



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

**Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, October 6, 2021
4:00 P.M.**

Via Zoom Only (Information on Reverse)

AGENDA

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call to Order, Introductions		
Executive Committee Minutes <i>September 2021</i>	2 minutes	Approval
Grant Application Approvals	15 minutes	Decision
Oregon Local Government Investment Pool Participation	10 minutes	Recommendation
Other Updates from Staff	10 minutes	Information
Other New Business; Committee Members Updates		
Adjourn		

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MCEDD is an equal opportunity lender, employer and provider.

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Topic: MCEDD Executive Committee Meeting/ Four Rivers Meeting

Time: October 6, 2021 04:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

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**MID-COLUMBIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2021
4:00 PM
MCEDD CONFERENCE ROOM & ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

ATTENDANCE

Attending: Bill Schmitt, Les Perkins, Bob Hamlin, Ken Bailey, Leana Kinley, Joe Dabulskis, Steve Kramer, Eric Proffitt,

Staff: Jessica Metta (Executive Director), Jill Brandt (Administrative Assistant), Carrie Pipinich (Deputy Director of Economic Development), Kate Drennan (Deputy Director of Transportation), Dana Woods (Financial Officer), Lauren Hernandez (Office Administrator)

CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Bill Schmitt called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Steve Kramer motioned to approve the August 4, 2021, Executive Committee meeting minutes as presented. Eric Proffitt seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

FINANCE REPORT

Dana Woods presented the financials to the Committee. Total Cash balance as of July 31, 2021 was \$6,462,520.62, an increase of \$231,297.98 from the previous month. Accounts Receivable (1202) balance is \$272,737.63. Loans Receivable (1300) decreased slightly from the prior month due to a fairly large payoff in the Housing RLF. July principal payments totaled \$382,352.32. Current Net Position is \$12,127,211.82. Moving on to the Operations Budget vs. Actual: Total Revenues for the month of July and YTD are at 7.2% of budget. The carryover revenue from FY21 has not been posted yet. Dana noted that the carryover numbers are typically posted once the audit is complete. The Local Assessments have not yet been invoiced because we have been waiting for the 2020 Census Data to be released. So far county and cities data is available only for populations over 5,000. Since much of our region is less densely populated, those numbers are not yet available. Dana went on to report that Total expenses for the month of July are at 23% of budget. She noted that the Bonds and Insurance (6800) appears to be significantly over budget, but in the YTD budget vs actual the Bonds and Insurance shows right in line at 72.7%.

Dana reported other updates: MCEDD's pre-audit review has been happening this week. There have been many good conversations with the new auditors about ways to improve, and this auditor has been reviewing things that the last auditor did not. Dana felt that this year's process is more thorough, and that she does not expect any surprises when the audit comes out. Dana gave appreciation to Lauren Hernandez for compiling documentation. Dana is also compiling documentation needed for the new buses' funding through ODOT. Dana also noted the books for the Mount Hood Economic Alliance are also under review for their audit and that the CREA audit was completed last week with no issues.

Discussion: Ken Bailey asked for an update on the transfer process to Caselle and if staff is ok with the current speed of the process. Dana reported that MCEDD has provided the majority of the information that was requested and is currently waiting while Caselle performs their piece of

the changeover. Dana admitted that timing has been perfect allowing her to concentrate on the audits.

Eric Proffitt motioned to accept the financials as presented. Bob Hamlin seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

PRIVATE SECTOR APPOINTMENTS

Jessica Metta said MCEDD's private sector seats come up for renewal every September as one-year terms. All of the current private sector members have expressed willingness to continue in their seats. The current private sector seats are:

- Ken Bailey, agriculture
- Scott Clements, housing and private business
- Buck Jones, food and beverage, Native American community
- Rob Kimmes, healthcare
- Eric Proffitt, workforce
- Marta Year Cronin, higher education
- Mark Zanmiller, high tech.

