

NEON Minutes

April 12, 2018, Biotechnology Advancement Center

Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and Nobles County Administrator, Tom Johnson, presided over the meeting.

Continuation of Child Care discussion: First Children's Finance Opportunity for funding to address the challenges of child care in rural America. Visit www.ruralchildcare.org for more information. Abraham-Greater MN Partnership sent updates. Coleen Gruis advised local daycare had a fire Monday and community is pulling together. Council working to provide space in the old Rushmore School. Nobles County Social Worker, Danette, was great asset in approving emergency location. The training of the daycare provider and the drills of the children paid off; exit went smoothly. Tom Johnson advised 5 weeks left of legislative session so if you have any comments, forward to County Administration.

Welcome, Education, Library, Livability (WELL): Discussion with local legislators: talked to 3 local at breakfast Saturday. Hamilton was pretty sure in house bill but he was going to follow up and see if there were any hearings for us to attend. Tom will continue to send emails to keep informed. After meetings with Chair, need ½ match so it's in as \$15 million. Right now at conceptual blocks so exact cost undetermined. The City and County have both approved \$2 million up front and the school board meets April 17th. Linden Olson advised it is recommended for approval by the school operations committee. 60% space is school district and 40% county. There is a chance this year that we may get small amount of bonding money, so maybe design and earth work may get done to be ready for in 2 more years. The County has taken the lead at this point and don't expect that to change. There would have to be an intergovernmental agreement (ie: PJC with City and County). At this point the City wants to keep the blue building (would need to add a story or two) but they have no operations within; they are providing parking and green space. Still all conceptual stage but makes most sense for collaboration (efficiencies). Mayor Kuhle was up and met with both bonding in senate and house. No levy required, would just be part of standard operations. An overseeing committee would be formed.

2018 Urban Lawmaker Tour Update: Tom attended International Festival planning committee to combine efforts. Trying to get 4 stops for legislators: send feedback, ideas to County Administration for planning. Need to have a kick off: BAC and rent Reading bus to tour. Lewis & Clark and Broadband construction will be in full swing. Darlene Macklin advised the president of the Federal Reserve Bank will be in town at the same time, so keep in mind to plan around. Tentative plan would be for the legislators to drive down Thursday afternoon, tour Friday, get them downtown for opening ceremony for International Festival and hopefully back for the other festival activities on Saturday. Ideas for stops: (Agriculture: Ryan Thier cattle barn- Coleen Gruis advised he is open to tour. His MPCA permit was delayed. Big shortage in staffing causes delays. Immigration issue (in Agriculture especially): Employment in plants and on farms. DNR Land: Maintenance of land and acquisition. Ron Janssen questioned if there is a way to work with DNR to outsource? Up north, their main income is mining (gravel and minerals) and timber. Private Investment groups: Regulatory Controls. Private investors would pay approximately 30% less in Iowa/South Dakota. Continuation of border city legislation. There is no private industry in Worthington. We have to drive to Sibley, Mankato, Sioux Falls to see theater; won't live here. Grow Your Own (teachers/healthcare of human and animal): Coming from students at Bio Conference, engage the students. LGA loss/1/2 cent sales tax: Would be a great disservice to not be able to do ½ cent sales tax because deducted from our LGA.

Around the Table:

Abraham Algadi/WREDC: Just completed Bio Conference, following up on good feedback following up on. Industrial hemp was very popular and could be good for industry; biodegradable at higher rate. Highlight was students; Investment group is aggressively pursuing items; regulatory controls are the issue. Met SWIFT's new Outreach Officer and provided resources. Nobles Home Initiative: more requests coming through to County and School District.

Linden Olson/ISD 518: Need to reach out to 7th/8th grade where they find their passion for World's best workforce; need to inform them of education required and steps; transfer the idea of grow your own beyond teaching and healthcare.

