



# Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

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**Minutes  
of  
Region 3 Regional Prosperity Initiative Collaborative  
April 27, 2016  
University Center  
Gaylord, MI**

**Call to Order:** Doug Baum called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

**Members Present:** Mary Vratnina, Hannah Sanderson, Katie Jensen, Cameron Brunet-Koch, Patty O'Donnell, Rosalie Myers, Doug Baum, Luann Mabarak, Natasha Allen, Lori Friend, Erich Podjaske, David Kurtycz, Lisa McComb, Lydia Murray, Diane Rekowski, Laura Budreau, Dave Glenn, Niki Chamberlain, Mike Brownfield, Dave Nyberg, Donna LaCourt, Steve Milford, Rina Allen, Mandi Chasey, Tom Stephenson, Dan Leonard, Corey Utley, Andy Hayes and Lisa Bolen.

**Staff:** Denise Cline and Theresa Huff

**Introductions:** All attendees introduced themselves to group.

**Roll Call:** Done by sign-in sheet.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting:** L. Mabarak moved, supported by E. Podjaske to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2016 meeting. All ayes, motion carried.

**Financial Report:** D. Rekowski gave a brief update on financials. This is the first report for this budget. \$12,000 was spent this period. Digital Works was a large expenditure.

**2016 RPI Project Update:**

- A. Mini-grant Selection Committees/D. Glenn: The Mini-Grant proposals went out. Grants up to \$5,000 are available for Economic Development and up to \$10,000 for Marketing. May 27<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to submit the mini-grant applications. Will be developing a committee to screen the applications and make final selection. The first list will be put together in the next week or so. Would like to encourage more regional/collaborative applications versus individual applications. A request was made for volunteers to assist, R. Allen and L. Mabarak volunteered. June 24<sup>th</sup> is the final selection date.

- B. Winter Tourism Video/D. Cline: The Winter Tourism Video is funded by a CZM grant, including 6 counties and RPI. There are three parts, video, and a companion map guide and website work. She pulled up the video on YouTube, "Silence" Northeast Michigan Winter Promotional Film and the group was able to view it although it's still in draft form. It was well received by the group. It can be used during travel shows as well. The companion map will be in a similar format to the current birding map. D. Cline showed a "draft" of the map cover.
- C. Website Dashboard/D. Cline: Stats are at year end. Prosperity is on the collaborative website. Performance dash board includes such data as Economic and financial health, public safety and education and talent. The 2015 data has not been provided yet, but when it is, it'll be added to the website. D. Cline encourages everyone to take a few minutes to visit the website and preview all the information that is provides. The data provided on the website comes from various sources. Reminder: Prosperity numbers include all 11 counties.
- D. D. Rekowski provided and reviewed a handout for RPI Regional 3 "2015 Year-end Status of Strategies Related to RPI Goals". Stated overall it's been a good year.
- E. Talent update/N. Chamberlain and L. Budreau: There has been or will be 4 Career Fairs this year: Alpena, Cheboygan, Grayling and Gaylord. Career Expo's with high schools have been very successful. Talent Tours (been having them for 3 years): have been challenging this year due to low funds for bussing for the schools. May have a couple in Grayling, possibly more in the fall. They meet with high schools to discuss what industries they'd like to learn about. Then the tours are setup. There will be a Talent District Council meeting in May.
- F. Roundtable Discussion/D. Glenn: Discussed linkage between businesses and talent needs. What are the needs and focuses? The RPI plan was never thoroughly discussed and needs to be discussed more and get more input from the group. How do we do it? What can we pull together? What linkage? How do we connect? Need more small groups to get most ideas. What opportunities are out there? How do we train for those needs? How do we communicate and distribute the information? Schools? MI Works!? The group broke down into several small groups to brainstorm for 15 minutes to get a list of ideas.
1. Current Talent Needs: Computer literacy, robotics, engineering skills for various communication techniques, trade skills, people (bodies), skilled labor, soft skills, people that can pass a drug test, general education, bring in equipment to teach kids, encourage interest, equipment operators
  2. Needs for 5-15 years from now: Skilled Labor, health Care
  3. Who needs to be involved?: Schools, lack of life skills, engage parents and employers, EDC, higher education
  4. How to communicate needs from Businesses to schools/teachers?: Using technology to our benefit and stay connected, get on teacher in-service day Agendas, guidance counselors, bring in employers to share information, linkage (sustainable), use roll-up banners that can provide a lot of information and can be placed almost anywhere without taking up a lot of space.
  5. Other ideas: Bring in equipment such as calipers, fast track, alumni.

**Committee Member Updates:**

Bylaws Committee/L. Mabarak: Working on final draft.

MI Works!: Won the appeal. On the Job Training (OJT) will be communicated. Will be training existing workers to move up in the field.

T. Stevenson: Alcona, Iosco done. Adding Frontier and Charter. ATT owns several strands of fiber-Merit. All communities to meet regarding build out. Connect America funds are \$12 million per year for broadband. FCC announced life line telephone to a broadband at \$9.25 subsidy per month to households that have kids on lunch program and seniors. All providers can offer to their customers. Charter merged with Time Warner.

D. Leonard: Rural Development is being enhanced. Low to moderate income-focus on building downtowns, \$7 million in funding available. This is the first of many. Community Development is being more particular. You must have an up to date Capital Improvement Plan, Master Plan, etc. They are hosting training in June. Since the beginning of the last meeting, MSHDA and the MEDC Collaborative Community Development have been combined. Every project will be evaluated on a first come first served basis. In Northern Michigan, \$40,000 doesn't go as far. Funding is now based on financial need. All NEM Housing commissioners have been met with to review changes. They encourage one on one, face to face meeting.

**Public Comment:**

D. Nyberg/Governor's office, based out of Marquette. Many changes are occurring with staff. Provides more people who can assist us. Looking for people to sit on boards and committees to provide input and ideas.

C. Utey/Governor's office, based out of Lansing. Encourages everyone to contact Governor's office to attend meetings, events.

M. Brownfield: Stated Governor remains committed to RPI and Economic Development. Prediction on RPI: the Governor will remain on board. See values in committees to keep informed and collaborate with legislature to share benefits.

D. Glenn: shared Mrs. Glee's has been selected for Main Street award, was selected one of 12. Is based out of Hillman. Will receive award in May. Have 40 plus employees now and has grown a lot in the past 2 years?

D. Cline: YouTube has had 90,000 hits on the video.

D. Rekowski: CEDs have been sent out.

**Next Meeting Date:** May 25, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 3:37 p.m.