July 9, 2014  

Industrial Development Committee Minutes

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Industrial Development Committee, July 9, 2014, 8:00 a.m.

Pierce County Courthouse, County Board Room

**Members present:** Jim Ross, Mike Kahlow, Cecil Bjork  
**Pierce County EDC Staff present:** Paul Schwebach & Heather Hines  
**Pierce County Staff present:** JoAnn Miller – Administrative Coordinator

Ross called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**Agenda** approved as presented (Kahlow, Bjork).

**June 18, 2014 Minutes** approved as presented (Bjork, Kahlow).

**Public Comment** None.

**PCEDC Budget Proposal.** Schwebach discussed PCEDC’s 2015 budget request document, with one additional line item, that he was just informed of. During Schwebach’s recent visit to major Pierce County employers, he learned that three of them have or are seeking to increase their number of employees by a total of 135. Of the total, 85 are temporary, however the two employers feel they will become permanent positions in six months or less. All three of these companies have been assisted by the PCEDC in the past years. Schwebach said that is a significant amount of jobs.

Schwebach has also made visits to all of the village and city offices in Pierce County to introduce himself and assist them in setting up committees for a Façade Loan Fund and the Micro Loan Fund. Schwebach was able to help 9 county businesses with information and two potential business clients. He is also a member of the Prescott IDC, the River Falls EDC, the Ellsworth Industrial Council, which he has been actively pursuing the improvement of broadband via the survey sent out earlier this year. 2014 was a transition year and we are working on updating information & putting together information packets.

The 4 county EDC group is still working together to discuss ways in which to better serve our counties and will work additionally together to promote the annual Legislative Day. They are putting on their first workshop on July 22nd titled “1+1=9, A Workshop to Improve Your Bottom Line.” Ross asked if we have our 10 attendees for the Pierce County representation. Schwebach said that he’ll find out in the report tomorrow morning. Kahlow asked Miller what the timeline was for budget approval. Miller said she would double check with Brickner. Bjork chimed in that this budget is not what is submitted to the County, this is just PCEDC’s request, which is what the IDC would approve to pass along. Schwebach said that going through past files, it looks like the budget is approved in September, but we wanted to get an early start on this with all of the changes that have occurred in the EDC. Ross asked what Schwebach thought the loss from $13,500 down to $9,100. Schwebach said the decrease is just the lack of contact early on with some of the previous donors. Schwebach noted that an additional $1,000 came in from WI Industrial Sand, so the budget will be updated to show that. Some donors were added to the list that hadn’t contributed in some time prior to this year, including First National in River Falls, Ross and Associates had previously dropped out and Associated Bank still hasn’t contributed, but they’ve expressed to Schwebach that they will, so there is potential out there for additional funds.

For 2015 the EDC plans to continue recruitment efforts for new business, working closely with state agencies, remain in contact with existing business to assure their continued operation within Pierce County, Provide assistance for startup businesses, Promote the RLF, and the RBF, Attend community events, Conduct an annual fundraising campaign, Attend County Board Meetings and other meetings as necessary, Remain in contact with the municipalities, and Work with the four county EDC consortium to provide efficient ways to promote our region. The 4 County group is planning call trips as well to realtors in the metro area. So that is a recap of this year & future plans. This PCEDC budget hasn’t been approved yet by the EDC board. **Motion by Bjork to approve the request for $63,800, same amount as 2014, with a more detailed budget coming forward, second by Kahlow & agreed to.**
Bjork mentioned additionally having the request from Pierce County Historical Society, but Pierce County Partners in Tourism has been disbanded and the IDC hasn’t supported it in approximately three years. Kahlow, thought the IDC should maybe hold things off in light of tourism, but Bjork responded that the IDC supported $63,800 for PCEDC last year, and he doesn’t foresee giving them less in 2015, but the tourism and historical has to be worked in. Bjork said that we have to include tourism. Ross responded that the tourism group has to be run by a proper board & show that the community has a buy in before we give it county money. The PCHS has an active board that governs that money & budget. There is dedicated purpose for use of that money. Ross recognizes it as an active group who is trying to achieve common goals for the county, there will be a dangerous environment if we just create a pot for tourism without direction from a board. We need to know that the funds are being properly dedicated. We cannot be throwing money at tourism, without direction and a vehicle. We have to have dollars & create an organization, or the other way around. Kahlow posed the thought of if the IDC created a set of guidelines and parameters; requirements, to give to those interested in tourism, we could then consider supporting a tourism group & give them a target at that point. Kahlow said that better clarification on who is eligible, what are we targeting for regarding tourism/historical society. Bjork said that no matter what happens, some funds should be selectively set aside for tourism. How we pursue it is key. Ross agreed that we do have to give funds to tourism, but without a plan is bad management. Bjork stated that just because the money would be in the budget, doesn’t mean we have to spend it. Just request a dollar amount, dedicated towards tourism & then give an inducement to a tourism group. If a certain group can prove that they are deserving of it & that they are to stand behind. Schwebach said he is also trying to put information together that will help tourism; a hand out for potential clients & businesses looking at Pierce County.

