



Board of Directors Meeting – Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 8:15 am

Present: Amy Laramie, Mike Mitrano, Ed Bove, Russ Marsan, Daniel Mora, Chris Keyser, Sarah Furman, Carly Perry, Cam Schaefer, Sue Bishop, Rolf Hirschmann, Mary Ann Goulette, Devon Neary

Staff: Lyle Jepson, Cooper Babbitt, Chrispin White, Olivia Bucksbaum, Shasta Mattino, Karly Haven, Lori Pinkowski, Bill Lucci

Guest: Joan Gamble, Strategic Change Consultant

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 am by Russ Marsan, President

Approval of minutes: Sarah Furman made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the November 19, 2024 meeting. The motion was seconded by Daniel Mora and passed unanimously.

Russ began by stating that the work with Joan on CEDRR's Strategic Plan for the next few years was a very lengthy process with many robust conversations over the last few months and today we are presenting the results of those conversations. He turned the floor over to Lyle, who thanked Joan for guiding us through this process.

Joan described the steps taken to arrive at this proposed plan. CEDRR staff and BOD met in October where the building blocks for the plan were conceived. Since then, a small group has been meeting and fine tuning the plan that is being presented today to gain Board approval.

Joan explained that this would be an ongoing living plan with accountability structures. She encouraged everyone to embrace the Values and said that the strongest organizations use their values when speaking with each other and using the values in everyday language can be helpful. She pointed out that goals are assigned to each committee and when they meet, they should be checking in to see where they are. The Goals, Mission and Values will remain the same, however the Action Steps will change and evolve as the year progresses. She recommended we review the Strategic Plan 3 times per year – In January, May and September.

Sarah made a motion to approve the plan as presented but with the ability to make adjustments to achieve the goals with overall Board support. The motion was seconded by Amy Laramie and passed unanimously.

Russ thanked Joan and everyone involved in developing this plan.

DEI: Lyle reported that as part of DEI's responsibilities of developing membership for the Board, the committee sent out a survey asking about skill set, sector of economy, etc. He stated that they are getting some surveys back and he will be sharing the link again for input.

EVENTS: The mixer at SWVCOA last week went very well with a great turn-out. They were very happy they could share information on who they are and what they do. An interesting tidbit is that in working with Meals on Wheels, they served over 200,000 meals in Rutland County.



Upcoming events:

- Monday, February 3rd – First Legislative Breakfast of the year at Southside Steakhouse, 7:30 – 9 am. Lieutenant Governor John Rodgers is the guest speaker, and all are invited. Register for the breakfast [HERE](#). We already have 88 people signed up and there is limited space, so please register soon.
- Tuesday, February 11th – Stafford Technical Center – this year is their 50th Anniversary Celebration.
- Saturday, February 15th, Real Rutland Feud at Paramount Theatre, 7 pm. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased [HERE](#).

Whoopie Pie Festival: We need to shift our focus so that the event remains vibrant now that Dream Maker Bakers is out of business, and we've beat the record of the Largest Whoopie Pie. The festival will take place on Saturday, September 13th.

The Business Show has run its course and we needed something that would still focus on the needs of the community. We are in the process of planning a "Bring Back the Trades Skills Expo" to celebrate a passion for skilled tradespeople. This event will be held on Tuesday, May 20th at VT State University Castleton. The focus will be on 1,000+ students to engage with about 100 vendors in the Trades. We are focusing on providing this type of programming because we are fulfilling not only a local need, but a statewide need, for skilled students. The Governor has been invited and we hope to have him present scholarship checks to students. We are in discussions with school counselors and tech centers around the state in addition to community partners and the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. If you or anyone you know have an interest in participating as a vendor, please contact Russ Marsan at 802-342-6416 or email at russ@carpentercostin.com.

REAL ESTATE: Cooper reported that the committee did not meet in January but re-capped their December meeting.

- The mayor has put together a task force to begin planning what the community would like to see in the downtown plaza once Walmart leaves in 2027. Cooper reported that conversations and meetings are moving forward.
- The BOA approved the Rutland City TIF.
- CEDRR continues to meet with the Belden's and the City of Rutland on the hotel project
- The MINT has approved the expansion at 112 Quality Lane
 - Kim Griffin will be at our next Board meeting to discuss the expansion.
- Cooper drafted a letter to the Governor from the mayor and Rutland County Senators regarding the impacts of the 3-acre rule on Rutland City businesses. There has not been a response yet.

MARKETING:

- Weekend Getaway Update: Olivia reported that the March Skiing/Maple Syrup weekend getaway, scheduled during the statewide maple house open week, has not garnered as much interest as our Fall weekend getaways.
- Real Rutland merchandise has been ordered – Travel mugs, umbrellas, pens, Carhartt beanies, 2 types of ball caps, men's and women's vests, and quarter zip pull overs. We plan on selling these items on the website.
- Brand Awareness & Communication: CEDRR historically has had a quiet image and we will be working hard to change that.



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT:

- Russ reported on a workforce development event - Bring Back the Trades Event (see info under Events).
- 112 Quality Lane – discussions about how to fill this area and marketing of the space. Rutland Area Robotics was a potential tenant, but they would require additional funding to pay for the lease.
- Mayor's Task Force – CEDRR is hosting these meetings and launching discussions that include stakeholders from throughout the community. Joan Gamble will help with the vision process of downtown Rutland at the next meeting.
- 3-Acre Rule - Cooper drafted a letter to the Governor from the mayor and Rutland County Senators regarding the impacts of the 3-acre rule on Rutland City businesses. There has not been a response yet.
- TIF/Hotel: The application has been approved by the BOA. Negotiations are underway between the City and the Belden's regarding a development agreement.

New Business: Lyle has had conversations with Far Vision consulting about workforce placement for high skilled refugees. With the change in the administration, we will have to wait and see what programs are going to be funded before we proceed.

FINANCE: Cooper stated the committee reviewed the CEDRR internal finances and said we are expecting a number of grant payments over the next month. At this time, all loans are current. There is one pending application for a new restaurant in Poultney that Cooper hopes to get approved in the next few days.

StarUp Rutland – A Placemaking study took place relative to Downtown Rutland being an Innovation District and recommendations included proposals that would attract and retain business startups and support current businesses. One item noted was the need for a new trash receptacle system. A local donor is running a donation through StartUp Rutland's 501c3 to implement a new plan. The implication is that StartUp Rutland is becoming more of its own entity and will show up in future audits as such.

Audit – We are wrapping up the remote fieldwork and will be presenting it to the Board next month. Cooper thanked Shasta for doing the majority of the work on this.

POLICY: Cooper said the committee met again for the first time this year and reviewed the Legislative agenda. The priorities focus on housing, project based TIF Districts and the Small Business Technical Exchange program. The 2025 CEDRR Policy Statement Draft was discussed and will be updated and returned to the committee for review.

Meeting adjourned 9:19 a.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 8:15 am