

**DRAFT MINUTES WBSA BOARD MEETING
7 APRIL 2009 5:30 PM – BRIDGETOWN**

1. **Present:** Wade DeCampo (Chairman), Shane Collie, Alan Lamb, Tony Goode, Barbara Dunnet, Jeremy Hubble, Louise Kingston, Brian Moore, Tim Clynych, Shirley Broadhurst, Brian O’Hare, Roger Downing, Deanna Guimelli (SWDC), Alison Madson (Guest Speaker – Development Officer – Dept of Agriculture)
2. **Apologies:** Don Punch, Margaret Bird
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** That the minutes of the meeting on 3rd of February 2009 (held in Boyup Brook) and the Special Board Meeting of 3rd March 2009 (held in Manjimup) are accepted as a correct record.

Moved – Barbara Dunnet Seconded – Shirley Broadhurst Carried

Business Arising: Special Board Meeting March 3

Matter: That the EO prepares a paper outlining the Alliance concerns regarding the operation of DEC and forward this to the Premier, Minister for Regional Development and Environment Minister.

Status: The EO has not yet commenced action.

Matter: Funding a project officer to undertake work on the Recreation Trails Project. The EO was asked to request funding, using a suitably weighted formula, from each of the supporting entities in time for consideration within the new financial year budgets.

Status: The EO has developed a formula for funding and has partly completed a request letter to be sent out to each shire and the SWDC.

Matter: It was agreed that the EO would undertake a review of the Constitution, liaising with members and if necessary, calling for a meeting to implement proposed changes.

Status: The EO has made contact with DOCEP and requested their involvement and has also begun compiling areas of the Constitution for review.

Matter: In relation to the state of the timber industry, the EO was instructed to deal with the matter using the best possible mechanisms to achieve a positive result.

Status: The EO actively engaged the office of the Forestry Minister culminating with a meeting held in Manjimup. Notes on the meeting were circulated to members.

During additional discussion of this matter frustration was expressed by the Board in terms of struggling to appreciate the position taken by the state government and a perceived lack of willingness to implement measures that would address the viability of the native timber industry.

Motion: That the EO prepare a letter to the Premier reiterating our concerns and asking the fundamental question regarding whether the state government genuinely supported a native timber industry.

Moved – Barbara Dunnet

Seconded – Brian Moore

Carried

- 4. Correspondence (as circulated):** That the Correspondence in was noted and the Correspondence out was approved.

Moved – Brian Moore

Seconded – Barbara Dunnet

Carried

A brief discussion followed centred on consideration of guidelines in relation to the provision of letters of support by the Executive Officer and to that end it was resolved for the EO to frame suitable guidelines.

5. Guest Speaker – Alison Madson – Development Officer Dept of Agriculture

Alison provided a general description of the large scale food precinct concept making reference to examples such as an 80,000 feedlot setup and explaining some of the general guidelines for sites including the availability of water and a separation distance of 20 kilometres from the nearest townsite. WA has a reputation for not being especially encouraging of large agricultural pursuits and of not having suitable sites available so that businesses could hit the ground running when it came to establishing new enterprises. Allison wrote to local governments about a year ago and to date some 36 responses had been received from local councils. She saw the food precincts as having major potential to facilitate substantial regional development. Her group, which will include a cross departmental/state government working party, was aiming to identify about 3-5 precinct sites and then make them available to investors. They are preparing a bold vision for Western Australia as the food bowl of Australia.

At the same time, an infrastructure analysis of food (especially livestock) industries will be undertaken and this will feed into a strategic document. Alison's role is essentially to act as a facilitator enabling substantial agriculturally based enterprises being established in WA.

6. Discussion/Status of Other Key Regional Identified/Possible Issues inc:

o **Royalties for Regions**

The EO reviewed the Discussion Paper submitted. Each stage of the approach advocated was discussed and after a broad debate the Discussion Paper was endorsed as the starting model for dealing with the allocation of regional funding. Some key points acknowledged included the application of a 25% levy directly to shire councils for the funding of smaller projects, the focus on approving a small number of substantial projects with the bulk of the funding available and the potential for a modest funding component to accommodate project management. Summing up, the Chairman commented that this matter would provide the acid

test for the Alliance and that we were bound by the state government policy guidelines to make our best efforts to identify suitable regional projects.

