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DeKalb County Government  
Sycamore, Illinois

**Economic Development Committee Minutes  
December 1, 2015**

The DeKalb County Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, December 1, 2015 @ 7:00p.m. in the Administration Building's Conference Room East. Chairman Brown called the meeting to order. Members present were Ms. Leifheit, Ms. Polanco, Mr. Porterfield and Mr. Whelan. Mr. Faivre and Mr. Pietrowski, Jr. were absent. Others present were Ms. Christine Johnson, Mr. Gary Hanson, Mr. Paul Borek, Dr. Joanne Kantner, Dean of Adult Education & Transition Programs at Kishwaukee College, Ms. LaCretia Konan, Coordinator, Employer Services at Illinois WorkNet Center, Ms. Maryann Kolls, Director of Workforce Transitions at Illinois WorkNet Center.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

It was moved by Ms. Polanco, seconded by Mr. Whelan, and it was carried unanimously to approve the minutes from October 6, 2015.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Mr. Porterfield, and it was carried unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

Mr. Pietrowski, Jr. arrived at 7:02p.m.

Chairman Brown mentioned that the Daily Chronicle had an article this week involving Economic Development in the County and Mr. Paul Borek.

**ILLINOIS WORKNET CENTER PRESENTATION AND TOUR – MS. LACRETIA KONAN AND MS. MARYANN KOLLS**

Ms. Maryann Kolls and Ms. LaCretia Konan introduced themselves to the committee and said that they not only work at the WorkNet Center but also at Kishwaukee College. They then began the tour of the Illinois WorkNet Center. Dr. Joanne Kantner also introduced herself to the committee. Ms. Kolls said that they are opened from 8:30a.m to 4:30p.m. Monday through Friday.

Dr. Kantner said that since Kane County is the administrator of the funds for the WOIA for DeKalb and Kendall Counties, they are the ones that furnished the offices and pays for the rent of the space for DeKalb County. All equipment, computers, etc. have also been purchased and furnished by Kane County. They also have workshops and job clubs with different topics each week that people can attend.

Dr. Kantner said that they have seen the numbers increase of the amount of people that are coming to the facility since they have moved to this new location. She mentioned that it is not on the bus route, so they were concerned about people coming there. However, people have found them with no problem. They do offer some programs at Kishwaukee College and at the Jail. They also get some bus passes from Voluntary Action Center if people need them.

Many displaced or dislocated workers can also come to the facility and help to train for other jobs or skills. They have seen about 1,000 people come through the facility from July 1, 2015 to September 30, 2015.

They also said that they have two offices upstairs in their space that still need to be rented out and Kane County would love it if someone wants to rent them.

Most people want training services that come through their offices. They can choose from Kishwaukee College or other WOIA approved colleges. Of the eighty-four percent of people that use training dollars, the majority go to Kishwaukee College or NIU.

Dr. Kantner said that there was a budget impasse that affected the WOIA funds so Kane County gathered all of the CEO's from the different counties and gave them a line of credit, because by the end of August they had not received any funds, so they helped them train those 1,000 people since we had no money.

Chairman Bob Brown asked if the English as a Second Language course is free.

Ms. Kolls said yes, that it is free and they refer them to the Adult Education program.

This Spring they are suspending classes and going down from 22 sites to 5 sites until they get some funding for Adult Education. Other colleges are closing their entire Adult Education site, so they are lucky somewhat that they did not have to close all of them at Kishwaukee College.

Ms. LaCretia Konan said that she works with employers on their needs for certain employees. The employers can come into the facility to do interviewing and meet with prospective employees. They are currently serving 145 adults and 71 dislocated workers.

Ms. LaCretia Konan also mentioned that the one job that employees in our County are having a hard time finding people to fill is the Industrial Technician which is a maintenance position. Kishwaukee College will be holding a roundtable discussion with employers next week on this subject.

#### **BUSINESS INCUBATOR PROGRAM – MARK PIETROWSKI, JR.**

Mr. Pietrowski, Jr. said that he had a meeting at the Community Outreach Building with other counties and their leaders, and the Mayor of Barrington, Illinois. There were about seven counties present. They are currently drafting a resolution in January in terms of a letter of intent with this partnership. It would tap DeKalb County into the Rockford RMAP funding that our County can utilize services for grant

writing and other services, he continued. We all will have access to these services. For example, if a company is locating to Rochelle because of the railroad, then the suppliers could locate to DeKalb County. This is how the relationships have worked in other alliances.

As far as the Business Incubator, he and County Administrator Gary Hanson have spoken about it and they are excited that it has passed the budget process. Now the committee has the exiting task of brainstorming about it. He would like to launch this program in January 2016.

Mary Supple has stepped into the role of searching for economic development opportunities for DeKalb County and marketing DeKalb Market Square. Ms. Supple will step in and it will be one of her roles to run the incubator program. Mary became officially certified by the State of Illinois for economic development recently in Naperville, Illinois.

Ms. Supple and Mr. Hanson passed out paperwork to the committee regarding questions to think about over the month of December and the actual layout of the incubator space in the Community Outreach Building.

Mr. Hanson said that the space is 4800 square feet and that fiber optic is included in this space.

Mr. Pietrowski, Jr., said that there could be a community think tank space included in the incubator, too.

It was the consensus of the committee that they would think about the questions on the incubator over the month of December and then meet next month and discuss them. They also agreed to meet in the space at the Community Outreach Building for their January 2016 meeting.

Chairman Brown asked Ms. Supple to please email out to the committee about 4 or 5 suggested incubators for them to look at.

## **2016 MEETING CALENDAR**

Ms. Hanson passed out the 2016 suggested meeting calendar. He asked them to look it over and that there was no action that need to be done.

## **DEKALB AREA ARTS COUNCIL REPORT AND DEKALB COUNTY CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU – MS. MARY SUPPLE**

Ms. Supple reported that the Convention and Visitor's Bureau will be holding a Strategic Planning Meeting on 1/21/16 at the Red Roof Inn.

They have already booked 200 rooms for the Colgate Skate event being held on 12/16/15.

The Egyptian Theatre held the Body Building Competition with 127 competitors in November and they are booking another competition in April 2016.

The Convocation Center is hosting in February 2016 the Monster Truck Show again.


The Arts Council held an Arts Summit recently where 100 people attended. They received great feedback and will be discussing it at their next meeting. They filed their 501c3 paperwork and received a grant from the Community Foundation to cover the filing fees. They also have a website now and it is [www.dekalbareaartscouncil.org](http://www.dekalbareaartscouncil.org).

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Mr. Whelan, seconded by Ms. Polanco, and it was carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Chairman Robert Brown

  
Mary Supple, Recording Secretary