

# ***Agriculture Development Council Meeting Minutes***

February 7-8, 2023

## **I. Call to order**

Chair John Wicks called to order the meeting of the Agriculture Development Council at 9:01 am on Tuesday February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## **II. Roll call**

Dani Jones conducted roll call and introductions were made by council members and department staff.

Council Members: Chair John Wicks, Megan Hedges, Lars Hanson, Sara Hollenbeck, Department of Commerce Director Scott Osterman and Liane Taylor proxy for Scott Osterman, Andy Fjeseth, proxy for Director Christy Clark.

Department Employees: Cort Jensen, Bailey Kaskie, Aly Townsend, Caitlin Horert, Alicia Hamm, and Dani Jones. Marty Earnheart was present via Zoom.

Members of the public list available.

## **III. Public Comment**

Chair John Wicks called for public comment. There were no comments from the public.

## **IV. Review of Meeting Minutes**

The committee reviewed the past meeting minutes from October 19, 2022, and December 29, 2022. Megan Hedges made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Sara Hollenbeck 2nd the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

## **V. Department Update**

Andy Fjeseth shared with the council that the Market Development Program is awarding small grants to help with trade show assistance, internet/web development, and business acceleration program. The upcoming RFP for Food and Ag development centers will open soon. The RFP will open March 1, deadline April 15, and awards will be granted sometime in May. Video clips were shared on the latest activities in the market development program-The Food and Beverage show was held last fall in Missoula Montana. Great companies, great buyers, and some amazing footage. The department has had inbound and outbound missions that included Pulse Crops, Livestock genetics, and specialty beverages. The Ag Tech Summit was a success, over

12 businesses were entered in the speed pitch. The winner of the speed pitch was pasta presenter out of MSU; “Al dente forever”. Upcoming trade shows include SIAL in Las Vegas in March of 2023, The Food and Beverage Show in Missoula this fall, and the Association Food Trade Shows also held in March. Current special projects include Hola Montana, Beyond the Weather, Local Food Purchase Assistance, and Regional Food Business Center.

This year’s legislative session has been quiet, just working on some clean up bills that included mapping of huckleberry patches and hucksters’ licenses.

## **VI. FY2022 Financial Report**

Program funding comes from the Coal Severance tax (\$400,000) and general fund allocation (\$900,000). Program funding is broken down to grants and loans, department personnel, and market development. The council currently has more cash than authority.

GTA Funding Priority areas for FY2023- Business expansion, investing in processing infrastructure, and projects that are utilizing new or innovative solutions to diversify, add value, or provide substantial growth opportunities.

## **VII. Review of Ethics Policy**

Cort Jensen reviewed the ethics policy with the committee and reminded the committee to remove themselves from discussion and decision making if they were or have been directly involved with the person or business. Recuse yourself on the record. Listening to the presentation isn’t a problem, can remove yourself from deliberation, but it int’s necessary.

## **VIII. Process / Zoom Review**

Aly Townsend shared with the committee that she will share and update the spreadsheet on the second day so the committee can see where they are at for funding. Bailey reminded the committee that there are 5 blocks of applicants. Each presenter has 10 minutes, Bailey will give the introductions. There is additional time for follow up, with a 20-minute section after each block.

## **IX. Growth Through Agriculture Review of Applications 1-19**

1. Montana Greenhouse Project 365, LLC
2. JWK Enterprises dba MR BEEF
3. Cold Spring Organics, LLC

4. Genuine Ice Cream
5. 41 Grains
6. Biotech Investments – Kuvu Bio

**Applications 1-6 were discussed followed by Q&A with each applicant. Ranking was completed.**

**Lunch**

7. Good Mama Farm
8. Aspen Grove Farm, LLC
9. Stablefeed
10. Beauty and the Beef
11. Key to the Mountain
12. YES, Compost LLC
13. BMB Ventures LLC dba Rawhide Meats

**Applications 7-13 were discussed followed by Q&A with each applicant. Ranking was completed.**

**Break**

14. Ag Processing Solutions, Inc.
15. Montgomery Distillery
16. Delpine Farms, LLC
17. Black Dog Farm
18. Daniel's Gourmet Meats and Sausages
19. Fort Belknap Community Economic Development Corporation

**Applications 14-18 were discussed followed by Q&A with each applicant. Ranking was completed.**

Chairman John Wicks asked for public comment, none at this time. Lars Hanson made the motion to close the meeting for the day at 3:53pm. The meeting will resume on Wednesday February 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am

**X. Tuesday February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Chairman John Wicks called the meeting to order at 8:59 am.

All the members were present.

Chairman John Wicks asked for public comment, none at this time.

**XI. Growth Through Agriculture Applications 19-33**

20. Beaverhead Bioplastics
21. Mile 9 Farm
22. Big Sky Orchards & Hops Farm
23. Montana Alfalfa Company
24. Farmers on Flynn, (a DBN of Wired Wild West Inc.)
25. Bloom Technologies Co
26. BB Farms & Soap Co

**Applications 20-26 were discussed followed by Q&A with each applicant.  
Ranking was completed.**

**Break**

27. Crazy Woman Cattle Company

Fort Belknap Community Economic Development Corporation #19 from 2/7/2023

28. SporeAttic LLC
29. Hoot Owl Farm
30. Nature's Enhancement, Inc.
31. Clark Fork Organics LLC

32. Sapphire Suri Alpaca Farm & Mill, LLC

33. Unwaffle, Inc.

**Applications 27-33 were discussed followed by Q&A with each applicant. Ranking was completed.**

19. Fort Belknap Community Economic Development Corporation

## **XII. BREAK**

## **XIII. Growth Through Agriculture Applications Funding**

The council settled on \$796,003.11 in grants and \$100,000.00 in loans. Lars Hanson made the motion to approve funding for presenters as presented on the spreadsheet. Scott Osterman 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. All in favor, motion passed.

## **XIV. FADC Application Deadline**

The RFP for the Food and Ag Development Centers will be published March 1, 2023. Aly will work on the next meeting date with the council to review the applications. The council would like to see a one-page budget sheet to stay consistent, including profit and loss,

## **XV. Public Comment**

Chair John Wicks called for public comment.

Andy Fjeseth will present the proposal for Market Development at the next meeting.

The council will also set priorities for the next year and the next meeting.

## **XVI. Adjournment**

Megan Hedges made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:18pm. The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Dani Jones

Minutes approved by: Andy Fjeseth