



Minutes
Somerset County Business Partnership
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
March 19, 2009
8:00AM
Somerset County Business Partnership
360 Grove St.
Bridgewater

Members: Sheila Breeding Troy Fischer Peter Palmer
Tim Comerford Rick Fontana Steve Reynolds
John Donnadio Jim Laskey Paul Stahlin
Melissa Feltmann Donna LoStocco Dick Williams
Dave Wolfskehl

Guests: Richard Canter

Staff: Donna Allison Takeena Deas Tom Sharpe
Hannah Blumenthal Bob Lantelme Diana Sieberg
Kimberly Charne John Maddocks Carol Soriano

Ms. LoStocco called the meeting to order at 8:03 A.M.



Mr. Sharpe Finance

To date, the organization is in good financial shape – there are no “red flags.” BP is on track to reach budgeted goals.

Staff has conducted an early and extensive outreach to investors and contributors resulting in good response. Somerset County has committed the \$285,000 that was requested.

Mr. Sharpe welcomed Melissa Feltmann from sanofi-aventis and thanked her for the commitment of \$50,000 for 2009.

Ms. Sieberg

Membership numbers are down slightly over previous years. The Quarterly Bank Draft plan is a positive enticement to some members to join or continue their membership. New companies are joining but are primarily smaller businesses, therefore membership numbers are moving up but revenue remains down from the same point in previous years.

The February 19th meeting Minutes were moved by Sheila Breeding and unanimously approved.

The February Finance Report was moved and unanimously approved.

Ms. Sieberg Accreditation

The BP has received 4-Star Accreditation from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The BP is the only accredited chamber in New Jersey and one of only 260 out of a total of 7,000 chambers nationwide.

The 90th Anniversary Celebration will be promoted in conjunction with the 4-Star Accreditation. Staff encourages Executive Committee members to offer ideas for promoting the gala celebration.

The BP received a joint legislative proclamation commemorating the Accreditation and 90th Anniversary, signed by Senator Kip Bateman, Assemblyman Peter Biondi and Assemblywoman Denise Coyle. A proclamation is also anticipated from the Freeholder Board.

The US Chamber has provided a number of recommendations for moving the BP forward, which were suggested to be incorporated into the upcoming strategic planning initiative.

The current market penetration of the Partnership is approximately 4%. To increase membership it was suggested that staff should try to engage other advocacy groups.



- Ms. LoStocco** Suggested reaching out to Rotary Clubs and similar organizations.
- Mr. Fontana** Suggested an incentive program for other organizations.
- Ms. LoStocco** Congratulated the entire organization for the 4-Star Accreditation accomplishment.
- Mr. Maddocks** Suggested that the Executive Directors of local membership groups be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings.
- Ms. Sieberg** Showed a video from the US Chamber congratulating Accredited organizations.
- Mr. Laskey** Suggested uploading the video to the website.
- Ms. Sieberg** **Member Value & Engagement**
There was discussion regarding the selection of the Outstanding Citizen of the Year for 2009. Based on an email poll of the Executive Committee, Dick Williams has been selected to receive the Outstanding Citizen Award. sanofi-aventis has been selected to receive the Quality of Life Award.
- Mr. Lantelme** The Small Business Resource Task Force is moving forward on all fronts following newspaper and TV coverage of the various initiatives. More than 30 gap loan applications have been distributed with the first loans about to be approved.
- The business resource initiatives have gotten greater response than originally anticipated but staff is managing the load. A BP “road show” is planned to various municipalities, to provide resources locally to the businesses seeking assistance in those communities.
- Mr. Stahlin** Credited Bob Lantelme and Diana Sieberg for their efforts to make the business resource program a success. Noted that the Economic Stimulus money provided to banks will help advance the loan program. He noted that the program is a true partnership among the banks, credit unions, media, staff, and the business community.
- Ms. LoStocco** These programs are an excellent example of what the partnership can do to help support the business community.



- Mr. Sharpe Public Leadership**
The BP's new shared services program for non-profits has been very well received by the non-profit sector and the business community which can serve as a resource.
- Mr. Wolfskehl** The committee has identified the "low hanging fruit" that can be easily addressed and provide benefit to the agencies. The businesses are now looking at the non-profits as a potential new source of revenue, creating mutual benefit.
- Mr. Sharpe** Duplication of resources can be reduced, more efficient operations can result and significant money can be saved by participating non-profits.
- Ms. Deas Environmental Health & Safety**
Committee is reassessing goals and action steps.
- GreenFest is an upcoming 3-day event at the Garden State Exhibit Center. EH&S will be involved by providing marketing support and BP representation at the event.
- Ms. Deas Advocacy & Influence**
Focus for the year will be on face-to-face meetings with elected and appointed governmental officials.
- Plans are underway for a gubernatorial debate in September.
- Committee is working on development of a public policy platform.
- Mr. Maddocks Economic & Tourism Development**
An Energy Audit Training Program is scheduled for March 24. The program is expected to provide real value to participants.
- Mr. Comerford** In partnership with Somerset County, Wadley-Donovan, a national economic development firm located in Bridgewater, has been retained to help prepare an economic development strategy for Somerset County. The intention is to provide an analysis of future economic development potential in Somerset County and isolate the next growth industry that will fit into our environment. The idea is to set a game plan for growth.
- Mr. Fischer** The Regional Center approved the \$15,000 for the Route 22 consultant. Bridgewater opposed the contribution, indicating that the money in hand has yet to be spent or encumbered.
- A meeting with Transportation Commissioner Dilts is scheduled for April 3 to attempt to move that short term improvement agenda forward.



- Ms. Charne** sanofi-aventis is working with the BP to develop a discount program for its employees.
- Ms. Feltmann** Getting positive feedback from retailers and restaurants.
- Ms. Allison** **RideWise**
Progress has been slowed slightly due to temporary leave on the part of two staff. At full staffing once again and aggressively reaching out to employers.
- Mr. Sharpe** **President's Report**
Mantra for the year is one of optimism with a focus on success. The accreditation package will provide a meaningful guideline in the necessary task of revitalizing the BP strategic plan. Measurable success has been realized through initiatives like the Route 22 Corridor Plan, the BP leadership statewide in shared services and the economic development study and implementation plan underway with the County.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:28 A.M.