Future agenda items. Ross requested that Corp Counsel be discussed with at our next meeting, regarding what type of criteria we’d need for this tourism idea, who would qualify, what types of objectives, & what should we be looking for to dedicate funds to tourism. A standard agenda item that states “Discuss tourism & establish criteria for use of funds.”

Additional agenda item, Pierce County Historical Society. How are they truly using the funds that they are given? **Action Item: For Ross to discuss with Pierce County Historical Society about attending the August meeting.**

Put a Discuss & Take Action Asking for an additional dollar amount, for tourism; develop parameters, not necessarily an action item, but having the option included in the agenda, to include this in the upcoming year’s budget. It will be relatively basic to develop the parameters, but the agenda item needs to be correct.

Budget process coming up, that’s driving the push to get that on the next year’s budget. Parameters for awarding that money. Advance the budget to F&P, then the full board. It helps to have the parameters. Defer to the chair whether or not we can develop it. Ross, we could develop good parameters in 1 meeting. **Action Item: Ross to discuss with Drew Neusbaum regarding attending the next IDC meeting.** Drew Neusbaum is the coordinator for this region, Bayfield down to La Crosse. If he can’t make it, someone could and/ provide us with guidance as to what they see a good template to utilize funds for objectives of tourism. The State Dept. of tourism, at our request, is working very hard on this. They’ve budgeted for a booth at the home & garden show & had advertising on MN Public radio, that sort of thing. Governor’s office on tourism conference is huge. The resources are profound and well-orchestrated. There is a number of resources out there, we just need direction on the way to begin. Ross said we need to get the right people on board and bring genuine tourism to this region. Promote development. There is a great potential out there for a group to attract additional funding. Ross mentioned JEM grants available (joint effort marketing grants), but there is great expectation with these grants. Next meeting we’ll sit down & create justifiable rules. Bjork said that as a user of tourism, looking at the laws in this county, currently they are detrimental to tourism with creating certain types of businesses. Ross said that philosophically speaking, the basic concept of tourism is that people come for lots of different reasons. There are great things to come to our region for; 3 Class A trout streams, wineries, motorcycle groups, bus tours for agritourism; opportunities are endless. One additional agenda item for next meeting will be approving other items on the budget with PCHS.

Next meeting date & time. August 13, 2014, 8:00 a.m.
Motion to adjourn at 8:37 a.m. (Bjork, Kahlow).
Industrial Development Committee, June 18, 2014, 8:00 a.m.

Pierce County Courthouse, County Board Room

Members present: Jim Ross, Mike Kahlow, and Cecil Bjork

Pierce County EDC Staff present: Paul Schwebach & Heather Hines

Ross called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

Agenda approved as presented (Bjork, Kahlow).

May 15, 2014 Minutes. Ross noted that Hines make the change from “Is on the commission for Rock Elm,” to “WAS on the commission for Rock Elm.” Motion by Bjork to approve the May 15, 2014 minutes as presented, noting Ross’ changes, second by Kahlow and agreed to. Kahlow also suggested longer minutes being better separated with paragraphs for an easier read.

Public Comment. Ross discussed Jim Bowman of the WEDC & whether or not Schwebach knew who his replacement was. Schwebach responded that it is Jennifer Kuderer & that he is meeting with her on Monday. Schwebach also has a meeting with WEDC regarding the Steamboat Inn in Prescott on Friday of this week.

Updated PCEDC Work Plan. Schwebach has organized this into a requested one page document, he has also reworked the last paragraph & has added tourism information. Additionally, Schwebach met with Wilson Mills to discuss tourism recently. For PCEDC, having the work plan is a handy tool when working with communities. Schwebach was able to give a copy to the Prescott Council & Spring Valley. In situations where he didn’t have it yet written up, he’s had a lot of questions asked, but in situations where he has had it along, it has been very self-explanatory.

Schwebach, wanted to discuss how Kahlow was passionate about noting both the positives & negatives in Pierce County, but PCEDC does not want to hand out a work plan document with negative connotation. Kahlow replied that it will be a necessity to have several documents, & eventually discuss what specific actions, metrics we have to show for our efforts to know we’re doing well; what are the positives & negatives. We can then use these as guiding documents. The only comment Kahlow had with regard to the work plan, was that he needs to receive all of the documents that will be discussed at IDC meetings prior to the meeting date. It is difficult to take action on something handed to him the day off the meeting. Kahlow reiterated that the positives & negatives that we eventually put together for Pierce County will be good to have for business discussions in the future & potentially we’ll have the opportunity for a more formulated answer for them regarding a solution. Ross added that most businesses fail when they just want to look at blue sky, ignoring what might be out there that might cause them economic disablement.

Bjork stated that the section under Administrative/General, this section seems to be part of a job description, & it doesn’t flow when you read it.

Bjork stated additionally to Kahlow’s point that when we were out looking at the Spring Valley Industrial site, they showed us what Spring Valley offers & what they do not. There are real positives & negatives. They have $90K to spend & 2 years left in which to spend it or it will be lost. Ross thought if the lists were compiled by area & where there is infrastructure available. River Falls doesn’t have any land available in Pierce County for use. How do we get a piece of land on County Road E, or South of River Falls for an industrial park? Bjork would like to see pros and cons for each community. For industry the topography in Pierce County is a huge challenge.

