

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Michael Preedin	Mayor
Nancy Connolly	Council President
Andrea Blum	Councilor
Jennifer Letz	Councilor
Gary Ross	Councilor

STAFF PRESENT:

Cory Miskey	City Manager
Paul Bertagna	PW Director
Joe O'Neill	Finance Director
Scott Woodford	CDD Director
Kerry Prosser	City Recorder

GUEST:

Ken Betschart Director, Small Business Development Center at COCC

Mayor Preedin called the workshop to order at 6:00 pm.

1. Early Child Care Business Start Accelerator

Mayor Preedin introduced Ken Betschart, the Director of the Small Business Development Center at Central Oregon Community College (COCC).

Ken Betschart reviewed the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) had been offering practical courses for small business owners in Central Oregon for over 25 years. These were non-credited courses that offered one on one advisory assistance. The participants learn in the classroom and then work with advisors on applying the classroom learning in their business.

The SBDC program thought this concept could be applied to help with the childcare problem in Central Oregon. They were working with Neighbor Impact to create an early childcare business start accelerator program.

This program would focus on creating new Home-based childcare businesses through a four-month education program and 1:1 advising. Course curriculum weaved the State of Oregon Licensing requirements, taught by Neighbor Impact, with business topics taught by Central Oregon Community College-Small Business Development Center (COCC-SBDC), focusing primarily on launching and effectively managing a business. Program participants would be assigned a business adviser who would then work together to identify and prioritize the most critical outcomes for success.

There would be three cohorts of 15 people, with the first course starting in October. The goal was to open 250 childcare spots in Central Oregon.

Mayor Preedin commented that lack of childcare was both a local and regional issue; with people commuting between communities, this program could help solve some of the daycare issues in the region.

Councilor Ross commented the business accelerator was moving in a good direction. One way for people to get back into the workforce was childcare; they hoped Sisters businesses might be able to participate in the program.

Director Betschart noted that if the participant became certified in addition to the educational component, they would get \$5,000 grant to start their business. Currently, they were not charging tuition for this program; the program was 2/3 funded by Bend and Deschutes County.

Council President Connolly asked if current providers, like Sisters Parks and Recreation Department, would be eligible for the \$5,000 grant to help them expand their programs. Director Betschart replied they would not be eligible right now, but they are considering a program to help home-based providers to move into commercial spaces. There might be a program in the future to address the needs of established providers.

Councilor Letz thought the seed money was critical to help people get started; there were many barriers to becoming a registered daycare. They said there was a lot of movement at the State level on the childcare issue; would you have enough capacity to educate the participants in the new State funding opportunities. Director Betschart replied that it would be part of the program curriculum; if they become certified, they would help them with the process. Another inclusion in the program was a one-year license to Wonder School, a software program for home childcare that helped with scheduling, invoicing, etc.

Councilor Letz asked what the interest was from possible providers. Director Betschart replied each cohort would have 15 slots, and they would be full for the October session. They had not started recruiting for the January session yet, but Neighbor Impact had 20-30 individuals who fit the program criteria. They said Neighbor Impact would take the lead on recruiting for the program.

Councilor Blum commented it sounded like a fabulous program. They asked what the individual tuition cost would be for a business. Director Betschart replied the program would cost \$8,000 for the entire process, including the \$5,000 seed money.

Mayor Preedin asked each Councilor to think about the program and how much Sisters might want to contribute.

City Manager Misley asked how much other entities had contributed. Director Betschart replied that the program's total cost was \$360,000, and they were currently funded at \$250,000 from Deschutes County and the City of Bend. They were talking with Redmond, Prineville, and others to work on filling in the funding gap.

City Manager Misley asked if Sisters contributed funding, was there a way to make sure local Sisters childcare providers could participate in the program. Director Betschart explained that a provider opening in Bend might allow a person to commute to Sisters for work and vice versa. They said we would measure where participants were coming from, but there would be soft benefits that were not measurable.

Mayor Preedin thanked Director Betschart for the presentation.

2. Other Business

Finance Department-Director O'Neill

- The staff was halfway through audit fieldwork.
- Director O'Neill had met with a bond counsel and a broker specializing in government transactions to look at future funding for Urban Renewal projects.

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 pm.



Kerry Prosser, City Recorder



Michael Preedin, Mayor