



Harney County Economic Development

Minutes
Community Response Team
Wednesday, January 8, 2020

Attendees:

Pete Runnels-Harney County Judge	Pat McCluskey-Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative
Patty Dorroh-Harney County Commissioner	Chris Holloway-Small Business Development Center
Mark Owens-Harney County Commissioner	Misti Porter-TVCC Outreach
George Heinz-CinA, HC NRAC	Roger Sheley- High Desert Partnership
Amber Wares-Symmetry Care	Jennifer Taynton-High Desert Partnership
Kirby Letham-City of Hines	Tara Thissel-Burns District, BLM
Jen Hoke-Harney District Hospital	Curt Blackburn-Blackburn Real Estate
Rick Paul-Community Member	Denise Rose-HC Economic Development
Becky Cunningham-Rimrock Recycling	Greg Smith-HC Economic Development

1. **Greg Smith** welcomed the group and called the meeting to order. General introductions were made around the table. Greg informed the group of the passing of Scott Fairley over the holiday break. No additional information was available, but he will be sorely missed in this community. Mark Owens gave brief comments about the financial support and encouragement Scott provided to Harney County as our representative from Business Oregon.
2. **Old Business:** November-December combined meeting minutes were provided via the website with email reminders. Mark moved to accept minutes and Patty seconded, by general agreement there were no changes or additions to the minutes.
3. **New Business:**

A. Regular Reports:

City of Hines, Kirby Letham- The City of Hines water project construction is gearing up and will be visibly beginning work as soon as weather permits.

City of Burns-Dennis Davis, City Administrator-no report, this meeting conflicted with the City Council meeting. Greg reported that he met with Dennis earlier in the day and he is getting a number of organizational projects going. They discussed support and assistance the Economic Development office could provide in city collaborative efforts.

Business Oregon, no report.

Harney County Court, Judge Runnels- A sanctuary county ammendment group attended the County Court meeting to express their strong desire for this component to be added to the disucssion. The Court is working on the appointee process to fill a vacancy at the State level created by other appointments. The plan is to meet around the 21st and to get a Representative from District 60 seated before the legislative short session in February. The new Sheriff, Dan Jenkins in settling in quickly and has already gotten a number of things done.

Burns Paiute Tribe, Tracy Kennedy – Tracy was unable to attend, no report.

Housing Committee, Curt Blackburn-Two successful meetings have been held with another planned for the 15th of this month. The group has focused on several incentive programs that could make spec. home projects profitable for contractors. Kirby added that the Ontario City Manager Adam Brown will be here to meet with the group next week to talk about their simplified incentive program that seems to be a good fit for Harney County. Denise plans to attend a state Housing Summit in Salem on the 16th.

Workforce Committee, Roger Sheley from High Desert Partnership introduced Jennifer Taynton who will be working with BizHarney and the HDP Native Seed projects. She has moved to the area from John Day and comes highly qualified in collaborative processes.

Infrastructure Committee, Pete Runnels- the Brownfield grant was resubmitted this year, after a professional review process. The public-private broadband partnership is moving along, they are working on a list of tasks from Business Oregon. The County is working on a certified industrial lands process and will keep the group updated.

Small Business Development Committee, Myndi Hemphill-no report

Harney County Economic Development, Greg Smith– the office will help facilitate the DEQ public hearing for Biodynamics Pellet operation in Hines. The group discussed how members of the community can be prepared to provide meaningful input, including talking points and getting the word out about this public comment opportunity. Small business support classes have started for 2020 with a Pricing Your Product or Service class held this afternoon with 13 attending. Additional classes are scheduled for the next four months. A goal has been set for 4 new business startups this year.

B. Focus Reports:

Mark Owens was asked to make comments about the changes to our state elected officials in Eastern Oregon. He reviewed the appointments of Cliff Bentz and Lynn Findley, opening a spot for District 60 Oregon State Representative. Mark has expressed his interest in this appointment and hopes to be able to serve and support the county in this new direction. The coalition building possibilities appeal to him. The precinct meeting will be held January 18 to make a nomination for final appointment on January.

George Heinz presented information about composite material made from woody biomass and plastics by a company named Atree. This product can be used in place of wood, and the company

is looking for relocation opportunities. They are currently located in New Mexico and are interested in opportunities out of state.

George Heinz also gave an update on the hemp extraction plant, where he currently works. They currently employ over 15 people at the plant and have added a small night shift. They are exploring the market for hemp bi-product, one option is called Hemp-Crete. Mark Owens noted a project in Enterprise is feeding cattle on hemp, it may be good to watch this process and contact OSU Extension service for more hemp projects.

2020 Feedback and Ideas:

- Training for skill sets still needed in general customer service, office clerical duties
- Work to finish up the 2019 projects that are in place before we launch new projects
- Brownfield follow up and derelect building rehab efforts renew if we get grant
- Biz Harney is ready to distribute the Economic Ecosystem findings and will be digging into several projects, will keep the group engaged
- Jen Hoke updated the group on construction and moving of departments happening at Harney District Hospital.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM.