Ross mentioned WEDC’s radio ad & questioned their intent & justification for the ad cost. PCEDC should piggy back on that. Ross told Schwebach that he has been on the Industrial Development Committee for a long time & this work plan is the best he’s ever seen. PCEDC narrowed down a great amount of work into 1 page document. This gives us a template to move forward in the direction we’d like to that hasn’t happened in the past. PCEDC should stay focused on these things.
Schwebach also updated the committee on a few items, including that Finance & Personnel approved the $6000 support for the Pierce County Broadband survey. Schwebach & Hines have compiled a list of businesses in the county, which started out with a very high number, 1700 businesses, and that has been broken down to 421 businesses. It is a vast amount of information listing executives, number of employees, address, etc. We will be working on getting these businesses broke down into types of business & so on.

This will be another tool for people to see what’s in their own backyard, or as a recruiting tool. Companies look at what types of business are here, who they can employ. Schwebach said that often companies ask to speak to local companies to discuss wages, ease/lead time with hiring employees, etc. Kahlow thought it would be a good idea to give these 420 businesses a cold call. We can ask them what we can do to help you, expand, stay the same, etc. Today Schwebach is attending a luncheon with Trisha Braun, WEDC Vice President. The list will be used in a 4-County group also with their business seminar coming up on July 22nd. The cost is $249 & each county is getting 10 tickets provided.

The work plan update is what we’re looking for, with minor changes in the future. As you measure success, contact businesses, tabulating responses, that’s a metric. Kahlow says that if someone comes to him & says what are you spending this money for? He’ll then have the tools to answer the question & tell them what is being accomplished.

Ross also said that the list of 10 conference suggestions is also good.

PCEDC Invoice & 3rd Quarter Draw Request. Need to know that we’re moving in the direction that this committee has intended & provide them the next distribution. Motion by Kahlow to approve the 3rd quarter draw request, second by Bjork and agreed to.

Future Agenda Items. The 2015 Budget is coming up, PCEDC should work on a 1 page document regarding 2014 accomplishments, what they look forward to doing in 2015. Schwebach, asked what all he should be providing, being this is his first year. Should PCEDC provide a budget request for 2015, breakdown of income & expenses, a list of accomplishments, & what we are requesting? Kahlow says that PCEDC should break down what they are requesting, with regard to the conferences, breaking out the cost of each he plans to attend. This way the IDC can say specifically what the money will be going for. Bjork said that the IDC doesn’t need the entire budget, whatever the budget number might be & what PCEDC will do with that amount. Additionally it would be a good idea to provide a brief summary as to what was accomplished in 2014, what you expect to accomplish in 2015.

Ross encourages Schwebach to add the conference costs to the budget & spell out why he thinks it important to attend them. Ross believes that education is what’s going to drive all of this into the correct direction. Schwebach said it is not our intent to ask for an increase & to be honest, Schwebach has held off on conferences when we do not know where our budget is at.

Next meeting date, July 9, 2014, 8:00 a.m.

Adjourn 8:52 a.m., Kahlow, Bjork
Ross called the meeting to order at 8:02 a.m.

Agenda approved, noting moving Item #7 to Item #6. (Kahlow, Bjork).

September 11, 2014 Minutes approved as presented (Kahlow, Ross).

April 17, 2014 Minutes approved, Kahlow clarifying that the vote regarding the draw, was not over the draw itself, but that appropriate progress was being made regarding the PCEDC work plan (Kahlow, Ross).

Public Comment. Bjork said that PCD has to get the meeting notice to the appropriate places so that it is added to the County home page. Hines sends a copy to the clerk, but will inquire regarding how to go about getting this published on the County home page. Bjork has Highway meetings the third Thursday of every month & would like the Industrial Development Committee to be mindful of that with planning the future meetings. Kahlow discussed economic indicators to better meet the needs of the citizens throughout the whole county. He said that something else is going on when free or reduced lunches percentages are 25-50% and Pierce has the 2nd lowest unemployment rate. This would be an economic indicator where we could better meet the needs of the citizens of the county. Bjork had a relative comment with regard to growth of industry in those areas. Townships or Cities do not have appropriate funds to subsidize, which will bring the businesses in. How does the county begin, through its tax levy, to create a bond to help those communities subsidize & bring industry in? Kahlow agreed, saying that is his point completely & with our plan going forward, we should develop a plan, where we can aide this struggle. Bjork said it was a real surprise for Prescott to see what it costs to get industry to come to their City. Ross noted that he was on the planning commission for Rock Elm & their biggest concern was the cost of infrastructure when you bring business in. Costs would hinder the desire for industry. The cost of freeways, access to broadband, etc. Some of the business growth might be small 10 acre organic farms that will fit the region. It doesn’t all have to be large Uline, GM type of industry. Find our niche markets & bring them here. Ross said it is important to realize there are so many functions going on out there today and it is difficult to keep up. Ross tries to tell the various groups to make sure your faces are in front of the County & educate yourself on who is doing what & what is their purpose/function. In Ross’ business, has marketing people, employees, everything filters through Ross. Everyone filters into the EDC & so we can put together the strengths & weaknesses of the community. With regard to broadband & various other economic development matters, what opportunities are out there, what could we have missed? Ross has been on the MRRPC appointed by commissioners, all relative to Economic development. Ross said in the past the direction of the EDC was not focused & instead of tightening the focus, a thousand things were trying to be accomplished, but nothing was being achieved because it is impossible to focus on millions of areas and do it well. That’s why the EDC finds value in listing & creating columns where we’ll list everything out there and how it can be used & most effective. What can we pull from MRRPC, the Industrial council, Chambers, etc., to make a better overall economic driver for the entire county.

