



Leadership Development Committee

Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 13, 2023

Members present: Mike Aspacher, Doris Herringshaw, Tom Mackin, Sandy Spang, Craig Stough, Dave Thompson; **Excused:** Scott Miller, Rhonda Sewell, Mark Stahl; **Staff present:** Bill Best, Tim Brown, Nate Reiter, Jennifer Allen

Call to Order/Welcome/Introductions – The Leadership Development Committee virtually met on Friday, January 13, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. via GoToMeeting. Chair Mike Aspacher called the meeting to order after a quorum was confirmed.

NW Ohio Economic Development District Discussion – Dr. Russell Mills will soon step down from his position as director of BGSU's Center for Regional Development to take on a position at the Federal Reserve in Pittsburgh. He has been TMACOG's point person with U.S. EDA and evaluating the EDD opportunity. Nichole Fifer has been named the interim director. Dr. Mills plans to schedule a meeting to introduce her to TMACOG next week. The committee had previously asked him to provide some specific reasons why TMACOG should expand its role as an economic development district and examples of grant opportunities that our region is eligible for but not able to apply for without having a regional EDD. It was noted that EDD success stories can be found on the U.S. EDA's website.

The committee engaged in a lengthy discussion about whether TMACOG should move forward and apply for an EDD designation. Sandy Spang shared an editorial by the Economic Innovation Group, a Washington think tank, regarding the funding opportunities. They looked at the CHIPS Act and as one of the components of the act, throughout the country there is going to be \$500 million innovation grants given to regions. Toledo was identified as the strongest applicant in the Chicago EDA region.

There were some concerns about how the annual expenses associated with administering an EDD would be financed and giving the next president of TMACOG an opportunity to weigh in on whether the organization should seek the designation. Mr. Brown noted that initially there was concern that the salary of the individual at TMACOG that would coordinate the EDD activities would be \$150,000. TMACOG has since learned from MORPC and SEMCOG who have also applied for the EDD designation that the individual a junior in economic development realm, and that individual's salary could be managed given the necessary local support within TMACOG's current financial structure. It was also noted that as the EDD administers more grants, its budget is expected to grow as well. This has been the trajectory of existing EDDs. It was suggested that the committee review the budget of an existing EDD that is similar in size to the TMACOG region.

Craig Stough pointed out that applying for and setting up an EDD is a long process (estimated 18 months) and suggested moving forward with getting approval from the board sooner rather than later. TMACOG and the new president could always withdraw its application if it is determined that there are going to be more expenses than anticipated. However, he noted that if we stop now, we will likely lose the opportunity to move forward. Mrs. Spang suggested convening a small working group to explore the application so that the committee will have a better understanding of the process versus before seeking board approval.

Committee members concurred with moving forward with exploring the application process and finding out from Ms. Fifer how soon TMACOG could start the process. Mr. Reiter will find out if U.S. EDA could provide us with an example of what a budget for a small kickoff staff for a region the size of TMACOG. It was also suggested that an invitation be extended to the CEDS Strategy Committee to meet at TMACOG when the time comes for them to begin planning and updating the Toledo Regional CEDS.

Search for TMACOG President – Nate Reiter recently emailed the committee the job description for the president's position, which date back to 2015. The document was shared on the teleconference screen during the meeting. To date, no comments have been submitted. Mr. Reiter pointed out a sentence that the committee may want to make changes under minimum requirements: "With a preference given to experience in matters of intergovernmental relations." Committee members concurred that this is a critical requirement that should be highlighted in the job description. Chair Aspacher asked the committee to review the job description and to forward their comments and suggestions to Mr. Reiter by the end of the day. A final draft will be sent to the committee next (Tuesday or Wednesday). Unless there are any additional updates, the position will be posted at the end of the month.

Chair Aspacher recently met with Mr. Brown, Mr. Best, and Mr. Reiter and came up with a list consisting of a dozen individuals who be invited to sit in on interviews and give feedback on the candidates. So far eight of the individuals have accepted the invitation. Mr. Reiter will follow-up with those who have yet to respond. Two TMACOG staff members have also been selected to serve on the search committee to pose questions regarding the internal operations of TMACOG. In terms of a timeline, the position will be posted at the end of January. Resumes and candidate submittals will be accepted through February. Interviews will be conducted in March, with May 1 being the target hire date for the new president. The May 1 date would provide some overlap time to ensure a smooth transition before Mr. Brown is officially off TMACOG's payroll.

Mr. Brown asked the committee how involved they would like him to be in the search process. He is willing to participate if they so desire or serve as a resource behind the scenes. Mr. Best noted that Tony Reams participated in the interviews when Mr. Brown interviewed for the president's position in 2016, but he was not certain if Mr. Reams asked questions of the candidates or was present simply as an observer. Chair Aspacher noted that Mr. Brown's level of involvement in the process will be a topic of discussion for the search committee once they have convened.

Any and All Other Business – The committee concurred that there has been pretty good reception from the public regarding to the U.S. 23 Corridor. The next endeavor is to invite the Lieutenant Governor and ODOT Director Marchbanks to a meeting with our region's transportation corridor leaders.

Public Comment Period – There were no representatives from the public present for comments.

Next Meeting/Adjournment – The next regularly scheduled committee meeting will take place virtually on Friday, February 10 at 9:30 a.m. A ***motion*** was made by Doris Herringshaw and ***seconded*** by Sandy Spang to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.