Darlene Macklin/Chamber of Commerce: Legislative breakfast had great turnout, have almost outgrown the fire hall. Salute to Women's banquet is Monday night (4/16) at Winery and still looking for male wait staff, Willow Sweeney is speaker; kicking off Chamber mixer 5-7pm at Spomer classics on Tuesday, 4/17); Thursday, 4/19 KTD fundraiser Donkey basketball. Opening Travel Information Center on May 11th.

Julie Foote/MVTV Wireless: Second day had solar presentation at Bio Conference; student panel-when it comes to legislature, how does that affect or block having a theater/entertainment plaza? They control where bonding money can be directed; Reading Community Theater this weekend and next weekend – using the WIFI.

Rod Sankey/Citizen: If you put in a library, look ahead 20 years when planning.

Amy Ernst/City of Worthington: Had put theater for ½ cent sales tax because it's more of a private industry and they are looking for more of a nonprofit (arena, trails, etc). They don't want us using bond money to compete with private industry. City can find other funding to assist other than ½ cent sales tax or bond money. Cities depend on LGA with budget; would be a great disservice if LGA reduced by the ½ cent sales tax. Working on Movie Theater so they don't have to wait for funding with the State; City approved next step on the Beach Nook; Sewer and Water extension on Crailsheim Rd (new gymnastics center) and to South Gateway Drive area for gas station. Couple of Students from the College came to City Council meeting Monday night and Council was impressed by good questions. Gene Metz advised in regard to threat of City's LGA reduction by the ½ cent sales tax, just about had same issue with Wind Production Tax.

Ron Janssen/Seward Twp: Went to the Annual Township meeting; new voting machines-2 townships voted by mail and now there are 5; our constituents like to meet at our hall for voting but may need to do mail in ballot in future.

Gene Metz/Nobles County: Legislative breakfast was very good, good turnout and were able to have good discussions. Busy with Legislative Session, roads, and water. County is looking at overlaying 25 miles this year. We should be rebuilding 3-4 miles per year in order to keep on track with the 100 year life of a road.

Gary Ewert/Heron Lake Watershed District: partnership with Dept. of Ag for a cover crop, soil moisture and temperature 5 year; conservation grant for wetland storage on JD #19; with ditches, encouraging conservation practices.

Linden Olson/ISD 518: Issue of overcrowding; plan to have a work session for options like year round school. Legislation has major impact on what a school can and cannot do (ie: safety issue like gun control, suspension withdrawals and expulsion rates; Cyber Security) Cyber security affects all governmental agencies. Amy Ernst advised there is a federal agency that will help public entities if they are attacked and walk them through steps on what to do next. Need to have policies and procedure in place that if attacked they can follow; setting policy and long term direction – how is technology going to change how things are done? A lot of things can be done now that humans don't need to do. What is e-tail going to do to retailers? Broadband comes in and everyone can access, will kids got to movies or just stream movies in their home? Governor wants threat assessment done in schools. Another mandate may come in regarding health curriculum, because of sexual exploitation, consent instruction to teach some of these things. Amy Ernst questioned what happens when we're overcrowded with mandates? State testing with 6th grade, special ed students have to have small group areas to take tests. Middle school doesn't have any small group areas. There is nowhere to test these kids in small groups (quiet, shut door). No approved space for them. Just an example of struggling with mandates and overcrowding.

77% of jobs right now do not require a college education. But how do we provide the correct education for the jobs available in our area. Look at trends.

Darlene Macklin/Worthington Chamber of Commerce: Directing her statements ISD 518, survey that was out, a lot of people don't want year round school and you can take survey more than once.

Gene Metz/Commissioner – At Commissioners at your café events, roundabouts always come up; internet purchasing effects due to no sales tax on small business; investment dollars that leave community when people retire; 1W1P collaboration of counties, soil and water conservation districts and watersheds; watching proposed wind project on northeastern part of county.

Tom Johnson/Nobles County: Arbor Day Event on Friday, April 27th at Government Center, 10 am.

Please forward ideas for the next meeting to the Nobles County Administration Office.

Next Meeting:

May 10, 2018 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
BioTechnology Advancement Center
1527 Prairie Drive, Worthington, MN 56187

The meeting adjourned.