

COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Meeting Minutes – May 25, 2023, at 3:00 p.m.
Ridge Conference Room

Committee Members:

Bob Schaller (Chair)
Daniel Mancuso (Vice Chair)
Bradley Converse - Teams
Cameron Camp - Absent
Colene Martin
Ethan Lane - Absent
Gary Richardson
Gene Merrill
Josh Duval
Josie Molloy - Teams
Mark Woods
Ron Gordon – Absent
Ruth Swain - Teams
Tori Middelstadt - Teams
Tim Sweeney - Absent

Government Liaisons:

John West, County Commissioner - Absent
Jean Ann Miles, City of Cave Junction
Valerie Lovelace, City Council Liaison
Marta Tarantsey, State Liaison, Business Oregon

Staff Liaisons:

Dana Pearce, Economic Development Manager

Guests and Others:

John Chimenti, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.
Collen Padilla, SOREDI

1) Roll Call: Chair Schaller called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

2) Public Comment:

- a) Marta Tarantsey of Business Oregon provided clarification on two documents that were forwarded to the group, Southern Oregon Regional Needs Assessment Report and Economic Impact Grants Pass Airport January 2021. Issues of youth workforce programming and STEM education continue to come up throughout the region and within this group. The Southern Oregon Regional Needs Assessment Report provides detailed information building local capacity for STEM programming. The Economic Impact Grants Pass Airport January 2021 references statewide aviation documentation and reports, which was then consolidated by airport staff and presented to the Airport Advisory Committee. The economic impact was significant at this time but has only increased since this document was created. Of note, “it is estimated that businesses which utilize aircraft based at Grants Pass Airport bring in more than \$500 Million dollars annually, with about 93% of that attributable to City-Based Business.” Additionally, Marta would like to share a makerspace study prior to the next meeting.
- b) Colleen Padilla of Southern Oregon Regional Development, Inc. (SOREDI) shared the Enterprise Zone benefits (3-5 years of tax abatement for expanding traded sector companies adding jobs) are up for renewal in the legislature. Since 1998, SOREDI has processed 197 applications, resulting in 13,900 jobs and \$602 million in new investments.

3) Approval of Minutes:

- a) Approval of minutes from April 27, 2023.

Motion

Member Martin moved, and Member Woods seconded the motion to approve the minutes from the April 27, 2023, meeting. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”: Chair Schaller, Vice Chair Mancuso, Members Converse, Richardson, Merrill, Duval, Molloy, Swain, and

**Middelstadt. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Members Camp, Lane, Gordon, and Sweeney.
The motion passed.**

4) Work Session Items:

- a) Presentation by John Chimenti of Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. on Hydrogen for Mobility.** Chair Schaller introduced John Chimenti, an employee of Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. out of Portland. Through correspondence, Chair Schaller determined John Chimenti could provide some valuable information on the future of hydrogen, the impact it is having on Air Products, and the potential opportunities it could provide for our community.

John Chimenti presented a slide show on how hydrogen is produced, where it will be produced, location of operating fueling stations, a map on where stations are being built, and target highways for expansion. He provided some background information on Air Products. The company is based in Pennsylvania and has \$12.5 billion in sales, \$1.5 million hydrogen fuelings per year, and more than 250 hydrogen fueling projects. 99.9% of hydrogen is made from natural gas. \$15 billion is dedicated to zero emissions and renewal energy projects for producing and distributing hydrogen.

Air Products has developed vehicles for transporting hydrogen and fueling station designs. They have 2,000 Class 8 trucks that they would like to convert to hydrogen powered fuel cell trucks by 2030. They currently have 2 in operation. There are 60 light duty vehicle fueling stations they own and operate in California. Air Products hydrogen equipment is installed in 37 stations out of 60 that are operational. They also have 16 forklift refueling sites and 5,000 fuelings per day. Currently, that makes up 0.08% of the market, but they are expecting exponential growth.

Air Products is working on building a hydrogen corridor from Mexico to Canada. It takes about 2 years from identifying / acquiring land to a station being operational. At a station, land space for equipment is 90'x60' and the station itself needs a footprint of 1-2 acres. It is early in the process, but Air Products is looking to expand north along the Interstate 5 corridor.