Pierce County Broadband survey. Olson defended Schwebach at the Industrial Council meeting; most of the discussion was done prior to Schwebach joining the group. For him to come up with the broadband survey numbers when he was thrown into the mix without a lot of background. Olson has been on the Ellsworth Industrial Council for 8-10 months after speaking to Sharon Siebel at a 4-H program, and she discussed broadband & Olson replied he’d been working on broadband for years. So he joined the Industrial council discussions. They’d had 6 meetings with AT&T prior to Olson joining the Council discussions, as well as discussions with other carriers. Kahlow’s question was what was the origin of the broadband survey and why should the County be paying for it? Where did the numbers come from? The Ellsworth Industrial Council was where this all started from. Bjork said broadband has been a subject of discussion at all PCEDC meetings in the past 2 years, never once in 2 years did the Industrial council get discussed. Olson replied that Warner was working on the survey for quite a while and the council was trying to figure out what we could do, so they spoke to AT&T. When Olson was involved they had subsequent meetings with BevCOMM. They invited Baldwin Telecom, who never showed. Riverland Communications & Midcontinent attended their meetings. Each company asked what was the density of users? How many people out there want the business? The Industrial Council thought it best to do a survey to know what the demand is. Milt Helmer started working with Olson & got the ball rolling on a survey. Got it developed & as an Industrial Council, decided to go forward with
this. Helmer originally said that there are a little over 19K residents in Pierce County and we’d be fortunate to have 300 returned, but 2,028 surveys were returned. Jahne at UWRF who does survey analysis, said we needed actually 400 for the numbers to be statistically viable on this sized survey. That’s where the 400 number came from. When Olson originally put together the numbers, we thought the 400 would be a push. The county has talked about doing a broadband survey, we should try to get the county to cover the costs for this. We aren’t doing this to benefit Ellsworth only, our mission was to help Pierce County as a whole. Olson has spoken to supervisors, including Ross & Chair Holst. Using Pierce County’s postage, Holst said yes, but it had to go through Joann Miller & Brad Roy, Joann never responded, Roy responded. Roy assumed it was Pierce Pepin, because of where Olson works. For legal reasons Roy said Pierce County couldn’t support the postage. It was decided that they couldn’t support it because if the county does the postage payment for the Industrial Council, they’ll have to do one for everyone. Olson doesn’t know how many people would request to do a survey for the County. Other surveys have been done, a land management, 1-2 questions on the survey regarding broadband 6 years ago. It was mailed out in the tax information. If we could have done that with our survey, that could have helped with costs. Bjork responded that when the survey came to the EDC, Bjork said it was a discussion of the $6000, Bjork said we should go to the IDC & ask for the whole 6K, it should be the responsibility of the county & it is for the County’s good. Schwebach came to one meeting & then had the PCEDC board meeting. The Broadband survey was brought up in a lot of meetings, the county board was pushing to have the county broadband survey done. Schwebach didn’t think there’d be objection to this & spoke to the EDC Board, Schwebach had intended that the EDC be a part of paying the cost. Then we got to the 6000 level & if the county paid for that, it would be fine. The 6000 was the original cost of the survey, but not with the full amount of data. Basic information would have been given? Olson replied, no. These dollars, if we had 400 surveys, we’d have statistically viable results. F&P wanted additional information on the cost, so it is currently on hold. Of the people who sent the survey back in, how much of that internet usage is for personal use and how much is for business? Olson stated that is a question we are hoping to get with the survey results. GIS coordinator just started working on this, it is color coded & is based on the state plane coordinates. So these are the responses that we receive back, 25% gave us back their addresses so we could plot this. The thing that surprised Olson was that 3% of the responses has 10 or more employees. The information coming out is very interesting & invaluable with what we’re trying to do here with infrastructure & having that in place for new businesses coming into the area. Kahlow, said it sounds like there was a miscommunication that the funds weren’t ever approved. The $6K for the original survey, what was the initial understanding for who would pay for that? Olson replied that the Industrial Council, of the Ellsworth Chamber, would pass the hat originally. The county has been talking about this, let’s go to the county & ask. Even though we’re almost to $12K, we’re only asking for half of that. There was miscommunication, we would request up to $6K, but Bjork was also understanding that the costs would be above that. The survey for the county, from an economic development standpoint, as a quality of life in today’s world, it be important that we do something in the county regarding broadband. Olson, the feeling at the Ellsworth Industrial Council was that the County had been talking about doing something for years, in hind sight, we should have come to the county first, and the timing was bad. Schwebach gave the costs at the EDC meeting, as the EDC director & being a part of one meeting & the Industrial Council needing support, Schwebach said that the $6K was being requested initially, but Bjork wasn’t aware of that request. Broadband is needed for county, schools, industry, etc. Bjork thought it should come from contingency and that is why Bjork came to Ross and asked if we could do this. Olson gave a copy of an article to the group that was in the Prescott paper noting how important broadband is to the industrial economic viability of the community. Ross requested Schwebach at the next F&P with specifications of need for broadband throughout the county. The big picture as Bjork displayed. It is easier if it is coming from the EDC. Olson should be at the next discussion with F&P. Ross asked that once the survey is done & complete, all data & charts are complete. How responsive will phone companies be to this? Ross has sat in with AT&T & BevCOMM, and they’ve been difficult. Do we feel the info will be useful enough for these providers to wake up to the problem in Pierce? Olson put together a proposal to AgStar & the gentleman they spoke to at AgStar said they really fit the bill with this survey, but then the group was denied. Olson put together a timeline, starting at the beginning, so F&P can see that at the next meeting. The expectation with AT&T is that nothing will happen. BevCOMM is doing 2 fiber projects right now, but Olson cannot expand on that at this time. There are things in the works, including Baldwin Broadband requesting federal funds to expand the fiber that they have. This information will help secure some of the federal dollars. Put together an overview discussing the broadened benefits throughout the county for this survey. Talk about the things that will encourage companies to look at the survey & help guide them in getting broadband here. Have all of that information ready & survey results also, send that packet to the F&P group a week prior. Just a basic overview of what we’re trying to accomplish, Ross said to have Miller informed that Ross requested that information be included in the packet for F&P. We don’t realize how many home based businesses aren’t coming into the County due to the lack of broadband. Bauer has cable currently through Midcontinent & since then he’s received multiple proposals from AT&T. The operations in Comstock to the Creamery have to tie in. Kahlow, WI Broadband expansion program, Act 20. 13 act 20 gives out money for Broadband expansion grant program, construct broadband facilities, cooperative, telecommunications project, county joint venture, ½ a million dollars. Info in survey could easily
form the basis for this proposal. Rational for this, that could be a basis for a proposal going forward. There is stuff going on with the FCC funding that’ll be awarded by the end of the year here. Put that in the report. Also look up new farm bill. Rural broadband allocation was increased for next ten years.

