

Minutes

BRAED - Annual General Meeting

June 25, 2020 via ZOOM



The Annual General Meeting for the Battle River Alliance for Economic Development (BRAED) was held virtually via ZOOM

Communities:

- Associate Member: Arnold Hanson
- Beaver County: Kevin Smook
- City of Camrose: Patricia MacQuarrie
- Coronation: Quinton Flint
- County of Camrose: Anjah Howard
- Daysland: Edward Kusalik
- Edgerton: Wendy Belik
- Flagstaff County: Jordyn Prior
- Hardisty: Doug Irving
- Holden: Mark Giebelhaus
- Paintearth County: Carol Thomson, Stan Schulmeister
- Ryley: Brian Ducherer
- Viking: Debbie O'Toole Balaban
- Wainwright: Carley Herbert
- Killick Leadership: Bobbi Menard

Executive Director: Cathy Goulet

Administration: Cindy Hurum

Alberta Economic Development Trade & Tourism: Dawna Allard

Workforce Consultant Ministry of Labour GOA: Jean Vidal

Guest Speaker(s): Roger Epp (University of Alberta), Michael Wetsch, (Grant Thornton LLP)

1. **Call to Order:** Brian Ducherer, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05pm
 - a. Welcome and Opening Remarks

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion: The agenda of June 25th be approved

Moved: A. Hanson

CARRIED

3. Approval of Minutes from the Annual General Meeting dated June 13, 2019

Motion: The AGM minutes of June 13, 2019 be approved as presented.

Moved: K. Smook

CARRIED

4. Guest Speaker: Roger Epp – University of Alberta “Rural Alberta – Where to Now?”

Key Points

- * Historically, the support of the Province of Alberta has been difficult to sustain over election cycles
- * “But.... BRAED and rural communities are still here, which means you have a chance to work together”
- * Four rural impacts post COVID pandemic
 - More consolidation of ownership of the rural economy with potential that shorter supply chains count benefit local producers.
 - Accelerated digitization of the economy. Rural needs to hold government accountable for basic bandwidth access.
 - The pandemic has given a push for movement out of major urbans to medium and sometimes even smaller urbans. Rural needs to push government to retain infrastructure to support population.
 - We need to “brace for a contraction of the provincial government.” Alberta public finances have been more precarious that we want to know or believe. Rural municipalities will be squeezed even further.
- * The future for rural communities has always been for rural people to determine. Alberta is a very urban province. “You shouldn’t think you have a rural champion in the Province. You need to be political for yourselves.”
- * Issues that matter for our communities are decided at a political level. “Don’t make it easy for them.”

Q & A:

Q - Regarding Augustana Camrose Campus - when the purse strings are controlled out of Edmonton what do we do?

A - When the decisions are made by the province and the university, they need to hear your strong voices that this Campus matters to the people in the region.

Q - It seems that in rural Alberta there is a lot of repetition in communities. Do we need more self identity?

A - There is something to what you say, you need to get people off the "Big Highways", they have no familiarity to smaller communities. Establish your place – web presence.

Q – What can a community do to draw people and get them off those major corridors?

A – Map your assets, package, and invite people to your assets, ie farms, successful rural industries, sometimes it just takes one pocket that will draw tourists

Q – Do you think age demographics contribute to municipal governments not pushing rural communities?

A – Do not sell short the powers of your local government, be creative with them

Q – We need to be more creative to move away from oil & gas. How do you get people to process that?

A – Oil & gas will not likely have another boom. Identity is wrapped up in energy, but it won't be the rock or employment source. It won't keep young people in the community. Provincial Government needs to lead a conversation about the next economy and what that looks like and how it reaches rural as well as urban.

5. Presentation of 2019/20 BRAED Annual Activity Report – Cathy Goulet, Executive Director – provided as information

The 2019-2020 operational year of the Battle River Alliance of Economic Development ended on March 31, 2020 – here's a brief summary of the year's highlights. (see attached)

Motion: To approve the 2019/20 annual report as presented.

Moved: W. Belik

CARRIED

a. BRAED Communications Report – Bobbi Menard, Communications Strategist – provided as information

- KNOTice - it's taken a year to develop – the open rate is exceptional
 - BRAED's long term initiative is to promote more
 - People seem to really like the local initiative.
- Twitter - tweeting engaging content
 - BRAED's followers are up by more than 10%
 - Flagstaff County and BRAED together are gaining more traction
 - Consistently seeing engagement into 1500 – 2500 impression rates
- Website – BRAED still has some work to do

Motion: To approve the communication report as presented.
Moved: A Hanson

CARRIED

6. Presentation of 2019/20 BRAED Financial Report – Michael Wetsch, Grant Thornton LLP

Motion: To approve the 2019/20 Financial Report as presented.

Moved: P. MacQuarrie

CARRIED

7. Appointment of Accounting Firm

Motion: To appoint Grant Thornton LLP as the BRAED accounting firm for 2020/21

Moved: D. O'Toole Balaban

CARRIED

8. Regional Round Table

• **Patricia MacQuarrie - City of Camrose**

- Things are slowly coming back to normal in Camrose with a staggered start for reopening businesses with good social distancing orders in place
- Looking at relaunch and recovery for second half of the year
- A rally planned for Friday June 26th sparked strong reactions on social media
- Camrose has had a significant number of inquiries around value-added agriculture in the last 2 weeks
- With the cuts in education funding, things are tenuous for the Augustana Campus. An American firm has been asked to look at how the institution can become more entrepreneurial
- Camrose did receive 1.6 million for runway overlap through the Step Grant

