

Northeast Minnesota
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD MEETING
Iron Range Resources – Eveleth MN
Wednesday, December 3, 2014

Regularly scheduled meeting called to order by Chair Stone at 10:07 a.m.

WIB members present:

Bud Stone, Jill Anderson, Darik Carlson, Paul Carlson, Dave Hart, Barb Hilde, Tom Jamar, David Ulrich, Kelly Zink, Allen Rasmussen, Roland Root

Excused: Sue Collins, Betsy Harmon, Jeff Lee, Terry Nystrom, Stan Paczynski, Craig Pagel, Jason Quiggin, Al Rudeck, Mike Valentine

Guests: Lee Bloomquist, Joy Ruedebusch, IRRRB; LaTisha Gietzen, Polymet; Erik White, DEED

Motion was made by Rasmussen, supported by Ulrich to approve the September 24, 2014 minutes as written; motion carried unanimously.

Chair Stone began the meeting by introducing Erik White, Labor Market Information Analyst at DEED. White will be available to provide the WIB with economic updates throughout the region. He is replacing Jax Saxhaug.

PolyMet Presentation

LaTisha Gietzen

PolyMet Mining Corporation is a publicly-traded mine development company focused on permitting, building and operating the NorthMet copper-nickel-precious metals project with headquarters in Hoyt Lakes, Minnesota. They also own and will refurbish and reuse the Erie Plant and associated infrastructure on the former LTV Steel Mining Company site, which was originally built to process taconite.

PolyMet is in the advanced stage of a comprehensive environmental review and permitting process to develop the new mine and restore existing facilities. Their plan includes using modern mining and processing techniques to minimize environmental effects while creating jobs, generating tax revenue and ultimately, producing the metals needed in everyday life.

As of July 2014, more than \$205 million has been invested in the project since 2006, dollars that have been primarily spent in Minnesota toward wages and consulting fees, environmental studies, land acquisitions and leases, engineering and other work. Approximately \$500 million in additional capital investment will be required to bring the mine and processing facilities to operations status, which is substantially less than the costs to bring a comparable green-field site online.

The company is seeking permits to operate the mine and processing facilities for 20 years at a mining rate of 32,000 tons of ore per day. PolyMet's NorthMet Project will annually produce 72 million pounds of copper, 15.4 million pounds of nickel, 720,000 pounds of cobalt and 106,000 troy ounces of precious metals.

When fully operational, PolyMet will employ around 360 mining and business professionals, ranging from engineers and shovel operators to accountants and information technology specialists.

These full time, stable jobs will give local workers the opportunity to improve our region's economy by producing the critical metals used every day. A 2011 UMD study found that the project would help to create 600 indirect jobs, and 2 million construction man hours. Jobs will be available in the technical, administrative, professional, and leadership fields. PolyMet employees will work in a safe and friendly environment that challenges individual strengths and reward achievements. In addition to stable, family-sustaining salaries, employees will receive an excellent benefits package, including health and dental coverage, 401K and paid time off.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Update

Michelle Ufford

Ufford showed the WIB two videos outlining the new WIOA. After 10 years, the Senate and House have reached an agreement in reauthorization of a new law, effectively replacing the current Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Youth services under WIOA places a greater priority on out-of-school youth, requiring that 75% of funding is spent on out-of-school youth and work-based learning activities. Additional changes include more emphasis on enhancing efforts to serve the disabled population, developing effective technology strategies, and stimulating employer engagement. Ufford will update the board as additional information is received.

Miscellaneous

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training is one of four pilot sites across the state operating the Career EdVenture Project. Free services are available to classrooms, groups, or school wide and resources divided by grade level. The main focus is on 9th-12th grade, with CEO's in the Classroom for 8th graders. The Minnesota Workforce Council Association is interested in using our logo and concept for the Career EdVenture program across the state. An extreme amount of time and effort has been put into this project and Ufford looks forward to the Career EdVenture Project progressing in the school districts across the region and our counselors working with interested students and teachers.

The Minnesota Workforce Council Association winter meeting will be held on Monday, January 12, 2015 in the metro area. All WIB members are encouraged to attend.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.