- **Recreation Trails Project**

The Board was advised that two funding submission had been completed through Lotterywest and Royalties for Regions (SWDC funds) and that we were awaiting the outcome of these submissions. The EO commented that a local consultant with extensive trails background experience had been employed to assist the preparation of the submissions and this person had provided an invaluable contribution. Pending funding, it was anticipated that real progress would hopefully occur in the new financial year with the employment of a project officer.

- **Food Precinct Project**

The project was about establishing a value added food precinct at a site in Manjimup where an existing industry was operating and taking advantage of centrally located established infrastructure such as refrigeration, freezers, weighbridge, quality water etc. The funding submission had been completed in respect to funding a feasibility study. It was noted that the available funds were highly competitive given the number and dollar value of the submissions received. Other potential funding options were being sought in case the submission was not successful.

- **Other Issues**

The matter of regional employment of doctors was raised and members were reminded that the state government was taking applications for assistance in regard to the employment of foreign medical staff. The general view put was that the region was now reasonably well off although it would be sensible to consider, especially in light of the age of doctors currently working, the longer term requirements.

Tim Clynch provided an update of information relating to the Inter Modal Hub. Some 2 million dollars had been spent recently by Mains Roads in the region in relation to roads relevant to the Hub. The Department now supported an application by the shire of Boyup Brook for an additional 4 million dollars on upgrading Jayes Road. It is assumed that this support is being provided in line with current government policy and therefore the Hub remains on the agenda.

- 7. Executive Officers Work Report:** The EO tabled his Work Summary Report noting the increased activities being undertaken with a focus on funding submissions completed. He was pleased at the direction the Alliance was taking in relation to more successfully fulfilling the role of this body as articulated in the Strategic Plan.

Finance Report: The EO tabled the finance report and drew the attention of the Board to a paper outlining our current position with particular reference to the projected current year deficit of around \$15,000. The deficit, whilst predicted virtually from the outset, had grown beyond the original estimate and was mainly due to both the increased salary bill for the Executive Officer and increased operational costs such as website development, insurance and travel. The EO expressed his view that this expenditure was in fact a positive indicator of the general increase in the level of activism of the Alliance. Action had been taken to address this issue by way of a request to the South West Development Commission.

However, the EO stressed that it was imperative to ensure that the budget for the next financial year is more properly and realistically framed and to that end he would be issuing a draft budget prior to the June meeting. In response to questions from the floor, the EO provided an indicative annual budget estimate of \$75,000 and suggested that our base contribution increase from \$5,500 to around \$7,500. Although we were not locked into using this approach, the application of a funding ratio would then result in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes providing around \$13,000 and the shire of Manjimup about \$19,000. At this point some concern was expressed (Shirley Broadhurst) that we should perhaps retain our equal contributions approach to deflect the possibility of larger members leveraging their more substantial contributions in return for a greater say in the Alliance. These options will be reviewed and considered at future meetings.

A further suggestion from the floor subsequently resulted in the EO being asked to request back up funding from each of the contributing shires on an equal share basis of the projected debt. This option was identified to cover the possibility of the South West Development Commission being unable to provide the shortfall funding.

8. **General Business:** The matter of meeting commencement time was raised by Tim Clynch and it was resolved that future meetings would henceforth commence at 5:00pm rather than 5:30pm. The EO raised the matter of the WBSA becoming an Associate Member of WALGA and this course of action was agreed to by the Board. The Chairman noted that the bike tour through our region was very successful and we should do our best to get them back in future years. Jeremy Hubble asked that a late letter briefly tabled at our meeting be considered at our next meeting in relation to resource sharing opportunities.
9. There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

Next Meeting – Tuesday 2nd June 2009 at Manjimup at 5:00pm.