• **Quinton Flint – Coronation**

- Coronation didn't really shut down
- Working with BREOC, business collaboration – finding ways to give small business loans in the Flagstaff region
- With our ACP Grant we want to start looking at the cost of building a new arena. This is in collaboration with the County of Paintearth
- The BREOC program offers \$20,000 to communities in the BREOC region
- Moving ahead, business as usual to set ourselves up post COVID

• **Ed Kusalik - Daysland – nothing to report, enjoy the summer and keep social distancing**

• **Wes Laporte - Edgerton**

- Working hard to keep taxes at par
- Edgerton has expanded their security camera network
- The town has a new program selling residential lots for \$1.00
- **Mark Giebelhaus - Holden**
 - Everything in town is still slow
 - The Gallery, museum and theatre all opening with COVID restrictions in place
- **Brian Ducherer – Ryley**
 - Solar panel project up and running two weeks ago
 - Selling power to the grid
 - Upgrading sewer line, road, and water – 1.4 million for 3 blocks
 - Held a virtual sports day and had a great deal of participants
 - Had judging of painted sidewalks, flowers and yards done by Drone fly overs
 - Very successful
- **Debbie O’Toole Balaban - Viking**
 - Things are slowly opening up
 - The solar panel project is almost complete and ready to go, we will be selling power to the grid
 - The ice will go back in the Carena following AHS Guidelines. Ice slots are booking up with hockey schools and teams looking for ice
 - We’ve had one doctor leave but have been able to recruit 2 new doctors, one is already here, the other one will be here this fall
 - Welcome to our new business on main street – Ancaron macarons – homemade macarons
- **Carley Herbert - Wainwright**
 - Most businesses in Wainwright are open, some in limited capacity
 - Working on promoting shop local
 - Dr. Bev Britz was awarded with RhPAP’s Rural Physician of the Year Award
 - The Wainwright Museum and Visitor Information Centre will remain closed this year due to volunteers being seniors and not comfortable working during the pandemic
 - Most events have been cancelled which has decreased the fundraising efforts for many organizations such as the CT scanner project which is trying to raise 2.2 million dollars to bring the scanner to the Wainwright hospital
 - The Wainwright region conducted a Tourism Strategic plan in 2019 which outlined the need for more content. i.e. photos, videos, articles to market the region. The Wainwright region is now applying for the next phase of this project to collect these assets with the Travel Alberta grant.
- **Kevin Smook - Beaver County**
 - COVID 19 cancelled the Snow Goose Festival relaunch as well as the Bruce Stampede

- Camping had been delayed but now open with AHS restrictions at Black Nugget and Coal Creek
- Wild Rose Co-op will open a card lock in Tofield
- From Beaver County, farmers, greenhouses, small businesses have all sent letters to express Beavery County's support for Augustana Campus Camrose
- **Anjah Howard - Camrose County**
 - The county has been busy with economic development, we have started an official committee
 - During COVID-19 the county has worked with Artisans for curbside pickup, this will continue
 - Campground and golf courses are open with AHS restrictions
 - The county brought water to junction of 13 and 21
- **Jordyn Prior - Flagstaff County**
 - Flagstaff County hosted a series of virtual events known as the #FlagstaffOnlineShowcase where businesses, crafters, entrepreneurs and local makes showcased who they are, what products and services they have to offer and finished with a call to action through a Facebook Live Video. We highly recommend using social media as a tool.
 - Business Success Program, which provided direct one-on-one expert business coaches and consultants to support our businesses on a variety of needs and challenges. This program is flexible and is not a "one size fits all." Once the businesses discuss their needs with a consultant, it is then determined if they are eligible for our business and skill enhancement supports.
 - Flagstaff Crafted Program is currently looking for new makers and helping the current ones that are interested in upscaling their business
 - Succession Program was interrupted due to COVID, we are working at restarting this program and helping businesses that are wanting to exit receive the resources and guidance they need.
 - Flagstaff county just completed our "Nominate a Frontline Hero" contest. Each week, during the 5-week contest, a random winner was drawn to receive a \$50 gift card to a small business in the Flagstaff region as a token of appreciation.
- **Carol Thomson – Paintearth County**
 - Continuing to work with BREOC
 - Business Beautification
 - Installing fibre optic lines
- **Arnold Hanson – Associate Member**

- Glad to see that people are talking about Agriculture, it's what pulls the region through

• **Dawna Allard - Economic Trade & Tourism**

- Regional round up of events
- Business Grant \$5000 announcement. Stay tuned
- Relaunch for small business for PPE or deferred utility bills
- Travel Alberta Grant out until June 30, 2020. Intake September, Economic Trade and Tourism
- Digital divide is being discussed
- Still waiting to see what the stimulus funding looks like. Budget agencies yet to be formed and grants have been delayed

• **Jean Vidal - Workforce Consultant Ministry of Labour**

- We're hoping that as businesses relaunch, they can hire staff back
- Canada Alberta Job Grant, <https://www.alberta.ca/canada-alberta-job-grant.aspx>
With this program you can train your employed staff but can also be used to train an unemployed Albertan that you might want to consider hiring... and at 100% reimbursement. (the unemployed Albertan must be unemployed for 30 days). There is a lot of in-depth information in the applicant guide and employers must apply online through the portal.
- Alberta Agriculture Job Connector-<https://www.alberta.ca/agriculture-job-connector.aspx> (a matching of workers with employers to fill Agriculture and Agri-foods jobs)

Next Meeting will be Board of Directors Meeting: TBA

Adjournment

The AGM meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.



Stan Schulmeister, Secretary

Brian Ducherer, Chair

Date: Sept 27 / 21

Date: July 7, 2021