The Cities of Hood River County are appointing Mark Zanmiller to fill the Hood River County public seat, so his private sector seat will be open. MCEDD received four applications in response to advertising: Jason Hartmann of Zepher, who was recruited by Mark Zanmiller; Juliet Pouillon of Domaine Pouillon Winery in Lyle, Washington; Tom Furey, CEO of Sagetech Avionics, a White Salmon tech company; and Mike Graham from Real Carbon, a tech firm in the Hood River area. The Executive Committee needs to appoint a total of seven individuals to fill the private sector positions on MCEDD Board. These appointments will go to the full Board for ratification.

Discussion: Ken Bailey clarified that all currently serving private sector members want to continue to serve, so that is six of the seven seats already filled. Bob Hamlin was in favor of keeping all currently serving members, leaving one seat to fill. General agreement was expressed by all to keep the current members in place. Ken Bailey stated that of the three high tech candidates, he personally knows only Tom Furey from his prior service on the Board. The committee noted that Mark Zanmiller had recommended Jason Hartmann as his replacement. Leana Kinley stated that Jason's service on the White Salmon City Council gave him additional qualification for the MCEDD Board seat. His experience would add public government service perspective as well as high tech representation to the MCEDD Board.

Ken Bailey motioned to recommend the MCEDD Board reappoint all of the private sector members and to fill the vacant position with Jason Hartmann. Les Perkins seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

Jessica then went on to the private sector appointments needed for the Loan Administration Board. LAB positions are currently held by Scott Clements, Dillon Borton and AJ Tarnasky. All have expressed interest and willingness to continue to serve on the Board.

Discussion: Bob Hamlin and Steve Kramer both endorsed the currently serving members, noting that they are all highly involved in the Board and that their perspective and participation are invaluable.

Ken Bailey motioned to recommend the MCEDD Board reappoint the private sector members to the Loan Administration Board. Bob Hamlin seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously.

FY21 ANNUAL REPORT

Jessica Metta presented the draft of MCEDD's Annual report in the packet. This document covers all of the work of MCEDD in FY21. This year, the look of the Annual Report has been updated. Jessica noted that RARE Jane Allen was instrumental in creating this new look for the Report, and that the work of MCEDD's staff is presented here with a combination of pictures and text. Jessica appreciated all of the staff that have helped with this doc, and explained that there will be a full presentation at the upcoming board meeting. Jessica asked the Committee members for feedback on the look and content of the Report.

Discussion: Bill Schmitt commented that it is fancier than a plain text document. Steve Kramer remarked, "This is awesome!" He noted that it needed a little bit of cleanup to be ready to go. Ken Bailey agreed that was very readable, not too much text on any one item and the pictures are a fine touch. Jessica thanked the committee for their comments.

PERSONNEL POLICY UPDATES

Dana and Jessica worked together on this project. These policies were taken from the SDAO recommended government employee handbook and adapted to MCEDD's specifics. Legislative updates were also reviewed for any required changes that needed to be added. Jessica pointed out that the policy for when leave without pay can be used has been clarified. An employee is not allowed to go on vacation using unpaid time so that they can use their PTO later. She also pointed out the additions in language that will allow flexible schedules and working from home. Also added in the language clarifying allowing breaks for expressing breastmilk. Jessica explained that MCEDD will need to add electricity to the quiet room in order to comply with these requirements. Jessica pointed out the addition of Juneteenth as a paid holiday that will match our state and federal government paid holidays. There were also some general restructuring and clean-up changes in the Family Leave section.

Discussion: Steve Kramer asked for clarification on the policy on Page 9: 2.7.2 that states that MCEDD will provide a laptop computer. The policy then states that the Employee may agree to use his/her own phone and internet access. What if employee refuses to use their work laptop from home? Steve suggested that this may need to be cleaned up a bit. He allowed that he did not think it would come up, but that it should be addressed. Jessica responded that there is also a separate teleworking agreement. She will review these policies together to be sure that this concern is covered. Les Perkins noted that if the teleworking agreement covers it, the amendment change can be a simple direct to the telework agreement. Steve agreed with this solution. Eric Proffitt asked if remote workers are using a VPN network, and if there was a speed requirement for the remote employee to work properly. He added that his employer required folks to have a minimum of 10 MBS speed. Jessica replied that MCEDD's rules currently do not have any kind of speed requirement. She added that most staff have boosted their personal internet connection speed since working remotely began with covid. She explained that the office also needed to add more speed due to all the work being done over VPN connections from home. Ken Bailey stated that these changes can be corrected later.