Updated PCEDC Work Plan. Schwebach put together a work plan, including a vision & mission statement. He broke it down into categories that he feels we need for inventory for potential clients & businesses. So we have the materials available. It might be information from a realtor, county, etc. What is the workforce situation, what benefits can I get, what benefits from the state? Schwebach responded with information he had, but would like to have a packet for such clients. If we had the components, we could assemble the packet for the individual need. The inventory situation ties into the other steps of the business plan. Often people have a great business idea, but no sense of business plan. Kahlow said a work plan isn’t just saying here are the nice things we want, but what are our warts also. Why wouldn’t a business want to come to Pierce County? What needs to improve? Schwebach discussed related functions, the financing, the state & federal, local financing. State & federal programs. Some of the other inventories are a list of all of the other groups that could assist, the various chambers, the various industrial councils, and regional organizations. Seek out information from each of those entities. Schwebach indicated in some of these cases, rather than remaking the wheel, use a referral system, where we could bring it up on the computer, list of the townships & boards. The county already puts out a book that has that information. Ross said it is a far cry from where we were. Build on it & keep improving it. We’d like to get into quarterly newsletters. St. Croix County does a great quarterly newsletter. We’ll be talking about this with Bill Rubin & putting this together for PCECD. Keeping open communications with businesses, County, Cities, Villages, towns, etc. Attending community functions to include chamber events, WEDC, Momentum West, Regional Business Fund, MRRPC, WCWRPC, etc. Giving this document to anyone, have it go to others as one sheet we can hand them, not a multiple page plan. Make it a nice one page document. Somehow have that so we can distribute it to various board members, etc. All of these communities are wanting help, Schwebach has to still run this work plan by our PCEDC Board of Directors. Motion made to accept the work plan as presented with changes per discussion, second by Kahlow and agreed to. Motion doesn’t mean this is the final draft. Schwebach discussed suggested conferences that PCEDC could attend, just to give ideas of what we’re looking at.

Future Agenda Items. Bring the living work plan back with updates & guidance. Also discuss PCEDC conferences to attend. Next meeting: One month out, coming up with budget soon. Wednesday mornings are best for Ross. Wednesday June 18, 2014, 8:00 a.m. in the County Board Room. Look at the July draw at that time also. Meeting adjourned, Kahlow, Bjork.
Pierce County Industrial Development Committee—MINUTES
April 17, 2014, 8:00 a.m., Pierce County Courthouse Board Room, 414 W Main Street, Ellsworth, WI 54011
Members Present: Jim Ross, Michael Kahlow, Cecil Bjork, and JoAnn Miller, Staff present: Paul Schwebach, Heather Hines

Ross called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Motion made by Kahlow to move Item #5 up to #3, & move #9 up to #6 which will make the agenda acceptable, second by Bjork and agreed to.

