

ECONOMIC RESOURCE ALLIANCE (ERA)

May 11, 2020 9:00 a.m.

Via Zoom

Meeting Summary

Attendees: Jeff Holt (Sault EDC), Tracey Laitinen (Sault EDC), Don Gerrie (USDA RD/City of SSM), Tony Haller (Sault Chamber of Commerce), Chris Olson (Chippewa Co. EDC), Jeff Hagan (EUP Regional Planning & Development), Joel Schultz (Sault Tribe EDC), Katelyn Radar (Senator Peter's Office), Jim Huff (Michigan Works), Rob Landis (Central Savings Bank), Jay Gage (Senator Stabenow's Office), Jim Tefft (Crystal Flash), Dr. Molly Mande (LSSU Early College Program), Lana Steinhaus (CC Health Dept.), Kevin St. Onge (EUPISD/MISTEM), George LaBlonde (Senator Peter's Office), Jake Brown (Cloverland), Vicki Schwab (MEDC), Suzanne Hartnett (PTAC), and Allan Watson (Norpro)

1. Call to order 9:00am

Holt welcomed attendees and proceeded with introductions.

2. Review of Past Meeting Summary

3. Guest Speaker – Dr. Molly Mande <https://www.lssu.edu/early-college-program/>

Dr. Mande gave an overview of the program and that all students are eligible in the EUP. Early college is a pathway to college while attending high school both on campus or online or a combination of both. The program started just 2 years ago. Students can continue on to a 13th year and work towards an associates or bachelor's degree. The goal is to help students who may not have considered college to receive supports including how to study, job shadowing, and internships. Barriers to the program have been turnover and Dr. Mande is working to clarify, educate, and advocate. Most students are taking a combination of classes but 100% are taking some portion online. Last fall they added Zoom classes so students could experience a live class setting. LSSU is working on a grant to increase technology issues. St. Onge gave feedback as a parent with a student in the program adding that he has been happy with the program and that his son had a positive experience with his math class during synchronous Zoom. For more information please reach out to Dr. Mande:

4. 2020 Goals

- Gerrie explained the new goal setting format for the City and that there was a move to overarching goals to make it more relevant to the community. Further discussion occurred around Covid-19 and the lack of government funding. Gerrie reported that there is a budget meeting at 10am Wednesday for anyone that wants to participate. Gerrie expects large reductions in revenue sharing along with being 10 million behind to start. Estimates are coming in at 30-50% lower than previous years noting significant reductions in road funding due to lack of folks purchasing gas and travel or tourism. Another source of revenue is facilities are they are all currently closed with no reopen dates. Moving forward the City will be evaluation essential services, holding off on all new projects, and will modify the budget throughout the year with additional cuts of revenue continues to drop. Gerrie explained the Meijer tax tribunal case and that the public needs to be aware of the cuts that they are applying for and what it means to the community and tax payers. Meijer had agreed not to file and has broken that agreement with the City. If the current lawsuit is won, the City will lose \$200,000.00 per year which goes to education, fire, police, roads, and more and will push the burden back on the public. Hagan noted that Escanaba had to fight Menard's for the same reason and that the City now employs that same attorney. Gage inquired on the taxable value of the movie theater vs. Meijer and

referred to a bill that had been brought forth prior through Rep Dave Maturen: https://www.michigantownships.org/downloads/dark_stores_talking_points.pdf. Gerrie wrapped noting that a future meeting would be set up with Speaker Chatfield and Senator Schmidt to review.

- Holt shared the most recent draft of the State of the Community. We want to wrap this up in 2 weeks so please send final content to Genevieve at gsmith@saultcity.com.

5. Events/Training/Workforce Development/Individual Sharing

Gerrie reported that campgrounds will open soon and that City staff is getting back to work and that there are a lot of positives occurring.

Holt reported on the upcoming tire recycling event in August. If this event has a large turnout, we do have enough grant funding for a second event in October.

Hartnett has several upcoming trainings including Defense auditing, Buy America Act, etc...and will share those out soon through Laitinen.

Schwab gave an update on a webinar from the National Main Street Center on Main Street Trends Impacting COVID Recovery, and hopefully **additional funding resources in the next couple of weeks to come!** Check in on our webpage for COVID resources here: <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/covid19/>, or our regional page for resources put together by InvestUP: <https://www.update906.com/>.

St. Onge reported that plans for Freshman Manufacturing Day are coming together for October and that we may need to talk about a contingency if we cannot have it face-to-face at LSSU. St. Onge also mentioned a virtual job/vocational fair that may take place in St. Ignace later this year.

Gage was glad to be back in the Sault during the pandemic and recapped the progress out his balcony regarding the Soo Locks.

Rader reported on the relief for local municipalities and that Senator Peters has introduced the [Direct Support for Communities Act](#) which would provide funds for local municipalities. Peters is also pushing the [Hero's Fund](#) would provide for \$13/hour additional wages up to \$25k until the end of this year plus a \$15k sign on bonus. Lastly Rader noted that they are pushing for all of the relief funding packages for hospitals to be distributed immediately.

The meeting ended at approx. 10 a.m.

****Please note that ERA meetings are the 2nd Monday of each month at 9:00am. The Legislative workgroup – U.P. Ambassadors will start at 10am. The NEW Soo Locks Stakeholder meeting will start at 11am.***

TGL