Town of Farmington
Economic Development Commission
Tuesday, June 9, 2015

**Commission Members Present:**Ann Titus, Chairman
Denise Roy-Palmer
Elaine Aylard
Jodi Connolly
Charlie King, Selectmen’s Rep.

**Commission Members Absent:**
Resta Detwiler, excused
Bill Tsiros, excused
Martin Laferte, Planning Board Rep.

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:**
Chairman Titus called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. All present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Presentation by NH Employment Security Representative**:
 Employer Services Representative Lindsey Richards came before the commission to discuss services provided to employers through the NH Employment Security and their various partner organizations. She told members that her territory covers from Massachusetts north to Wakefield and west to Epping, NH. Ms. Richards said employers don’t realize the many services that are available to job seekers and employers and that her office is a lot more than the “Unemployment Office” as it is often called. She then gave an overview of the programs included in a packet given to commission members.
*Return To Work-* This program provides training for an individual for up to 24 hours a week for up to six weeks at no cost to the employer. An individual can continue collecting unemployment benefits while participating in the training program. The program also provides Workman’s Comp coverage for the trainee.
*Work Opportunity Tax Credit Program*- This program encourages employers to hire job seekers from certain targeted groups such as TANF recipients, veterans, ex-felons, designated community residents and others by helping them qualify for up to $9,000 in tax credits.
*Job Match-* This is a job board for both job seekers and employers. Employers can place job orders on-line or fax the information to their local office and receive matches of current applicants by mail or fax.
*Economic and Labor Market Information-* The ELMI is a resource for employment statistics, economic highlights, social indicators, demographics and more. The publications can be viewed, down loaded or printed from the NHES website.
*O-NET-* This site provides descriptions of jobs and related tasks, average pay rates for occupations and resume help.
*Job Training Fund-* This is a Dept. of Resources and Economic Development funded program that pays 50% of training costs up to $100,000.
*Work Ready-* This program is in conjunction with Great Bay Community College where individuals learn to improve their soft skills such as interviewing, workplace safety, communication skills, conflict resolution, problem solving and on-the-job-training.
*Work Share-* Offers an alternative to layoffs during a temporary slowdown in business. It allows employers to keep employees on the payroll by cutting all employees’ hours in a department by 10-50% and allows them to collect partial unemployment benefits for up to 26 weeks.
Richards also gave the committee copies of the NH Employment Security Employer Handbook. The handbook includes information about taxes, benefits, forms, record keeping and additional services for employers.
Members discussed including this information in the planned monthly e-mail blast and the newsletter. The information packets will be distributed to Town depts., the Community Action Program center and Town businesses and groups.
The meeting will also be re-broadcast on the Community Cable Access TV Channel 26.
Ms. Richards offered her assistance to the committee as well as to employers and job seekers. Members thanked her for attending the meeting.

 **Review of Minutes**:
**Motion:** (Connolly, second Titus) to table the review of the minutes of May 28, 2015 until the next meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**Moose Mountain Regional/EDC meeting on May 29, 2015: Overview** Denise Roy-Palmer asked the committee for their thoughts on the joint meeting. Members said the meeting was very informative, well attended and the members of the Moose Mountains Regional Alliance were cordial and respectful to the EDC members.
Mrs. Roy-Palmer then asked the members if the committee plans to appoint a representative to the MMRA. After some discussion, it was determined that members Resta Detwiler and Elaine Aylard will represent the EDC to the MMRA.
The next MMRA meeting will be held on June 25 at the NH Farm Museum in Milton.

**ERZ Mapping and EDC Marketing Folders Update- Elaine A.:** Ms. Aylard presented the new marketing folders to the committee. The folder includes information on the TIF District, maps of the Rt. 11 Business Node Overlay/TIF District, Economic Revitalization Zones (Downtown Core and the Sarah Greenfield Business Park), frequently asked questions about the zones, an application for tax credits for businesses projects locating in the zones and contact information for the committee and the Town.
Members discussed including a tri-fold brochure containing a list of local things to do or a welcome letter in the folder. After some discussion, the members decided to include a welcoming letter. Mr. King suggested the letter also include contact points for town departments of interest to business owners such as the Town Administrator, Building Inspector and the Planning Office. Ms. Aylard will provide a draft of the letter at the next meeting.

**Discussion on Planner/Economic Development Director:**In the absence of the Planning Board Rep., Selectman King updated the committee about the discussion between Planning Board members and Selectmen at a recent Board of Selectmen meeting. Mr. King said Selectmen have been discussing the Planning Board’s request for a full time Planner and to keep the Planning Office open five days a week. The two boards also discussed hiring professional help to develop a management plan for the TIF and 79-e Districts.
Mr. King said following the resignation of the former Town Planner Kathy Menici, Selectmen decided to hire a part-time Planner. After the Planning Board expressed concerns that this is not working out, Mr. King said he contacted the interim Planner and requested he provide staff hours for the town each week. He said the Planner may not be able to commit to the request.
He added there is some funding available so the board is looking at alternatives, such as paying a stipend to a professional for work on a particular project. He said the board received a proposal from Strafford Regional Planning Commission regarding the services they could supply and related costs. King said he also contacted Kathy Menici and Consultant Jack Mettee to see if they are interested in providing services to the town and is awaiting a reply.
King said Selectmen are in the process of hiring a new Town Administrator and a new Fire Chief. He said after those positions are filled, the board may take a look at hiring a full time Planner/EDC person.

**Old Business:***Resignation-* Chairman Titus informed the committee that member Joan Funk has resigned from the committee. She then read the e-mail Funk sent informing them of her resignation. The e-mail said her resignation is due to needing a break from serving on town boards and because the current Board of Selectmen doesn’t see the economic value in continuing to support the Farmington Children’s Center.
Mr. King said he informed Ms. Funk that the board has reached a tentative agreement with the center for a 20-year lease. He said he told her the contract will be signed once the lawyers for both sides complete the contract language.
**Motion:** (King, second Connolly) to accept the resignation passed unanimously.
Members signed a card of thanks which will be sent to Ms. Funk.
*Sarah Greenfield Business Park Sign-* Chairman Titus reported that she discussed the incorrect wording on the sign with the Finance Administrator and the former Town Administrator. Titus said she first spoke to the Finance Administrator about not paying the invoice for the sign work. She then spoke to the Town Administrator who said Selectmen approved the invoice and the sign company was paid. Discussion included the sign company was told to correct the words on the sign; the correction is included in the meeting minutes and getting an estimate to fix the sign.
Selectman King said after the company was paid, the town received correspondence stating the company quoted the wrong price for the sign work and requested an additional $1,000 which the town did not pay. King suggested the owner would be unlikely to repair the sign at no additional cost. He suggested the committee look into getting an estimate to correct the wording from “Economic Revitalization Project” to “Economic Revitalization Zone”. Chairman Titus will obtain estimates for the next meeting.

**Monthly E-Mail Blast from the EDC:**
Members discussed items to be included in the monthly e-mail communication from the committee. Suggestions included an overview of the presentation from the Employment Security representative, contacts to obtain an informational packet and notice that the presentation will be re-broadcast on Cable Community Access TV Channel 26.

**New Business:** None.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 at 6 p.m.

**Adjournment:
Motion:** (King, second Connolly) to adjourn the meeting passed unanimously at 7:10 p.m.

Respectively submitted

Kathleen Magoon

Recording Secretary