Industrial Development Committee reorganization. Election of a Temporary Chair. Motion by Bjork to nominate Ross for the temporary Chair position, no additional nominations were suggested, so nominations were closed, second by Kahlow and agreed to. Election of a Chairperson. Motion made by Kahlow to nominate Ross for Chairperson, no additional nominations were suggested, so nominations were closed, second by Bjork and agreed to. Election of Vice-Chairperson. Motion made by Bjork to nominate Kahlow for Vice-Chairperson, no additional nominations were suggested, so nominations were closed, second by Kahlow and agreed to.

September 11, 2013 minutes. Kahlow stated that he’d prefer that we postpone the approval of the minutes until the next meeting so he can review them. Ross said to bring minutes back for the next IDC meeting & the group will review them at that time. Ross mentioned being able to conduct a series of meetings, if the EDC saw need for that. The IDC meets quarterly, but can accommodate a meeting sooner, they’d be more than happy to do that. Whatever it takes to get things done. The September 11 Minutes are a tabled item.

Public Comment. Kahlow wanted to discuss the unveiling of the Small Business Innovation Center at the University. He had sent an email out, Auckland was able to attend. Pierce County had a presence there, and it was well attended. Kahlow had a good conversation with the Assembly Representative. He talked with Dean Knudson, who had met Kahlow’s wife, back when she was chair of The Rotary. Kahlow mentioned the PCEDC website & the menus that come up, files that are missing, contact information is not there. Kahlow stated that whoever maintains the website, it is on a list for phishing site. Kahlow would like to see the Pierce County EDC Officers contact information, and the Board of Directors, to know who is involved with the Pierce County EDC. Schwebach also attended the CIBD ribbon cutting. It is a good program for the University & for those to get to the University site. Dr. Potts, had put put on a site that had the slide presentation for the CIBD, St. Croix County was mentioned, and River Falls Chamber, but Pierce County EDC wasn’t on there. Kahlow noticed this glaring hole also. After the talk Schwebach had with Dr. Potts, it has been taken care of.

Pierce County Broadband Survey. Schwebach stated that over 19,000 surveys were sent out, the anticipated return was 400, based on national averages. The actual number of surveys returned was 1,965. The broadband cost then changed from $5,600 to $10,600. With regard to funding, Schwebach added that the committee had submitted a request to AgStar, this grant could be up to $5,000 in funds for this project. Bjork asked that the County should take a substantial portion, being that it is both good for economic growth & government. Go online, wireless, need to be able to do this through the whole county. The IDC is willing to pay a portion of the total cost. Bjork said that the EDC has some money unbudgeted, but that the County should contribute $6000 towards the total cost. Motion by Bjork for the County to contribute up to $6000 towards the broadband survey. We have it in IDC funds, or we request the funds from the County Board, F&P. Kahlow second the motion for purpose of discussion. Ross, comments to the Herald that broadband is one reason why businesses would look elsewhere. Bjork mentioned how local government communicates today. They are trying to get rid of paper that is really important. Bjork mentioned how he’ll get a packet for a county board meeting, get same info in packet again for info for next meeting. Pierce County needs to be more paperless, expand & improve internet systems. Kahlow mentioned the recent St. Croix County meeting and how he was able to select a link at the bottom with documents associated with the meeting as well as a video reference that progressed to the points in the meeting related to certain agenda items. He was able to review this the evening of the meeting. Bjork mentioned that if you watch a St Croix county board meeting, there is no rustling of paper. Each board member has a computer & everything gets downloaded for a computer. There is no paper & the updates occur right away, on the screen. Miller’s opinion was requested as the best approach for going to board for this item. Better to approach with no bill in hand, but we know the numbers by the amount of returned surveys, or contingent on the AgStar grant, having Pierce County give the least approach, something now, something later...authorization. Miller said that she doesn’t know what is in the budget for IDC, but if there is money in the IDC budget, that it wouldn’t need to go to the County Board, it can be decided here and decide what line item to take it out of. If it is requested out of contingency, then it must go to Finance and Personnel. The only things in the IDC budget are PCHA, and PCEDC. Motion by Bjork, for the Pierce County Broadband survey support not to exceed $6000, and forward the request on to Finance & Personnel, and that the funds come from contingency. Request from contingency funds not to exceed the $6,000 dollar amount, for the broadband study, and submit to Finance & Personnel, second by
Kahlow & agreed to. Bjork was excused at 8:26 a.m. Kahlow, mentioned that Ron Kind will be in River Falls attending the open house, at the River Falls City hall at 11 am, April 22nd. Broadband would be a good issue to bring up.

