

**Ellensburg Business Development Authority dba CenterFuse**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**  
**Wednesday, April 10, 2024**  
**4:00-5:30 PM**

Members in Attendance: Garrett Poshusta, Chair, Dawn Alford, Vice Chair; Grant Clark, Treasurer; James Jankowski, Board Member; John Perrie, Board Member; and Jared Vallejo, Board Member.

Members not in Attendance: Jennifer Lubanski, Board Member

Others present: Rich Elliot, Ellensburg City Mayor and Liaison; Kelle Vandenberg, City of Ellensburg; and Kristine Miller, CenterFuse Executive Director.

**1. Opening**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Motion to approve the agenda made by Jared Vallejo, second by Grant Clark. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

Motion to approve the March 13, 2024, regular meeting minutes made by Grant Clark, second by Jared Vallejo. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

**4. Approval of Voucher**

Motion to approve the March 2024 voucher made by John Perrie, second by Dawn Alford. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

**5. Public Comment**

Kelle Vandenberg noted that there is no benefit to the City of Ellensburg in not having CenterFuse succeed, and the City of Ellensburg will do what they can to help with this. She stated that her role is not to do economic development but to keep the wheels on the bus moving.

**2. Executive Update**

**2.1 Highlights Since Last Meeting**

Executive Director Miller noted that all three congressional funding requests have been submitted, she continues to work with the I-90 project workgroup, and the task force. Executive Director Miller provided an update on the CenterFuse building at Bowers Field. The board discussed the Executive Director's monthly report that indicated the carpet in the office and break room of unit #2 are worn and need to be replaced and that there are lighting issues in unit #2.

John Perrie noted concern over CenterFuse paying to replace the carpet as well as the lighting and that this is the responsibility of the tenant. Executive Director Miller noted that carpet had sustained significant normal wear and tear over the years and that the tenant in unit #2 has tried to replace

bulbs in entry way fixture but it is still not working and could be a ballast issue. Discussion was had amongst the board members concerning whether the tenants or CenterFuse should pay for carpet and lighting. It was agreed that Executive Director Miller would check the lease policies regarding this and would also investigate potential funding opportunities for some of the work (i.e. lighting fixture replacement).

Executive Director Miller gave a brief update on CenterFuse key industries and the talent pipeline, to include a recent Wall Street Journal article titled “The Toolbelt Generation”.

## 2.2 Board Questions/Feedback

John Perrie expressed concern that decisions (related to the task force and CenterFuse) were being made without the board, related to the director’s update March 2024 document and item number one under “priority #1 build organizational capacity”, which discussed meetings that had been held to discuss “next steps”. Executive Director Miller provided additional information on the meetings and that the purpose of the meetings was to gather information and facts to take to the board for them to use when deciding CenterFuse’s future direction. Executive Director Miller noted that she can add the board members to the meeting invitations so that they are aware of the meetings. Executive Director Miller and Board Chair Garrett Poshusta will continue to represent CenterFuse at the task force meetings.

## 3. Task Force Update and Review of Chamber March 29 Meeting

### 3.1 Current Status of Task Force Discussions

Board Chair Garrett Poshusta gave an update on the recent meeting with the City of Ellensburg regarding CenterFuse’s assets noting that he and Executive Director Miller met with the city manager, city attorney, and city arts and economic development director. It was a productive meeting, but nothing is set in stone at this point and there is not a hard and fast deadline. Board Chair Poshusta noted that it will take some time to craft a plan and figure out a process. The board discussed what might happen to CenterFuse’s assets if the PDA is dissolved, with City of Ellensburg Mayor Rich Elliot providing the board with some additional information John Perrie asked what CERB’s position is regarding the airport building given their initial involvement. Executive Director Miller will speak with CERB contacts.

