

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

City Hall – Council Chambers

December 6, 2021

The Committee of the Whole met at City Hall at 6:30 p.m. on December 6, 2021, with the following Committee persons in attendance: Mayor Robert Green and Councilmembers Frank Darrah, Sudan deBuhr, Kelly Dunn, Simon Harding, Daryl Kruse, Mark Miller, and Dave Sires. Staff members from all City Departments and members of the community attended in person and teleconferenced in.

Mayor Green called the meeting to order and introduced the first item on the agenda, Grow Cedar Valley Update and introduced Cary Darrah, CEO of Grow Cedar Valley.

Ms. Darrah gave opening remarks and introduced Lisa Skubal, Vice President/Economic Development of Grow Cedar Valley.

Ms. Skubal stated they have had 10 new project leads since May and prepared 5 prospect proposals. Ms. Skubal explained the importance of having available 50,000 sq. ft. plus industrial space for potential companies to come to our community; companies are challenged in building new due to a delay in materials and construction costs. Companies are trying to stay ahead of the demand for products and need the industrial space immediately. Ms. Skubal explained the IEDA's grant program for SMM (small/medium size manufacturers); IEDA continues to review applications. Grow Cedar Valley has plans to establish a lead generation campaign in the Netherlands to identify interest in companies who would like to establish U.S. facilities. Ms. Skubal gave an update on the Grow Cedar Valley wage and benefits survey for the region; over 100 businesses participated in the region including many from Cedar Falls; the survey was published and distributed in June in the Cedar Valley. Ms. Skubal introduced Danny Laudick, Senior Program Director/Economic Development.

Mr. Laudick explained the workforce has declined; Grow Cedar Valley would like to focus on attraction and retention, working with K-12 and colleges, and utilize people in the community. Grow Cedar Valley will be serving as the key point of contact for employers and service organizations. Mr. Laudick will be rebuilding relationships with Iowa Workforce and other non-profit organizations, the State, and local schools. Mr. Laudick updated Councilmembers on the BBA (Black Business and Entrepreneurial Accelerated Program); they received \$600,000 in funding. Mr. Laudick introduced Becky Guinn, Grow Cedar Valley Board Chair.

Ms. Guinn thanked the Councilmembers for supporting Grow Cedar Valley.

Mayor Green opened the meeting for Council discussion.

Councilmember Dunn stated the continued support for Grow Cedar Valley is essential.

Mayor Green stated Goal Setting will include changing Grow Cedar Valley from a competitive grant to a contract that's sustainable and predictable.

There being no further business, Mayor Green adjourned the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

Minutes by Kim Kerr, Administrative Supervisor