Pierce County EDC Work plan. Ross wanted to welcome Paul Schwebach & said that change is never easy, very difficult. Ross appreciates Schwebach stepping up & get into discussion of the work plan, what direction they’d go with the EDC, last we’d heard in December, was that they’d bring in CEDA & from what Ross could gather at the annual meeting, the CEDA component went away. Schwebach interviewed with CEDA, board met & talked about it, they felt confident in Paul without CEDA. CEDA isn’t very involved in WI. We’d have been their first management type situation. As long as he’s available & willing, we’ll go that route. Schwebach’s background is Manager of the RCU, River Falls office. The pay with EDC was negotiated based on Bill Warner’s yearly salary & there will not be anything surprising there. Actually, it will be a 3rd less, because Paul will be working 30 hours a week. The work plan was discussed with the members of the Industrial Development Committee at the PCEDC Board meeting. The work plan describes PCEDC’s goals, which are to continue promoting Economic Development, providing PCEDC leadership, & collaborating with other counties to better serve. Schwebach was hired as part of that leadership, with regard to the collaboration, the 4 County Executive Directors meet the 2nd Thursday of every month. Paul couldn’t be there today, due to the IDC meeting this morning. Schwebach wanted to add that he read in the minutes from the September meeting, and St. Croix not wanting to be a part of the collaboration is not true. St. Croix EDC wants very much to be a part of it; Schwebach confirmed with Rubin. Before taking the Executive Director role for Pierce County, Schwebach was in line to become President of the St. Croix EDC. He & Rubin thought that was getting a bit too far involved with St. Croix. It was asked if Mayor Huber would be staying on the EDC board, Schwebach has had discussions with him & he plans to stay on the board. We need that representation for Prescott. Ross said he has had great heartburn over the years shared publicly before, not discrediting Mr. Warner, but it troubles Ross greatly, that we don’t have a laser focus on what we want to do. Invest both for the IDC & EDC as a Corporation in general, to bring jobs to the area, with equitable business; long term business that can stand the test of time. We have to be able to formulate a way to best communicate our plan to whomever might be coming into Pierce County. We have to be able to present properly to businesses what we can do for them, to have them make the decision to come in. For example, Bay City doesn’t recognize or try to help Flat Pennies in any way. When it comes to expansion of distribution center, Ross can tell you, he will not expand in Bay City. If the town isn’t going to communicate with him, then why would he? There is no need to do everything the business owner requests, but the businesses only have limited funds to dab market share & profit their business, as well as have employees have a great place to work, especially on larger scale. Ross’ drive is towards having the EDC understand that & put together a marketing packet for businesses to want to come to Pierce County. What types of business would be a good fit for this county. What do we offer more than other counties? There are things we can do & offer up. The ribbon cutting with the CIBD, what a great asset to sell, it is all about salability. Miller was excused at 8:38 am, requested that Hines have Schwebach get her a copy of draft minutes & anything he wants Finance & Personnel to consider.