Bob Hamlin asked if the Committee is simply accepting what has been proposed. Jessica clarified that the committee is recommending the addition of new requirements to the board. She added that she can include in the memo language about adopting personnel policies what the actual the changes were. Leana Kinley questioned the addition of leave to donate bone marrow- why that specific is listed versus donating an organ or anything else. She pointed out that as a medical procedure this would be covered. Dana replied that this is a legislative requirement, probably added due to a legal issue. By law, it now is required to be specifically included. Eric asked for the date when this requirement came out. Dana replied that it has been there for the past year.

Bob Hamlin motioned to recommend the MCEDD Board adopt the updated Personnel Policy with the addition of cleaning up the telecommuting equipment section as discussed. Eric Proffitt seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion passed.

VACCINATION REQUIREMENT

Jessica said she was looking for feedback if the Board wants to require COVID-19 vaccination for MCEDD. She added that the Board did provide the incentive of an extra day of PTO for COVID-19 vaccination last spring. She added many, but not all, of our employees took advantage of that incentive. Currently, when MCEDD has an employee who tests positive, she will ask that person to work from home. If it is a driver who cannot work from home, their quarantine time is covered with CARES money, and they are asked to stay home. There are two alternatives identified in this memo. Option 1. Continue to not require vaccine. 1.A. Adjust the incentive so it will be available any time an employee gets vaccinated. 1.B. Change the quarantine pay practices so that employees will not be paid through CARES funding but will have to use their PTO to be paid for the time off work. Current state health rules state that if a person who is vaccinated gets exposed, they can continue to work. If the person is unvaccinated, they are required to quarantine. Option 2 is to require all employees to be vaccinated. There are pros and cons on either side.

Discussion: Les Perkins agreed that this is a tough topic, and he noted that it is coming up everywhere. Hood River County is opting to not require vaccination. Les added that he preferred option 1A and 1B, and not use the CARES funding. Steve Kramer agreed. Steve is concerned that employees would quit if vaccination was mandated. In his opinion, mandating vaccination was not a high priority. Bill Schmitt agreed with Steve.

Eric Proffitt expressed deep concern, adding his perspective of watching Life Flight taking sick people out multiple times a day. He reported that Mid-Columbia Medical Center has had to turn ambulances away because there are no beds or staff available to care for more sick people. The rising number of deaths and instances of infection are not going away. Eric asked if we could afford not to require vaccinations from the broader societal perspective. He also offered Oregon's policy of exceptions for religious and medical reasons. Bob Hamlin said the state of Washington has mandated that all health care workers be vaccinated and Skamania County is getting pushback for adhering to this policy, and being forced to look at exemptions. Bob agreed with Options 1A and 1B.

Jessica summed up the discussion by noting that most folks were supporting 1A and 1B. She offered to prepare materials for the full board that reflect this. Leana Kinley asked Jessica about the number of unvaccinated employees who would quit if vaccination was required. Jessica responded that there has not been any poll to determine an actual number, but she thought that some would quit. Les Perkins asked for clarification on the goal of this policy: is it to protect everyone in the organization itself, or is it directed towards broader community safety? He pointed out that the main risk is to the unvaccinated person. If the Board is looking to protect the organization with a higher vaccination rate, the data supports the idea that we are protecting people who are vaccinated by requiring vaccination of all employees. The Committee needs to consider if we are risking losing employees that will be hard to replace. Ken Bailey stated that he would prefer to require vaccinations but admitted that reality makes that too difficult. He also stated that the state government has enough power and reach that requiring vaccination can make a real difference but that MCEDD is not large enough that mandating employees to be vaccinated is going to make any appreciable difference for community safety as a whole. Ken recommended keeping option 1, stating that he believed that having incentives is a positive step that will help employees decide to get vaccinated. He also pointed out that the public transportation side is a constant exposure to risk, so passing a vaccine requirement for staff is not going to eliminate risk. Bill Schmitt agreed with Ken, both voting for both 1A and 1B.

