

Minutes
SKOWHEGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MEETING
January 19, 2016
7:00 AM
Renaissance Center – Conference Room

Members Present:

John Jordan, Chairman (arrived 7:07 a.m.)
Kurt Maynard, Vice Chairman
Jason Gayne, Treasurer
Betty Austin
Sally Dwyer
Billy Finley
Doreen Poulin
Todd Smith

Members Absent:

Reid Gibson

Others Present:

Dena Rich, Recording Secretary
Jeff Hewett, Director of Economic & Community Dev.

- 1. Approve the Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation minutes from the “regular” meeting November 3, 2015 and Phone Pole from December 14, 2015.**

Motion by Betty Austin, seconded by Sally Dwyer to approve the minutes from the “regular” meeting November 3, 2015 and the Phone Pole December 14, 2015. Vote 7-0, motion carried.

- 2. Approve the Skowhegan Economic Development Corporation financials from November and December.**

(John took over meeting)

Todd Smith asked if Richard Lyons was making payments toward his Micro Loan. Jeff Hewett said we are chasing him and have talked with him last week; Richard said he would be in to start making payments toward the loan.

Motion by Betty Austin, seconded by Todd Smith to approve the financials from November and December. Vote 8-0, motion carried.

3. Discussion and decision to change meeting date from the 3rd Tuesday to 3rd Wednesday of the Month.

Jeff Hewett said the reason for this change is there seems to be a conflict with the Skowhegan Rotary meetings at the same time as our monthly SEDC Meeting.

Motion by Betty Austin, seconded by Todd Smith to change the monthly SEDC meeting to the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 7:00 a.m. Vote 8-0, motion carried.

4. Update of Broadband efforts

a. Results of online Survey

Jeff Hewett went over the results that were returned for the Skowhegan Broadband Survey. (See results below)

Total Responses to Survey 137

Q 4. What is the cost of your plan? Response 97

Least cost \$19
Highest Cost \$300
Average 63.58

Q5. Who provides your internet connection Responses 96

Fairpoint 31.25%
GWI 12.50 %
Beeline 50%
Hughes 5.21
Hussey Comm. 1.04%

Q6. Are you happy with your service? Responses 98

Yes 48.98%
No 51.02%

Q7. Download speeds Responses 56

Slowest speed .48 mbps
Fastest speed 100 mbps
Average speed 7.4606 mbps

Upload speeds

Slowest speed .14 mbps
Fastest speed 700 mbps
Average speed 2.94 mbps with the one at 700 removed

Q8. What are your needs for the Internet

Personal	78.38 %
Medical	16.22 %
Education	44.59%
Marketing	25.68%
Research	51.35%
Movement of large files	32.43%
All of the above	20.27%

Q9. Do you or any member of your household telecommute ? Responses 73

Yes	32.68%
No	67.12%

Q10. Which potential effects of improved broadband access do you believe would benefit Skowhegan?

Responses 69

More small businesses	42.03%
More Telecommuting	23.19%
Fewer your adults leaving	13.04 %
More distance learning access	15.94%
Increase year round residents	4.35%
Increase vacationers	1.45%

Q11. Would you like training on using the internet? Response 32

Learn to use the internet to connect to family	9.38%
How to use Ipad or tablet	15.63%
How to use Facebook or social Media	15.63%
How to use Skype	15.63%
How to use the internet to promote my business	25.00%
How to use Quickbooks	28.13 %
How to use Photoshop	18.75%
How to use Excel	34.38%

Q12. If no, what is the number one reason why you don't have internet service at home or place of business? Responses 4

Too expensive	50.00%
Not available in my area	50.00%

Q13. What are your needs for the internet? Responses 7

Personal	100 %
Education	42.86 %
Research	57.14%

Jeff Hewett said he was surprised to see that 50% of people were happy with their service. Billy Finley said it is probably based on that people in this area don't know that they can get better

service. John Jordan said that could also include the people who are just satisfied with the service they receive.

Jeff Hewett also discussed having an education piece to give small businesses and residents more information into broadband and the internet for their everyday uses.

b. Follow up KVCOG mailing survey's to residents in Somerset

Jeff Hewett had hoped to have the results back for this meeting but had not received all the surveys back. At this time he had been told there were 300 surveys returned as of a week ago. He hopes to have the result all back by our next meeting.

c. ConnectME Planning Grant-Regional application

Jeff Hewett said this grant is supposed to become active in February. At this time we are working with Canaan, Cornville, Skowhegan, Madison, Norridgewock and Starks as a region. The first part of this grant will be the meeting January 21, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center. We sent 35 direct invites out and have also opened this meeting up to public. Next part is to set up a committee to see what our region needs are for broadband.

d. Broadband Meeting January 21, 2016

Jeff Hewett asked the Board if they are available they are welcome to attend also if they know of others who are interest in Broadband are welcome to attend as well. Lisa Leahy from ConnectME will be at the meeting to discuss broadband in our area. A few of the businesses coming are Fairpoint, Axium Technologies, Backyard Farms, Bee-Line Cable, also Sewell.

5. Items by the Members.

a. Broadband Goals

Attend Broadband Meeting January 21, 2016.

b. Natural Gas Goals

Todd Smith had no new information from Summit since they cancelled to meet back in October. He will follow up and see if there is a date that Summit could come to meet with the Board.

c. Acquisition/Development Goals

Kurt Maynard spoke with Amber Lambke and Ann Smith to get the Farmers market depot possibly in the KVI building.

Jeff Hewett said that the KVI building is under a lease for 2 years then purchase agreement; and being turned into a Tavern.

d. Marketing Goals

John Jordan is going to set up a meeting with Kristina Cannon.

e. Run of River Goals

Jeff Hewett let the Board know that the Sewell Application Grant was turned in January 15, 2016. This grant if awarded should cover most of the permitting and final engineering costs for the project. The Town has contracted with Planning Decision out of Portland to start the Economic Impact Study for the project. Kristina Cannon is working alongside Ken Young of Planning Decision.

6. Economic & Community Development Office Items.

Jeff Hewett let the Board know he is involved with the newly formed Downtown TIF committee. This committee is working very well in figuring out projects that will be funded by the Downtown TIF if it is extended; and also expanding the Downtown TIF area. The projects and the TIF extension still have to go in front of the Selectmen for approval. It will also have to be put on the Town warrant for June. This group has a mixture of members from the Town, Main Street, Somerset EDC, Skowhegan EDC and Downtown businesses.

Jeff Hewett also let the Board know that New Balance Lease is coming due soon. A New Balance Representative has been in contact with the office about renewing. We have been playing phone tag with them and by next meeting we will have their information. He reminded the Board to be thinking about what they would like to see with the lease and any changes.