opportunity to do more projects at the federal level beyond this.

**Community Accelerator:** Megan would like to meet each of you in October as part of her goal to meet each of the individuals and groups that are focused on

revitalization efforts in the region. Let's discuss this more during our board meeting.

**Randy Jackson and Mudgie's Market:** I have connected him with SBDC to help with his business plans. He is starting two businesses: a movie theater, and a paper making company (that is very confidential). Once his business plans are complete, he will be seeking funding to help pay for equipment purchases. He is also trying to on board a coffee shop in his commercial space and I have paired him with Michael McCafferty, who has been working with the SBDC on his plan for Mudgie's Market, a deli and bakery/coffee shop. They are also working out leasing details at the Boreal Theater. Michael will also be seeking between \$60k and 100k to start his business.

**Town of Patten:** I spoke with Becky Sullivan multiple times in September, and we are looking at working on a BUILD grant together for the town and possibly Mount Chase. This would be used to help pay for road construction and updates. We also had a lengthy discussion about a community center for the northern region, and I will be coming to a joint session between the board of selectmen and the planning committee to discuss that possibility and what steps would be required. The first two items we will need to tackle before looking for funding is lot space and a feasibility study.

**GRI/FEMA:** I have set up a review team from Millinocket and East Millinocket consisting of Jess Masse, Cody McEwen, Tony Mascone, and Angela Cote to work with myself to review and provide feedback to this project over the next 10 months. This will result in a resiliency plan for the Opportunity Zones in the Region that will be submitted to the Governor.

**Tif for Mill:** I submitted a Tif proposal to the Penobscot County Commissioners for \$100,000 in funding to help offset the cost of the engineering studies being done to the mill site. This was also a great opportunity to tie in the regional benefit this site will have to the Commissioners.

**Omega Benefit Strategies:** I have been working with Doug Snowman again, and have teed him up for much needed capital to hire multiple new FTEs in both 2020 and 2021. He will be seeking \$450,000 in funding from EMDC's revolving loan fund to provide the working capital he needs to make those investments.

**UVEC RBEG Update:** There is \$53,016.75 available for loans.

**Sherman Boralax Plant:** Mervyn Yan hopes to be working with engineers in the next two months on the project. He has some reservations about a TIF. Dixie Sides gave him the contact for an attorney to answer any concerns and questions he has.

**Broadband/Fiber Optics:** No Update

**Solar Project:** Lars Gundersen - Assistant Project Manager: We're making good progress on several fronts, having completed the wetland delineation and secured offtakers for the power we'll produce. Next steps include continuing to work with Versant on interconnection and doing the boundary survey work, hopefully before there's too much snow on the ground

**County Wind Project: Clearwind is going through the permit process for the Maine Department of Environmental Protection Agency which should take about two years.**

**Rep.Chris Johansen commended the UVEC Board for all the projects that theya re working on in the region.**

**Meeting ended 4:45 pm.**

**Respectfully Submitted**

**John Qualey, Treasurer**