Ken Bailey motioned to recommend options 1A and 1B to bring before the full Board. Eric Proffitt seconded the motion.

Kate Drennan asked for clarification on option 1B and whether there would be a different quarantine policy if a vaccinated person was infected. Jessica replied that MCEDD would follow the CDC guidelines on quarantine. Les Perkins asked if a vaccinated employee would be paid with CARES money if they are required to quarantine. Ken Bailey asked how long CARES funding is available to cover quarantine time off. Jessica replied that the funding is available through 2023. She added that if the Board allows CARES funding to cover quarantine time off, the caveat “only when CARES act funding is available” should be added. MCEDD’s review and change in policy at this time is due the full FDA approval of the Vaccine that has just been released. Les Perkins noted that if an employee is infected with a confirmed case, then PTO should be used, regardless of whether the person is vaccinated or unvaccinated. Jessica explained that without this policy MCEDD can use CARES act funding to cover time off for transit staff.

Eric Proffitt asked if it was possible to go back and revisit with suggestions. Ken Bailey asked if CARES funding could be used by MCEDD staff who can’t work remotely. Jessica explained that the non-transit staff who do not work remotely are Dana, Lauren and Jill. Some parts of their work can be remote but not 100%. Their time cannot be covered with CARES, they must use PTO. Eric Proffitt asked how an employee determines if they are too sick to come in to work. Jessica replied that COVID guidelines require a specified time of quarantine after symptoms have passed to ensure that the person is no longer contagious. Ken noted that the wording here is basically a penalty for not getting vaccine. Les added that the penalty is for everyone. Steve Kramer suggested removing 1B for the time being, stick with option 1A for now but add that the policy will

be adjusted to follow changing guidelines from the CDC and the state. Ken appreciates the flexibility that this offers.

Ken amended his motion to only have 1A and take 1B out. Les Perkins seconded the change. Steve pointed out that this is only a recommendation to the full board, and that this group will be talking about this again. Eric noted that the current policy will not be changed by this recommendation today. Ken concurred, clarifying that today's discussion is strictly guidance for Jessica in her preparation for bringing this topic to the full Board. Les added that he approved of providing incentive for people to get vaccinated – that it is important to offer. Ken wanted to know if the incentive worked for the booster and second shot as well? Jessica confirmed that the current policy allowed for one day of PTO total. A vote was not taken but the discussion will be shared at the September full Board meeting.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Deputy Director of Economic Development Carrie Pipinich highlighted the upcoming Regional Economic Development Summit in Goldendale and central Klickitat County. MCEDD staff Marla Harvey is providing coordination support, collecting and preparing information about the projects that will be addressed.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR REPORT - TRANSPORTATION

Deputy Director of Transportation Kate Drennan reported the additions of five new buses and three new drivers, plus significant progress on the construction of the new bus shelter at the Port of The Dalles. On the Mobility Management side, the travel trainer outreach position is still unfilled. The job has been posted, so far with no success. Kate requested the Committee's help to spread the word personally among their own contacts.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director Jessica Metta shared that MCEDD received \$1.9 million in USDA Rural Development Grant funds for small business lending, with \$99k going to the Port of Klickitat, who applied directly. A press release should go out shortly. Skamania EDC will distribute funds on the Washington side through the WIB. The time frame for the grant is two years to get the monies out. This is a similar format to the disbursement requirement for the EDA CARES Revolving Loan Fund.

OTHER NEW BUSINESS / COMMITTEE MEMBERS UPDATES

None noted.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jill Brandt, Administrative Assistant

Memorandum

To: MCEDD Executive Committee
From: MCEDD Staff
Date: September 29, 2021
Re: Grant Application Approvals

Overview

MCEDD staff has had opportunities to apply for several grant applications in September and October that would benefit the region and fit with the mission of the organization. Staff is seeking approval to apply for or accept the following two grant applications.