The Dept. Of Tourism hires Geiger, puts together full thing, for 3-4 days they pick up people at airport & bring them down the great river road & see what is available for. Those 24 reporters go back to freelanced magazines that they write for, hopefully they write favorable stories on why people want to come to this region. All 24 reporters came to Flat Pennies. Since September Ross has had 5 articles written about Flat Pennies. Put together a simple disc of region. Marketing people put together a disc/thumb drive. Simple packet, colorful photos of region. Sell Pierce County with fewest amount of words, but with the visual. That ability to connect is huge and is what we were losing in the past. Ross would like to see the EDC move in that direction; simplicity, get in front of the right people. Maybe Schwebach attends some National conferences, go with a small EDC packet, with this is what we can do for you and we cannot wait to see you. Kahlow, reiterated that we should study that packet to get it right & see what that packet should be. With the University Center, they spent money to make it look nice & are getting a good return on a good looking center. Kahlow agrees with everything that Ross said. Kahlow would like to put off on approving the work plan. He would like to see Schwebach assess, measure, & see what opportunities are out there. How will the EDC go about increasing Economic Development in Pierce County? What isn’t there, what specific actions are going to be taken & how we’ll tell that those actions are going to be taken. What are our measures of success, how do you know what is or isn’t working. I think that we can make a case that we aren’t spending enough on Economic Development in Pierce County. Kahlow wants the ability to go to the County board & increase the budget because we want to do XYZ, here are the things being done, here are the successes. He realizes that it is hard to assess success because you build on the economic cycle. Schwebach stated that it is difficult to make a definite plan & say we’re going to contact two prospective businesses a month & retain 32 prospective employees, but to what extent. A prospective business, he’s had 2 so far since being in the position, sometimes requires months & years. Kahlow stated the EDC should create a menu of what’s available & those things in place. In Kahlow’s job, he is granted funding from the National Science Foundation, & for that he works towards increasing graduation of students in stem fields by 30%. He cannot just say he’s going to do it, he also has to describe everything he did & how to shift gears to focus more on what’s working vs. what isn’t. If the EDC does this, that’ll help the IDC in building a case for
the board members. This puts you on notice that if you don’t reach this goal, you won’t get, if we tidy this all up, focus in the past years, we have all of this money & clients, how do we focus forward. How will you be getting yourself out there & networking and how will we be prepared when we do. You will not be chastised if you make the effort to do a really good job. We can sell ideas, if the train has left the station & is running smoothly, we can sell that, but if every two minutes it is breaking down, we can’t sell that. This board is very open to good quality information, IF we can provide that, the board will be open minded enough to consider it. What is setting the stage for 3-5-10 years down the road, the climate people talking to each other, what other groups are doing similar things, what can we do together. Taking people off to a conference or meeting, go find out what our competition is doing. Here’s what St. Croix is doing, North Carolina, what’s working for others, what isn’t, what’s gaining attention, or isn’t. Even if work plan says you are in the process of developing strategy. How will you implement them? Help us to sell things later, further down the road. March 2-4, Lake Geneva, March of 2015, will be in Lacrosse, Governor’s conference. Roger Brooks spoke this last year. He talks about destination marketing, viable in a specific market. One component of the work plan is tourism. Kahlow, said that the ability to see what the competition is doing is priceless. Where are we, where are we going to go, how do we get there, how do we know we’re getting better. What’s our plan & how does it evolve over time? Is it working or not? Prefer an actual matrix, based on something that could be accomplished. Make it realistic. Success gives you the motivation to get back out there & the ability to get there is fun. Schwabach responded with two situations, one with Mark Huber, talking about Prescott & the identity of Prescott, the other Wilson Mills regarding the RV Show. No one knows where Pierce County is, came out of both of their mouths. That is a big hurdle. The Department of Tourism went to the Home & Garden show. Drew Neusbaum, he’s the coordinator for this area. Schwabach should contact him & tell him that Ross mentioned his name as a contact. Took a booth to H&G for Wisconsin, one day regarding the Great River Road, one for Door County, as an EDC, we could help sponsor or work with them on that. One day that you collaborate, and make it the day for Pierce County & the Great River Road. If you start doing an investigation, what is the image for Pierce County going forward? Here are directions, here are potential directions; bicycle trails, snowmobile; destination stuff, in better shape with destination things. The aspiration for this committee for next 2 years, is to be proactive, not reactive. There is that link with the Dept. of Tourism, bike trails, publication just on trails. For Schwabach, 715.299.5422 is Drew’s phone number. One of the biggest assets to sell, is the campus in River Falls. People want to know that if they’re going to put a warehouse here, UNFI, that they are in a better shape with destination things. The county is saying until you get it clarified, they are going by Warner’s memo. Kahlow & Ross recalled that it was a quarterly disbursement, but the first one Jan 1 would occur without need for approval. The April 1, 2014 draw was contingent on getting a work plan created. Ross stated that the work plan presented today is acceptable on releasing funds for the April 1, 2014, no misunderstanding that we cannot get April 1 payments today. Kahlow will expect to meet going forward more often to get things done. The document will not be DONE, but if it is not in a final acceptable shape, but should be progressing. Schwabach said there is lots of searching, finding, but he will not recreate the wheel. He will go across the state/country, wherever, but plans to do things the right away, not fast. Motion made by Kahlow to approve the quarterly draw request for April 1, 2014, for $15,950, second by Ross and agreed to.

**PCEDC April 1, 2014 Draw.** The minutes indicated three draws, but then on Sept. 12 Bill had written a memo to the county, indicating quarterly draws. The county is saying until you get it clarified, they are going by Warner’s memo. Kahlow & Ross recalled that it was a quarterly disbursement, but the first one Jan 1 would occur without need for approval. The April 1, 2014 draw was contingent on getting a work plan created. Ross stated that the work plan presented today is acceptable on releasing funds for the April 1, 2014, no misunderstanding that we cannot get April 1 payments today. Kahlow will expect to meet going forward more often to get things done. The document will not be DONE, but if it is not in a final acceptable shape, but should be progressing. Schwabach said there is lots of searching, finding, but he will not recreate the wheel. He will go across the state/country, wherever, but plans to do things the right way, not fast. Motion made by Kahlow to approve the quarterly draw request for April 1, 2014, for $15,950, second by Ross and agreed to.

**Future agenda items.** Review/discuss/take action relative to the EDC Work Plan, discuss the broadband survey progress, the 9/11/13 minutes also on, as well as April 2014 minutes. In addition to the work plan, Kahlow would like to see PCEDC take time to find various conferences or options for conferences that’d be a good fit for Pierce County. A list of 10 conferences, 1 being the Governor’s conference on tourism. Wherever in the US. If it can be justifiable, very useful conference, we can consider it, obviously closer to home would be better. The 2015 budget requests will be coming up sooner than we think. Even if we can’t do something
this year, here is a list of #’s, this is why, this is the benefit, this is what will come out of all of these. Forward that up the chain for the budget request. Dedicate X amount of dollars, for conferences, for 2015 in the budget, so that everything will be approved. Figure out the ones where we’ll gain the most value and figure out assessment measures. Come back after the fact, this is what we learned & what has changed. The funding will come either from EDC, or IDC. The target should be to get a list together to include in the budget. We’ll need justification, to convince Finance & Personnel & the County Board, that spending that money is a good idea. Just to be clear, the annual $63,800, would create a second line item in addition to that for travel and conferences separately if it is done in a way we can justify it.

*Kahlow moved to adjourn, 9:34 am, second by Ross.*