Questions and Answers: John Chimenti opened the floor for questions.

Why is hydrogen better than charging a battery? For Class 8 long haul trucks, hydrogen is an advantage because battery weight of electric vehicles takes up too much of the payload. To compare, the hydrogen fuel cell adds 4,000 lbs. to the payload, while batteries add 12,000 lbs. Electric may be better for short range trips, but longer range will likely go to hydrogen.

How does hydrogen fuel cell work? A chemical react occurs within the fuel cell and the only emissions are heat from the reaction and water vapor.

How can the committee help? Air Products would be interested in any potential properties that are identified in this area. SOREDI can assist in identifying properties and provide additional technical assistance for their potential expansion to the area.

How many people will each station employ? 0.4 persons with technical skill for monitoring and 2-3 station attendants for customer service.

What technical skills are needed? A person from technology school that can work with transmitters, valves, and fittings, and has experience working with compressed natural gas would be a good fit.

What is the footprint of a hydrogen production plant? An onsite production plant needs about 3 acres. They are first looking to expand by installing fueling stations but will eventually want to identify hydrogen production plant sites.

Member Discussion: Committee members continued discussion. Member Martin felt hydrogen development has potential and we should keep it in mind. Several members agreed it has potential. Member Swain expressed concern over the limited number of jobs created for the development of a fueling station. However, other members felt it could provide potential trucking jobs, create additional training opportunities, or help support workforce development centers for technology. Member Mancuso expressed concerns that Seven Feathers has already cornered the market for Class 8 trucks.

Chair Schaller shared thoughts on using biomass as a natural resource to create jobs in our area. Member Mancuso opened a discussion on a hotel for Cave Junction. SOREDI has been marketing for the City of Cave Junction and always suggests Josephine County for new hoteliers coming to the area. A traffic study would be needed to better understand the needs for a hotel in Cave Junction. Member Middelstadt spoke about a lodging feasibility study conducted in Cave Junction in 2017. This will be shared with the group prior to the discussion scheduled for the August meeting.

5) Information Sharing

a) Committee Members

b) Government Liaisons

- i) **City of Grants Pass.** Councilor Lovelace was hoping to hear from Commissioner John West on who would be going into the Flying Lark as he has previously expressed it could be a hotel. She shared the Commissioners are going for a \$0.99 taxing district in the County in November. Boatnik is on and the park is closed. Riverside Park will reopen June 21st. With support from legal counsel, there will be a public meeting to discuss what is legally possible to do with establishing safety parameters in the public parks. At the June 7th Grants Pass City Council business meeting, there will be a resolution approving Spalding Commerce Park sanitary sewer design. The City is starting to budget millions of dollars for sewer and water infrastructure at this location
- ii) **City of Cave Junction.** On June 10th, Main Street Cave Junction is having a 75th birthday celebration for the City of Cave Junction in the park. Bring a picnic. There will be cupcakes, activities, and games for participants. There will also be a pie eating contest. Purchase a raffle ticket and the 8 tickets pulled will be the individuals that will get to participate in the contest.

c) Items from Staff

6) Items for Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting:

6/22/23 Airport Strategic Plan – Presentation from Roger Brandt on airport activities and events. Members Camp and Richardson will provide an update from the Airport Subcommittee. Update from Marta Tarantsey on drone activity information. Update from

Commissioner John West on County airports and other development sites (e.g., Flying Lark and Dimmick Campus)

7/27/23 Industrial Lands, Development at Merlin Exit, ACES – Marta Tarantsey will provide an update on the Industrial Lands Subcommittee activities. Member Gordon will provide an update on the RV development at Merlin exit and present on ACES Subcommittee activities.

8/24/23 Focus on Cave Junction – Final Cave Junction hotel study from March 2017 will be shared with the group. Member Mancuso and Lane will discuss a hotel in Cave Junction. Member Camp will provide an update on the Illinois Valley Airport and potential activities and events.

9/28/23 – Alternative lodging, housing, ADUs

7) Adjournment:

- a. Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Next scheduled meeting: June 22, 2023

Minutes prepared by Dana Pearce, City Staff Liaison.