



## Meeting Summary

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**Committee Meeting:** Small Business Council

**Date of Meeting:** Friday, May 8, 2009 – 8:00 a.m.

**Next Meeting Date:** Friday, September 11 – 8:00 a.m.

**NOTE: No July or August Meeting**

### **Committee Purpose:**

The Small Business Council will be the primary vehicle to connect and help grow the Chamber's small business members. The Small Business Council's focus is to embrace and encourage entrepreneurial business practices, to serve as the voice for small business, and to offer opportunities for development through networking and Chamber programs.

**Committee Chair:** Bob Forsman, National Coatings

### **Meeting Summary:**

**Present** – Kyle Trevas, Liz Sayre-King, Jeff Henkel, Bonnie Alfonso, Chuck Curtiss, Beth Holmes-Bozung, Ruth Nunnolley, Steve Merten, Steve Perdue, Denny Lauterbach, Marie Chantal Begin, Bob Forsman, Tino Breithaupt, Doug Luciani and Kelly Walter.

**Welcome & Introductions** – Chairman Forsman called the meeting to order at 8:04 a.m.

**Follow-Up Discussion Regarding Conflict Resolution Services, Inc. Program for Chamber Members** Chamber President & CEO Doug Luciani gave the Council an overview of the proposed CRS business-to-business program. Luciani explained the goal of this program is to help member businesses trim the cost of doing business. If approved by the Chamber Board of Directors the program would be Chamber endorsed, and the Chamber would own part of the intellectual property used to train business mediators. The Chamber's program would be considered a pilot program for CRS – we would help develop the training materials. The Chamber may receive some royalties if other communities use the product but at this point that is not certain. The Chamber would be responsible along with CRS to make member businesses

aware of the program and the mediation process and how it can benefit their business. Luciani asked for Council members thoughts, what issues their businesses encounter where mediation may be of assistance, what they'd like trained mediators to know in regards to business, and do they feel this is a worthwhile endeavor and viable service to members. He clarified there is no member discount – the cost savings is in keeping their case out of court.

Discussion ensued. Council member thoughts and recommendations were as follows:

- Feel it's a good program and businesses, including the Small Business Council, should be involved in helping to develop the training curriculum – particularly merchants. It was also recommended Bruce Rogers be consulted on this.
- Feel this is a Chamber member benefit even if there is no discount – it's a service that business really need and may not currently be aware of it.
- There were questions about liability issues for the Chamber – the Chamber will not carry any liability due to the fact the mediator doesn't make the decision(s) – the parties using the mediator are the ones who agree on their final decision.
- There were questions about what CRS's role is in all this – CRS is a clearing house for mediation volunteers. They must have 40 hours of practice service to be certified through the State of Michigan and only certified mediators are accepted into the CRS program. CRS is funded partially through the court system via court fees.
- There were questions about this program taking away business from member attorneys or mediators who are not part of CRS. It was noted that the majority are members of CRS and this is not expected to be an issue.

Doug Luciani asked the Council if they would recommend the Chamber of Commerce enter into an agreement with CRS – endorsing the pilot program. A motion was made by Steve Perdue to recommend the Chamber Board approve the CRS pilot program. The motion was seconded by Bryan Crough and unanimously approved by the Small Business Council. It was added that the Small Business Council will help develop the business curriculum for training mediators.

**Chamber Advocacy Efforts** - Chamber President & CEO Doug Luciani informed the Council that the Chamber is working to define what advocacy means for the Chamber and how far the Chamber is willing to go in regards to advocacy efforts. The Chamber Board recently spent a half-day working solely on this issue. The Chamber is moving away from strictly government advocacy to advocacy for businesses. The Board is committed to being an impact player in the region and wants to engage in issues quickly and effectively with a targeted agenda and process for all issues the organization takes on. Discussion ensued. Luciani said the current Government Relations Committee has about 54 members, with about 16-18 attending on a regular basis. A lot of them are elected officials and public employees – with strategic changes in regards to

advocacy, the Chamber would like to see more business owners on the Committee giving guidance in the decisions and recommendations coming out of the Committee. Luciani said he will be asking the Council to get much more involved in advocacy efforts if they are willing to do that. Ideally, becoming a group of Chamber members who are willing and able to be engaged in advocacy efforts – this will manifest mostly at the local level by attending meetings, being “watch-dogs” in the community (the Chamber covers 93 local units of government), and being proactive in getting fellow members engaged in advocacy. Further discussion ensued.

Chairman Forsman recommended the Council continue to discuss what their role could be in Chamber advocacy efforts. He further recommended that Doug Luciani and Chamber Board Chairman Tim Nelson attend the September Council meeting to report on the Board’s plan of action for advocacy efforts and how the Council can assist once that plan of action is in place. Forsman added that in the mean time the Council will help in any way they can. It was noted Luciani and Nelson will be invited to update the Council at their September meeting.

**Next Meeting Date** – Friday, June 12, 8:00 a.m. at the Chamber.  
The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.



Health Care Committee  
of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce  
Meeting Notes: May 6, 2009, 8:00 a.m.

**Present:** Arlene Brennan, Lyn Chappel, Gary Huyge, Tracy Kiersey, Russ Knopp, Darryl Lesoski, MD, Rene Louchart, Doug Luciani, Jim McDonnell, Sharon Olson, Steve Perdue, Greg Lewis, Dr. John Schneider, and Caryn Cleland

**Guest:** Sherri Fenton, Director of Development for Traverse Health Clinic

**Call to Order:** Chairman Jim McDonnell called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

**Review Meeting Notes:** Minutes of April 8, 2009 meeting were approved as written.

*Upcoming Seminars –*

- **Details on May 20<sup>th</sup> Seminar & Sponsorship** – Jim McDonnell explained that while we planned on having someone from Medicare present on data match, in light of passage of ARRA and the impact on COBRA premiums (claims have quintupled since passage of the Act), the seminar will be shared with half of the presentation addressing this impact. Sponsor will be BCBS. Committee members wanting to attend we asked to be sure to register,
- **Discuss & Confirm Topic for November with Selected Presenters** – There was discussion regarding a panel w/representatives from legislature, BCBS, Priority, etc. in November. Committee members asked to consider others to be included on the panel.
- **Survey** – There was discussion regarding a survey of Chamber members and their areas of interest or concern as they relate to health care. Caryn will ask Beth Milligan to attend the next meeting to discuss conducting such a survey through the Chamber website.

*Traverse Health Clinic Update*

Sherri Fenton, Development Director of the Traverse Health Clinic, was introduced. Ms. Fenton stated that has been working to get the word out on the mission of the clinic, its growth needs and the impact it has on the community. Ms. Fenton provided background on the clinic's history and its main focus of providing access to services for the uninsured. In 2007 there was a merge of Traverse City Health Care Coalition and Community Health Clinic to create what is now the

Traverse Health Clinic. An increase in community support is needed as demands on the Clinic continue to grow. They are about to launch a nine-month ad campaign for resources dubbed “Give, Live, Act”.

***Other Business – Concerns – Issues***

Steve Perdue reminded the Committee of a joint meeting with the Government Relations Committee to be held on Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 a.m. with Andy Johnston of the Grand Rapids Chamber. Everyone is urged to attend if schedules permit.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING:                    June 3, 2009**