

# MINUTES

## Lane Economic Committee

Lane Council of Governments – 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Large Conference Room  
99 E. Broadway, Suite 400 – Eugene

September 6, 2005 – 11:30 A.M.

**PRESENT:** John Tamulonis, Chair; Tim Black, DeAnn Cherbas, Chuck Forster, Anna Morrison, Glenda Poling, Rob Scoggin, John Sullivan, Ellen Teninty, members; Jay Bozievich, Philip Hudspeth, Deb Schmidt, *ex officio* members; Dave D’Avanzo (for Jim Ramseyer), Howard Schesser (for Rob Scoggin), alternate members.

Steve Dignam, Milo Mecham (LCOG); Peter Thurston (Lane County).

**ABSENT:** Mike Blommé, Jim Ramseyer, Hal Reed, Mike Sullivan, Mitch Wilkinson, Lynnette Wikstrom, members; Kari Westlund, *ex officio* member;

To facilitate the late arrival of Mr. Tamulonis, Mr. Scoggins called the meeting of the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) Lane Economic Committee (LEC) to order at 11:35 a.m. He invited those who were present to introduce themselves.

### 1. Public Comment

None.

### 2. Comments of the Chair

None.

### 3. Comments of the Staff

Mr. Dignam expressed appreciation to members who had participated in the Regional Strategic Planning Forum in Corvallis on July 25. He reported on his observance of economic development activities of the Lane County Sheriff’s Department, noted that Mr. Mecham would assume staff responsibilities for revision of Economic Development Strategies, and described a chance meeting with former LEC Chair Alex Pawlowski.

Mr. Tamulonis joined the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

### 3. Minutes Review

*Ms. Morrison moved, seconded by Mr. Scoggins, to accept the minutes of the June 20, 2005, meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 9:0, Ms. Teninty having not yet joined the meeting.*

*Mr. Forster moved, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, to accept the minutes of the July 25, 2005, meeting. The motion was adopted unanimously, 9:0.*

#### **4. Higher Education Budget Outlook**

Mr. Black reported on actions of the 2005 Oregon Legislative Session affecting the University of Oregon (UO). He said no budget cuts had been imposed and that, in the end, more was allocated to University programs than had been in the budget proposed by Governor Kulongoski. He explained that \$7 million was budgeted for development of a UO micro-business program, the level of support for the Oregon Opportunity Grant program was increased, and authority given for General Obligation Bonds to support capital improvements for the College of Education, Theater, and Gilbert Hall. He said the adoption of SB853 provided tax advantages to donors to university-based research for development of market place applications.

Mr. Bozievich reported that the Legislature had increased budgetary support for community colleges, but that formulae for distribution of funds to schools throughout the state had not yet been completed. He said Lane Community College anticipated balanced budgets until fiscal year 2007, when a \$1.1 million deficit was expected. He explained that funding was most affected by distribution formulae, employee health benefit cost increases, Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) rate increases, rising energy costs, and faculty contract settlements.

#### **4. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy**

Mr. Dignam referred to agenda support material developed at the July Strategic Planning Forum. He noted that documents entitled "Regional Vision" and "Existing Goals" contained revisions provided by the Benton-Lane-Lincoln-Linn Regional Investment Board Planning Committee and Economic Development Committee of the Cascades West Council of Governments (CWCOG). He said the LEC was invited to discuss the strategies to provide Lane County perspectives.

Mr. Dignam explained that the vision and goal statements were significant in that they served as criteria for the awarding of federal grants.

Mr. Mecham reviewed the format and purpose of the support material. He referred to his memorandum that listed current economic development strategies and example projects. He suggested that members use them as a basis for their discussion.

Mr. Mecham said proposals developed by the LEC would be reviewed and finalized at its next meeting scheduled for September 19. He explained that regional economic development goals and strategies would be finally adopted by the CWCOG. He suggested that a subcommittee might be formed to articulate recommendations for LEC consideration.

Mr. Sullivan said he believed there were more examples of new and existing industry clusters to be encouraged than just those involving recreation vehicles and bicycles. He said he continued to also support more involvement of regional business leaders in the LEC to enhance its effectiveness as a forum for the exchange of economic development information.

Ms. Poling said she believed the bicycle cluster had the potential for significant expansion as an engine for regional economic development. She suggested that other areas with good potential were business ventures in the areas of micro-biology and life sciences.

Mr. Black suggested that it would be important to identify enhanced cooperation with currently developed industries and businesses as an economic development strategy.

Mr. Tamulonis suggested that convening UO alumnae in an economic development forum could be a productive strategy.

Ms. Morrison said she believed regional business leaders needed to be more involved in regional economic development strategy activities.

Mr. Sullivan said creation of a viable inter-modal distribution system was essential to future regional economic development.

Ms Poling said Lane Metro Partnership was seeking to expand the representation of area business leaders on its board of directors. She said technology transfer would be an important stimulus for economic development, but that its high cost might limit its potential in area. She said improved rail service was a significant need of regional business and was tied to the importance of an inter-modal distribution system.

Mr. Dignam suggested that more value should be placed on tourism as an area economic development strategy.

Ms. Teninty joined the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that an economic development strategy could be to increase the usability of available industrial property.

Mr. Forster suggested that developing wage progression strategies would be important for area economic development.

Mr. Bozievich suggested that higher education was a major driver of economic development in Lane County and could be considered an existing industry cluster.

Mr. Tamulonis suggested that the “steroidal improvement” in area medical facilities highlighted the economic development importance of hospital services and the healthcare industry. Mr. Bozievich added that elder care and assisted living programs should be identified as an important element of the cluster. Mr. D’Avanzo observed that migration to urban areas by aging populations to be near healthcare services had impacts on rural business, including electric utilities.

Mr. Mecham said he would circulate a summary of suggestions made regarding economic development strategies via E-mail. He invited feedback before the September 19 meeting.

## **5. Cascades West Economic Development District Board Membership**

Mr. Dignam referred to information regarding appointments to the Cascades West Economic Development District Board.

***Mr. Black moved, seconded by Ms. Teninty, to nominate John Sullivan and Mike Sullivan for appointment to the Cascades West Economic Development District Board. The motion was adopted unanimously, 10:0.***

The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

*(Recorded by Dan Lindstrom)*