Business Oregon Rural Opportunity Initiative

Grant Summary: Over the last six months, community partners in The Dalles and Wasco County came together with support from the Center on Rural Innovation to explore ways to enhance the local economy through increasing the presence of digital and tech focused strategies for new companies or enhancing their utilization within current industry. Discussions focused on enhancing workforce training around digital skills, growing a proactive and connected entrepreneurship support system, and improving access to capital.

Through this process, partners with Columbia Gorge Community College, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, the Wasco County Economic Development Commission, and the Port of The Dalles identified initial gaps in our entrepreneurship supports for this sector and more broadly in the region. These gaps focus on unclear ways to navigate the business support system, limited programming other than SBDC training sessions available, and challenges accessing capital. As a next step from this high-level strategy development, the team of partners has identified a need to do some additional mapping of our entrepreneurial ecosystem to clarify gaps in services, develop an outreach and engagement strategy to further coordinate information sharing and gathering around entrepreneurship, and forming a steering committee structure to further develop this work. The grant would support completing these tasks as well as initial programming like PubTalks, MeetUps, or other strategies as identified by the assessment phase. This initial phase would focus in Wasco County but would work to explore regional opportunities.

Grant Amount: \$73,000

Match Required and Source: Staff proposed including matching funds from our local contracts and (if funded) the OCF Thriving Entrepreneurs grant that will allow us to enhance our lending program's templates and host PubTalks focused on access to capital. Total Match proposed is \$25,000.

Staffing Implications: This grant would provide support through June 30, 2023. Much of this resource would go toward supporting our most recent Project Manager position

after CARES funds are expended by June of 2022. This would require some additional focus for staff in the interim to ensure that the initial assessment is moving forward but the bulk of the programming would occur in the next fiscal year.

EDA Build Back Better Regional Challenge

Grant Summary: Grant development is in process and the latest document will be provided before the Executive Committee meeting. Staff from Business Oregon is leading the grant development but requests MCEDD to be the applicant. The region included in the grant would cover additional counties in Eastern Oregon and Washington.

Grant Amount: \$500,000 for Phase 1.

Match Required and Source: No match required.

Staffing Implications: The grant would be managed by a committee and primary work would be run by a consultant. MCEDD's Deputy Director of Economic Development would participate in the committee and oversee the work. This work would be covered by the grant.

Suggested Motion

I move to have MCEDD accept the Business Oregon Rural Opportunity Initiative if awarded, and to apply for the EDA Build Back Better Regional Challenge.

Memorandum

To: MCEDD Executive Committee

From: MCEDD Staff

Date: September 29, 2021

Re: Oregon Local Government Investment Pool Participation

Overview

MCEDD staff has been considering ways to increase the financial benefit to MCEDD for the funds in our bank account. Mount Hood Economic Alliance keep a portion of their funds in the Oregon Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP) which in August had a 0.55% Annual Yield. This has brought in revenue for Mount Hood Economic Alliance higher than what MCEDD is currently receiving in our various bank accounts and CDs. We are also able to transfer money to and from the Oregon LGIP fund easily if needed.

About the Fund

From the fund's [website](#): "The Oregon State Treasury helps governments across the state, including schools and cities and counties, to stretch taxpayer dollars and keep public funds safe. Between the time that revenue is received and when the money is needed to pay expenses, governments can deposit money and earn a rate of return by accessing the Treasury-managed Oregon Short Term Fund (OSTF) through the Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP or pool). The OSTF is made up of money from state agencies, certain public universities, and local governments. Any municipality, political subdivision or public corporation of this state that by law is made the custodian of, or has control of, any public funds, may participate in the pool. Sovereign Tribes are also eligible to participate. Treasury has hired PFM Asset Management LLC to provide administrative and operational support for the pool."

Because the fund is investment based, the interest earned could fluctuate. However, we believe LGIP rate will stay higher than any bank rates.

Suggested Motion

I recommend opening an account with the Oregon Local Government Investment Pool to the MCEDD Board of Directors.