

Meeting Notes

Grand Forks Immigrant Integration Steering Committee

August 21, 2014

3:00 p.m., City Hall Room A101

Present: Kirsten Kennedy, Katie Dachtler, Jill Shafer, Jessica Thorlacius, Robin David, Ellen Brehmer, Bret Weber, Sue Swanson, Terry Hanson, Gloria Serna, Terri Keehr, Alex Azenkeng, Jennifer Norton, Cynthia Shabb, Terry Bohan, Pat Berger, Pete Haga,

1. Welcome –
Mayor Brown provided a welcome to committee members.
2. Transportation Subcommittee –
Jessica T. reported on a meeting held on transportation issues in the immigrant population. A meeting was held with Dale Bergman and Ally Rood of the Cities Area Transit to discuss funding options for people who cannot afford the cost of a bus ticket. Dale and Ally reported that they do not have much flexibility at the local level. Public Transportation has strict regulations dictated by federal regulations. The Grand Cities Community Celebration (formerly National Night Out) is scheduled for September 9, 2014 from 5:00 – 8:00 pm. The committee would like to purchase some tickets and disburse to those in need or offer free bus rides for that event then bill the event organizer. This would be a good opportunity to promote the bus system, community and law enforcement. The committee will move forward to look for funding for free transportation for this event. Approximate cost would be \$200-250.

The evening adult learning classes at the Stanford Center have been impacted by the current bus schedule. The Chamber has created a Grand Forks Workforce Committee to identify regional workforce strategies and provide leadership in their implementation. The Workforce Task Force discussed the importance of English Learning Language for new Americans. Two issues for new Americans are lack of English skills and transportation. Cynthia will give a report on the results of the Chamber Task Force at the next meeting.

3. Upcoming Events –
G.C.C.C – Grand Cities Community Celebration
Potato Bowl – Global Friends will have a float in the parade
Global Friends citizenship classes
Conversation classes
4. Workforce Issues
The Chamber Workforce Committee Task Forces are in the beginning stages. The New American (refugees) and Immigrants (legal to work) Workforce Task Force met with employers to learn more about hiring New Americans and immigrants. The Workforce Task Force is meeting monthly to develop strategies to improve employment opportunities for New Americans and immigrants.

5. Roundtable –
Community Interpreter Training – had about 25 people take training 4-5 years ago when it was sponsored by the Public Health Department with a grant and sponsorships. The community needs interpreters for medical issues. There are a number of stakeholders that would benefit from this training. Bret asked if we could form a task force on this issue. Terri Keehr, Sue Swanson, Jill Shafer and Pete Haga volunteered to work on this. They will provide a report for the next committee meeting.

Pete asked for some ideas on how we could tell the story of Grand Forks' diversity on the City of Grand Forks website. How do we present this information?

6. Next Meeting Date/Time –
Thursday, October 23, 2014 at 3:30 pm
7. Adjourn
Meeting adjourned