

**CEDS COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES**

**Thursday, August 15, 2024 - 10:00 a.m.
17 Main Street, Fairfield, ME 04937**

1. Attendance

In person:

Jessie Cyr, KVCOG & Joel Greenwood, KVCOG
Erin Benson, Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board
Kimberly Lindlof, Central Maine Growth Council
Tenley Skolfield, Main Street Skowhegan

Via Zoom:

Celeste Banda, Main Street Skowhegan
Kristina Cannon, Main Street Skowhegan
Jean Dempster, New Ventures Maine
Brian Eng, Developer
Christian Savage, Somerset Economic Development Corporation
Patric Moore, Main Street Skowhegan

Presenter:

Kirk Bellevance, Senior Transportation Director
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP)

2. Presentation by Kennebec Valley Community Action Program

Kirk Bellavance, Senior Transportation Director at the Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) gave an informative overview of the work they do, and the programs offered. He spoke about the potential changes to the Penquis contract with Mainecare and the possible effects that it will have on KVCAP Transportation services and our region, noting that 85% of the trips KVCAP performs are for Mainecare members. He discussed how a shortage of drivers and vehicles affects all of the programs they offer, and specifically the change in services for their General Public Transportation Program called KV Van has moved from flexible routes to a demand response model. Kirk noted this new model has changed how services are offered, and specifically how the changes impacted the Skowhegan/Madison route. To learn more about any of the programs, you can go to <https://www.kvcap.org/>. The contact information for Kirk Bellevance is 207-859-1680 or kbellavance@kvcap.org

3. Approval Of Minutes

K. Lindlof, MOVED, E. Benson SECONDED, to approve the 5/16/24 minutes as written. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Other Business

K. Lindlof MOVED, E. Benson SECONDED, to add to the agenda under "Other

Business”, Consideration of adding a significant “Transformative Project” to the Action Plan within Chapter 4, Entrepreneurship and Innovation. MOTION to add this to the agenda PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

Members received a written summary of “The Kitchen at 185” project in their packet and Kim Lindlof reviewed the significance of this project for the region, and the need for a commercial kitchen space for small culinary businesses in the region. Upon completion of discussion, K. Lindlof MOVED, E. Benson SECONDED, to add “The Kitchen at 185” as a Transformative Project into the Action Plan within Chapter 4- Entrepreneurship and Innovation of the 2022-2-27 Kennebec Valley CEDS. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY by those in attendance and via zoom.

Note: Votes in favor via email received from M. Lindley and J. Hewitt on 8/27/24.

5. Review and Discussion Regarding the Status of Identified Projects

The lack of housing was discussed and was noted that it continues to be a barrier to the growth and success of our region and how it may prevent us from meeting some of our goals outlined in the CEDS.

6. Round Table discussion

A round table discussion began about the urgent need for housing to support the need of our region, noting that businesses can’t attract and retain employees when there are no housing options to offer them. Members agreed that although we had MaineHousing at a meeting in May, given the urgent need of all types of housing in our region, that this should be discussed again at the next meeting.

7. Next Meeting Agenda Items/Topics/Guests

Our next meeting will be held on November 21, 2024 at 10am. In person at KVCOG or via Zoom.

8. Other Business

Christian Savage, Executive Director of Somerset Economic Development Corporation gave an update on the status of the Somerset Broadband Coalition, noting that construction is underway in Solon-West Forks and by next June all of Somerset will have access to Broadband, bridging the digital divide for the region. Access to reliable and affordable broadband for the residents and businesses in this rural region of Maine, will allow for expanded opportunities related to employment, educational, and tele-health. Members expressed their thanks to Christian for all his work to get this accomplished for Somerset County!

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jessie L. Cyr
Economic and Community Development Director
Kennebec Valley Council of Governments