

MINUTES
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
January 29, 2010

Committee Members Present: Derek Stanley, Shawn Gillen, Diane Weber, Paula Frings, Bill Eckblad, Jake Goering, Tom Schmoll, Margie Ritter, Dale Adams, Josh Hafer, Gary Mcinerney, Irene Koski, Steve Arbour

Advisory members present:

Guests:

Chamber Staff: Renee Thompson, Administrative Assistant and Finance Coordinator; Bud Stone, President.

Jake Goering called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the December 18, 2009 meeting minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Steve made a motion to approve the December 18, 2009 meeting minutes. Margie seconded the motion. Motion carries.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

NUCLEAR ENERGY BAN

Bud explained that there is movement to repeal the State of Minnesota's nuclear energy plant ban Bud distributed a flyer explaining the Minnesota Chamber's Base Load Energy & Capacity Policy.

After committee discussion, Steve made a motion to support the Minnesota Chamber's position. Gary McInerney seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ACTION: Bud will draft a resolution of support and take it to the Chamber's Board of Directors.

CORPORATE TAX CREDITS

Bud informed the committee that Minnesota's corporate tax rate is the third highest in the nation at 9.8%. Reducing this tax or providing tax credits will go a long ways towards improving the climate for economic development.

ACTION: No further action necessary.

MINNESOTA STATE GRANT PROGRAM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Bud informed the committee that Minnesota State Grant College Program will be short 50 million dollars by the end of 2012.

Dennis Egan would like the Chamber to support The Minnesota's Private Colleges Council's efforts to keep money in the fund.

ACTION: Bud will talk to Sue Collins from NEHED to see where they are on this issue.

MEMBER UPDATES

Dale informed the committee that the Pokegama Golf Course Club House is coming along. The target open date is April or May.

Shawn invited the committee to attend the retirement open house for three retiring police officers at 2:00 p.m. today, and the swearing in of the new police chief at 4 p.m. today. Both events will be held at the Fire Hall. Shawn also reported that the PUC and City are still negotiating combining services and that an annexation to the City Limits was completed on January 1, 2010.

Bud talked about the language change in the Lessard Outdoor Heritage 3/8 of 1% Constitutional Amendment. Bud talked to Wayne Brandt and Mark Johnson about this. The Forestry Affairs Committee will be discussing this issue in greater detail today.

Margie reported that her business is expanding their show to the Chisago Area.

Tom reported that his business had a record year in 2009.

Steve Arbour asked the committee if anyone had any input regarding the School District Contract that did not get signed.

After committee discussion, it was decided to ask Joe Silko to attend the next meeting to discuss this issue.

ACTION: Bud will contact Joe regarding attending the next meeting.

Gary discussed the City's interest in purchasing some land parcels at the Ainsworth site.

Diane thanked the City for doing the plowing and providing security at the Ainsworth site. Diane spoke about grants that have been applied for to complete demolition and reconstruction and environmental clean up at the Ainsworth site. The (potential) major tenant for the site has started their environmental assessment. The assessment should take about 6 months. Diane mentioned that there is also a local business looking at relocating their business at the site. Lastly, Diane spoke about a contract/partnership between APEX and IEDC. Jeff Borling, is currently employed with APEX and will be working full time out of the IEDC office working on marketing and recruiting businesses to the area.

Paula informed the committee that she has "sun-set" her business, Cleveland, Management and Consulting Group and started a new business under Maven Perspectives, LLC as of January 1, 2010. She has added two employees.

Irene informed the committee that the County Board will be making a decision on February 23, 2010 regarding the Living Word Bible Camp.

Jake informed the committee that their renovation project at Grand Village is underway.

NEXT MEETING AGENDA ITEMS

- Joe Silko – District Contract
- MN State Chamber Conference Call

ACTION: The above items will be added to the February 12, 2010 agenda.

The next meeting will be at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, February 12, 2010. There will be a MN State Chamber Conference call.

Steve made a motion to adjourn. Dale seconded the motion. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.