



Southeast Conference Economic Development Committee Meeting **Tuesday, April 11, 2022, 2 PM**

Call to Order/Opening Remarks: Chair Kaitlyn Jared opened the meeting at 2:02 pm via Zoom with more than 23 participants, including Debbie Franklin, Richard Harney, Carol Rushmore, Brad Clark, KC Hostetler, Brian Holst, James Cheng, Nolan Koluda, Rick Harris, Samantha Wilson, Keith Perkins, Cynna Gubatayo, JC Cowan, Andrew Letchworth, MistyFitzpatrick, Ashley Snookes, Will Ware, Tracy Harman, Laura Vaught, and SEC Staff Robert Venables, Meilani Schijvens, Sarah Woodruff, Juliana Melin and Shelly Hill.

Motion to Agenda and Approval of the Minutes from March 5, 2021- Rushmore/Harris, all approved.

Nolan Koluda with the University of Alaska Center for Economic Development (CED) presented a power point describing the State-wide CEDS program. The purpose of the program is to build off of and find connections within the regional CEDS. A key part of a state-wide CEDS is to connect with communities. See www.seconference.org for a copy of Koluda's presentation. In response to questions, Koluda answered that they are hoping to have the public input completed by the end of May and the final document completion of the CEDS by August 31. He also said that transportation would be included and feedback would be collected through public meetings. Tribal input is super critical and they have tribal representatives on their CEDS committees. Will Ware said that Tlingit and Haida would love to be able to participate and be a resource. Ashley Snookes with Spruce Root added that their spring retreat would be a great opportunity to discuss these needs with SEAK membership. She also said that childcare is an issue that continues to hinder the workforce and warrants further discussion.

Laura Vaught said that the AK ARPA round two grant closes April 15th and they are looking for assistance in getting the word out to businesses. The eligibility criteria has changed for the second round so business should take a look at requirements. Brian Holst confirmed that the program is currently under subscribed and abandoned applications are not likely to be completed. There is also an appeal process. Open to businesses that have been severely impacted by covid (at least 50% down) and have eligible expenses. The aim of the program is to catch businesses that missed out on the other assistance.

Keith Perkins spoke about USDA Secretary and Undersecretary's visit to Southeast. The focus of the meetings was working with local and regional economic activity and partners in the Tongass and the SASSi project awardees. Deputy Undersecretary Justin Maxon is committed to returning to the region later in the summer to continue the conversations and support the region.

Executive Director Robert Venables said that Southeast Conference sends out a number of letters of support for projects happening throughout the region and is making progress on our own objectives with the ferry system, mariculture, biomass and wood pellet production, and beneficial electrification efforts in the region. He asked to hear updates on projects from other regional partners on the call. Meilani Schijvens added that Southeast Conference will be launching our business climate survey and will be reaching out to help get enough input. Ashley Snookes said that Spruce Root said that currently hosting a business competition which offers support and development and helps business get a push towards developing business plans. Spruce Root additionally offers business basics as a free online course. Brian Holst also informed the committee about the upcoming Mariculture conference. Debbie Franklin said BIA is hosting a virtual regional resource conference tomorrow at no charge.

With no other new business to discuss, the Chair **adjourned at 2:57pm**