



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

District Expansion Task Force Meeting

Friday, December 17, 2021

1:00 P.M.

REMOTE ONLY

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89620613716?pwd=UEJWVEF3QXVVaEZ2R3VoeGRWTKYwUT09>

or call 253-215-8782, Meeting ID: 896 2061 3716 Passcode: 381858

AGENDA

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call to Order/Introductions	2 minutes	Information
Review of Modification Process and Prior Discussions	15 minutes	Information
Identify Additional Information Needed and Next Steps	15 minutes	Discussion
Adjournment		

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires any special materials, services, or assistance, please contact the MCEDD office at 541-296-2266 (TTY 711) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

MCEDD is an equal opportunity lender, employer and provider.

Memorandum

To: MCEDD Expansion Task Force
From: Jessica Metta, Executive Director
Date: December 13, 2021
Re: Review of Modification Process and Prior Discussions

Overview

At the September Full Board Meeting, the Board discussed a revived request from Gilliam County to join the MCEDD region. This request had been received initially in 2015 along with Wheeler County. The Board discussed it in detail at that time and ultimately the process stalled when Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC), the EDD that currently covers Gilliam and Wheeler Counties, was not interested in moving forward. GEODC has now said they are willing. The September 2021 MCEDD Board discussion decided to create a task force to explore the concept again.

Modification Process

MCEDD's district boundaries are approved by the US Economic Development Administration. In 2015, it was determined that changes to the boundary to include new counties would require explanations about what had changed in the economic region to merit the change and resolutions from any counties asking to join, both EDD boards, both Oregon and Washington governors, and then approval by the EDA.

Prior Discussions

The MCEDD Full Board discussed this at most of their 2015 sessions. Two memos received by the Board at that time are included as information. Discussion circled around many of the same concerns the Board has identified in 2021: size of the board, balance between Washington and Oregon interests, hardship on MCEDD staff. The board consensus in June 2015 was to move forward with a process to detail options for accepting both counties on a conditional basis or non-voting for the first year, then considering accepting both counties, under the hybrid model and adding additional private sector positions to the board.

Board discussion in 2015 about additional private sector board membership were that they should be broadly representative of the region's economic base with an additional focus on clusters not yet represented, they would be focused to Washington, and that these members should be industry leaders, CEOs or other decision makers.

Staff also met with all five county commissions in 2015 to explore the concept and there was general willingness to move forward.

Questions to Consider

- MCEDD has not heard from Wheeler County this time. Should we confirm that they are not interested before we go further?
- Are there any new concerns to consider besides those voiced in 2015?
- Are there any other options to consider?
- Is there other information that would help the Board choose a course of action?

Memorandum

Date: June 11, 2015
To: MCEDD Board of Directors
From: Amanda Hoey, Executive Director
Re: Gilliam and Wheeler Counties Membership Request

Overview

MCEDD was formed in 1969 by our five member counties through Intergovernmental Agreements under ORS190 and RCW 39.34. MCEDD received designation as an Economic Development District by the US Economic Development Administration in 1970. Gilliam and Wheeler counties are currently aligned with the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC). We have a formal request from both counties to join MCEDD.

The full MCEDD Board briefly discussed the membership request at the last meeting to develop a list of questions. The primary questions related to:

- Understanding the expectations of Gilliam and Wheeler counties
- Clarifying the reasoning for their request to join MCEDD and move from GEODC
- Defining potential Board representation
- Assuring that there would not be a dilution of staff or resources

Following the Board meeting, Chair Mike Smith and I met with Judge Perry (Wheeler County) and Judge Shaffer (Gilliam County). While Judge Shaffer will attend to present to the MCEDD Board of Directors, the following should provide an overview of initial conversations:

Expectations/Reasoning:

- Alignment is the key concern, crossing over multiple areas. In particular, alignment with the Area Commission on Transportation, Regional Solutions, and workforce were cited. In addition, there is a strong interest on the part of Gilliam County to leverage regional strength along the river for all Ports.
- They want to be involved in an economic strategy and conversations around regional economic development that align with their region's issues.
- Overall, they stated low expectations, other than being a part of the conversation.
- Revolving Loan Funds and other programs were discussed. There is variation in how these are managed, so could be considered on a contractual, fee-for-service basis if requested by the county/counties. Currently, Wheeler County feels confident in how their programs are managed so proposes no change.

Board:

- Board positions are not a sticking point. They are flexible. A voting position for a county member is important. However, auxiliary members (e.g. cities, Ports) do not necessarily need to be voting members.
- The counties would like to have the option for entities in their jurisdictions to receive meeting information and be able to attend meetings, but they do not need to be voting.
- A hybrid model may be an option wherein the County has a voting position and could select one other voting member. They would then have the option to determine if that was a city, port, chamber, or private sector representative.

Staff/Resources:

- The counties have hired economic development and tourism staff. They would propose leveraging that staff to minimize MCEDD impact.
- Gilliam County currently participates in CGBREZ and has done so at an equal financial rate as other members for the services they use. They have been a net asset and added additional strength to the group.

Options

The MCEDD Executive Committee asked to have a few proposals put forward for discussion purposes only. The following are a few options:

1) Deny membership.

- No change to MCEDD Board.

2) Accept Gilliam and Wheeler counties as hybrid members.

- Board membership: One County member, plus one additional member appointed by the County. Adds four full board members. County members join the Executive Committee.
- Financial Assessment: Given additional upfront costs, a higher one-time assessment to cover administrative, legal and other costs, with long term annual assessment in accordance with local dues policies.
- Programs offered on a fee-for-service basis.
- Economic Development Strategy: incorporate beginning in 2016 with a minor update and 2017 with the full update.

3) Accept on a conditional basis or non-voting during the first year

- Board membership: no change during the first year. Counties participate in meetings as non-voting members. Vote for membership and addition of board members takes place after year one.
- Financial Assessment: Instituted as with option #2, but delayed by one year
- Programs still available on a fee-for-service basis.
- Economic Development Strategy: Incorporate in 2017. Begin incorporating items of regional similarity in 2016.

4) Accept only one County, using the hybrid board model

- Adds two board members

5) Accept both counties with full membership

- This is complex in the relationship of board positions (e.g. Chambers are “Oregon Chambers”) and could significantly increase the board size. A revisit, overall, to the MCEDD bylaws would be necessary if considering this option.

6) Accept both counties, under the hybrid model and add additional private sector

- Accept hybrid model (#2) and add an additional 1-2 private sector positions, specifically for Washington-based businesses in key sectors.

Discussion

If considering pursuing one of the options for approval, each MCEDD member would need to engage in further discussion with their own governing body. No decision is requested today, therefore, only general discussion and direction.

Memorandum

Date: July 30, 2015
Re: Gilliam and Wheeler Counties Membership Request

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Staff/Resources:

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Options

Test phase

Accept both counties, under a hybrid model and add additional private sector positions

- Board membership: One County member, plus one additional member appointed by the County. Add an additional 1-2 private sector positions, specifically for Washington-based businesses in key sectors. Adds five to six full board members. County members join the Executive Committee.
- Financial Assessment: Given additional upfront costs, a higher one-time assessment to cover administrative, legal and other costs, with long term annual assessment in accordance with local dues policies.
- Programs offered on a fee-for-service basis.
- Economic Development Strategy: incorporate beginning in 2016 with a minor update and 2017 with the full update