



NOTES: June 26, 2009 – 7:30 a.m.
Government Relations Committee

Present: Ben Bifoss, Drew Buchholz, Don Coe, Ron Crofoot, Bryan Crough, James Feil, Robert Gluszweski, Art Jeannot, Kerry Kaysserian, George McBath, Steve Nugent, Steve Perdue, Gabe Schneider, Jack Schripsema, Paul Shirilla, Sharon Wise, Joseph Zayaz.

I. Welcome and review of Notes from May 29, 2009

Art Jeannot opened the meeting and reviewed the notes from May 29, 2009 meeting and then introduced Doug DeYoung for a discussion on the Director of Government Relations goals.

Advocacy Introduction:

- Discussed grassroots advocacy and committee member involvement.
- Communication to the committee members from board and government relations communications
- Alliance duties

II. State Report:

- Representative Scripps called in and gave us an update on, Tourism Funding, MBT review committee.
- Update on Tourism Funding Bills.
- Michigan Budget update.

III. Federal:

Gabe Schneider: Healthcare will be an August debate
Cash for Clunkers at cars.gov
Energy Bills will move to Senate

Sharon Wise: Cap and Trade Energy Bills
Healthcare alternatives

Local Reports

Ben Bifoss/

New community development director Bryan Crough starts Monday.

A vital downtown continues as one of the best in the state.

Bryan Crough: 101 Park Street Ground Breaking Friday June 26th at 11:30 a.m.

IV. Other Items:

Steve Perdue discussed his trip to Washington D.C. and discussed using opportunities like that to advocate for northern Michigan.

VI. Next Meeting

- TBD Maybe July 31, 2009 if needed at 7:30 a.m. at the Chamber office

The meeting was adjourned.



Meeting Summary

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.



NOTES: June 19th, 2009 - 7:30 a.m.
Transportation Committee

I. Welcome and Review of Notes from January 16, 2008

Evan opened the meeting and welcomed everyone and asked for a review of the Notes from the last meeting. No changes were offered.

II. Dam Removal Update:

Presentation from County Administrator Dennis Aloia on the removal of the dams on the Boardman River.

- Funding; still working on all funding needs for the 10 -15 million dollar project.
- 4 to 5 year process with sedimentation studies along the way.
- Hiring program manager to oversee removal.
- Working with area organizations on soil conservation etc.
- Updates available at boardmanriver.org

III. Federal, State, Local updates

Discussed transportation funding issues with the state of Michigan's inability to match the federal dollars. Continue to push legislators to ask for an exception from the federal government to allow for state funding.

Discussed TF2 funding analysis sent to members of the committee, no action taken but discussion was the state needed to look at how to fund future transportation needs.

No State report

Local report: Discussed the Boardman trail and the plans that were presented to create a tunnel under South Airport Road. The plan is to connect the Boardman Lake trails with the Boardman Rivers trails. A study will need to be conducted and funding requests by the Tart Trail organization are underway to look at all options of making this connection.

IV. Grand Vision Update:

Discussion on Transportation Committee taking a role in the Grand Vision planning and having members to be a part of any Grand Vision Committee on transportation.

Discussion and agreement on pursuing with the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments a 2010 Transportation Summit in Northern Michigan.

V. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be on Friday August 21, 2009, 7:30 a.m. at the chamber office.

The meeting was adjourned.