### 3.2 Overview of Meeting with Chamber on March 29 and Next Steps

Board Chair Garrett Poshusta noted that the focus is on trying to get to point of having an idea as to what CenterFuse and Chamber of Commerce coming together could look like. Amy (Chamber CEO) is drafting an MOU. Board Chair Garrett Poshusta noted that we (CenterFuse) are doing our part and being constructive in the process. John Perrie asked if the Chamber knows about the discussion around CenterFuse’s assets. It was confirmed by Executive Director Miller and Board Chair Poshusta that the Chamber is aware. Jared Vallejo shared his takeaways and insight from the March 29 meeting with the board members. Dawn Alford added that during this process it is also important to be aware of the human aspect of the situation. It was noted that it will be important for CenterFuse to be prepared for various what if scenarios.

### 3.3 Board Input RE: Implications for CenterFuse

It was discussed that there is a lot of alignment, there is a lot of work to be done, and that we all must do what is right for the county. James Jankowski inquired as to the time frame for the process, and it was shared that a July timeframe has been discussed.

## 4. Strategic Discussion: Changing Economic Development Landscape

### 4.1 Ellensburg is a Creative District!

Executive Director Miller noted that Ellensburg is the newest Creative District in Washington State. She shared that Kelle Vanderbilt had put together a very strong application, with the board acknowledging Kelle's work. Executive Director Miller shared some key statistics on the role of the creative economy in Washington State and discussed implications for economic development and CenterFuse's work. Kelle Vanderbilt shared some additional information and insight on the Creative District.

### 4.2 TIPS Strategies Kittitas County Strategic Plan Quick Review Status Update

Executive Director Miller noted that the economic development entities in the County are working together to implement the Kittitas County Strategic Plan and that the expectation is that economic development entities are including the strategy in their work. The board briefly discussed how this is occurring. Executive Director Miller shared that meetings will be taking place in late May to bring everyone together to work on the implementation of the strategy. Discussion was had as to the location, with Kelle Vanderbilt sharing that the locations had just come out and that the May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting would be held at the Cle Elum Centennial Center and the May 30<sup>th</sup> meeting would be held at the Chamber's location in Cle Elum.

### 4.3 University of Northern Iowa Visit in May

Executive Director Miller noted that Central Washington University (CWU) will be bringing University of Northern Iowa (UNI) to the county in May and that CWU and UNI will be spearheading the meetings on May 29 and May 30.

### 4.4 Bowers Business Park TAG

Executive Director Miller shared that report from the last meeting had been shared by the consultant. Nothing more to report.

### 4.5 Board Input RE: CenterFuse Role & Strategies Given Changing Economic Development Landscape and 4.6 Determination of Next Steps for CenterFuse

James Jankowski asked what work we take on as we work with the task force and noted that if we do not, the work is still important and who would take it on. John Perrie stated that we should assume we are going to be here, with Dawn Alford noting that people know we are here, and we are doing the work. The board agreed that it is important to focus efforts on the task force, pause pursuing new grants for now and focus on working with the Chamber. Given a pause on new grants will need to review/adjust the annual budget.

## 5. Next 90 Days

5.1 What Should CenterFuse Focus on Given Task Force Status & Changing Economic Development Landscape? 5.2 Board Input RE: Grants, Congressionally Directed Spending Requests, Current Projects/Initiatives, New Projects/Initiatives, Working with Task Force, etc. 5.3 Board Input RE: Board Member Recruitment: Process, Potential Candidates, etc.

John Perrie noted CenterFuse could move forward with a seven-member board and the board discussed doing so as well as how the quorum would change. Dawn Alford noted CenterFuse should

wait to bring more people in while in a state of flux. Discussion was held concerning the board application process. James Jankowski noted that he will be relocating at some point.

John Perrie motioned to move to a seven-member board, removing two seats from the current nine-member board, and moving forward with a total of seven CenterFuse board member seats. Dawn Alford seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

It was noted that the secretary position needed to be filled. Discussion was held. The board decided to reach out to board member Jennifer Lubanski to see if she would be interested in serving as secretary.

## 6. Closing

### 6.1 For the Good of the Order

Kelle Vandenberg discussed the need for people to serve on the Creative District steering committee.

Adjournment – time 5:34 PM Motion to adjourn by Garret Poshusta

**Drafted: 4/15/2024**

**Approved:** *Garrett Poshusta*

**Submitted by: Kristine Miller**