

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – JUNE 21, 2010**

### **VAUGHAN BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE (VBEC): MID-YEAR STATUS REPORT FOR THE PERIOD OF JANUARY 1, 2010 – JUNE 4, 2010**

#### **Recommendation**

The Director of Economic Development and the Manager/Senior Business Consultant of VBEC recommend that this report be received for information purposes.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

Green Directions Vaughan embraces a *Sustainability First* principle and states that sustainability means we make decisions and take actions that ensure a healthy environment, vibrant communities and economic vitality for current and future generations. The basis for ensuring economic vitality is rooted in creating a resource for entrepreneurs, youth and new businesses in the City.

#### **Economic Impact**

There is no economic impact from the receipt of this report.

#### **Communications Plan**

A communication plan is not applicable to this report.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to appraise Council of the projects, activities and core areas of work in which the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre has been involved for the period between January 1 – May 31, 2010.

#### **Background – Analysis and Options**

The Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre (VBEC) was established in 2001 through a partnership between the City of Vaughan and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

The Centre maintains an important role within the Vaughan economic development framework by engaging four primary audiences. Vaughan residents that are;

- Starting A Business – (Business Start-Ups)
- Growing A Business – (Business less than five years)
- Youth
- Entrepreneurship

These four primary audiences are vital to the economic health and sustainability of Vaughan and the Province. Supporting these audiences through VBEC's services and programs compliments the work being undertaken in the City's Economic Development Department and fills a critical role in the Vaughan business community.

#### **Provincial Update**

The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade now reports that there are 57 Small Business Enterprise Centres (SBECs) across Ontario. These Centres contributed to the economic growth of the Province by creating 13,600 new jobs, 11,500 business start ups and the expansion of 1,556 businesses for the reporting period of April 1, 2009 - March 31, 2010.

On June 2, 2010, Minister Papatello addressed the managers of the 57 Small Business Enterprise Centres at the “Innovation Through Collaboration” conference and commended the dedication, work and economic impact that is being accomplished at the Small Business Centres. To show support for the SBC initiative, the Province has confirmed that each centre will be receiving an additional \$30,000 in base funding on an annual basis. The Province is requesting that the funding be dedicated to strengthening and enhancing the areas of customer service and database management.

Attachment 1 provides a snapshot of Ontario's Small and Medium Enterprises as provided by the Ministry at the SBEC conference.

#### Provincial Process Working Group

At the end of every month the 57 Small Business Enterprise Centres upload their business statistics into the Ministry's Enterprise Centre Reporting (ECR) system. The data categories are Economic Impact, Client Contacts, Seminars/Workshops, Outreach/Networking/Presentations, Events Hosted and Mentoring. The Ministry is currently in the process of reviewing the various reporting fields within this database to ensure clearer definitions and consistency in information reporting.

Since April, VBEC staff have been actively engaged in taking a lead on the provincial reporting working group and has provided input to the Ministry's Regional Advisor on a number of topics to improve reporting. VBEC staff are now part of two Ministry working groups (ECR Definitions and Economic Data Measurement). The goal of the working group is to enhance definitions in the tracking mechanism to ensure consistency and enable a standardized trend analysis and comparison method.

#### Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre Overview

In its ninth year of operation the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre (VBEC), a Character Community supporter, continues to be a valuable resource for its core audiences; Starting A Business, Growing A Business, Youth and Entrepreneurs. Through the provision of such services as one-on-one consultations, library and electronic resources, business name registrations and the delivery of business seminars, educational workshops and networking opportunities VBEC fosters an environment conducive to successful business enterprise development thereby contributing to a vibrant local economy.

#### **VBEC Business Activities January - May, 2010**

Between January 1, 2010 and May 31, 2010 VBEC staff responded to and facilitated;

Telephone Calls	1,835
Client Walk-ins	817
Business Consultations	601
Business Registrations and Renewals	267
New Jobs	601
Seminars/Events -306 Attendees	10

Client consultation summary breakdown by Sectors

Agriculture	1
Import/Export	19
Construction	181
Hospitality/Food	37
Manufacturing	25

Retail	33
Service	275
Technology	19
Wholesale Distributors	11
Tourism	0
<b>Total Consultations</b>	<b>601</b>

As part of VBEC's connection and outreach with small business entrepreneurs, clients requesting referrals to local professionals or businesses is very common. In the last five months VBEC clients have contacted the Centre requesting referrals to professionals and local businesses as indicated in the chart below.

Client Referrals Summary (breakdown by Referral as defined by the Ministry)

Accounting	26
Legal – General	26
Legal – Intellectual Property	4
Finance – General	23
Finance – Investors	7
Import/Export	14
Other	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>

#### Business Seminars and Workshops

As part of the operational improvements that are taking place at VBEC, an annual calendar of seminars and event dates has been created. Core seminars are now offered quarterly and clients are being provided the option of choosing a date that best fits their schedule. Historically, seminars were scheduled only three months in advance. By strategically planning and developing a yearly calendar of seminars and workshops promotional efforts are well utilized providing the client with enhanced service options.

Four specialized seminars are being introduced this year with "Real Estate in Your Business" being the first. This seminar focused on assisting home based businesses move to an office location.

#### Specialized Environmental Initiatives

The partnership with Powerstream continues to grow and foster information exchange on energy conservation for the small business community. Sustainable business practices and green business development is integral to the growth and expansion of Vaughan businesses as well as Ontario.

VBEC has made partnership alliances with Green-Connections, which is a networking and mentoring group of small businesses who are dedicated to exploring and sharing environmentally-friendly practices, products and ideas. The goal is to encourage all businesses to 'Go Green. Two sessions have been scheduled, one in Council Chambers on July 12 and another at Earth Rangers in October.

#### Specialized Diversity, Arts & Culture Initiatives

VBEC is fostering liaisons and engaging with business owners relating to Diversity, Arts and Culture. As this was identified as a growth employment sector for Vaughan within the

Employment Sector Strategy, initiatives will become part of a specialized series of seminars or future special conferences as it relates to Vaughan's small business development.

VBEC will be continuing to expand and enhance the services available to newcomers. It is important for Vaughan to create an environment where they feel welcomed and obtain the information needed to increase their business skills and knowledge or further the specialized skills they have acquired. Currently through a partnership with COSTI VBEC offers specialized business seminars at COSTI offices. VBEC also ensures that business owners are aware of the free COSTI Language Training at the Workplace program where immigrants who may have difficulty with the English language receive job-specific language training.

A new research initiative to remove barriers for individuals with learning disabilities as it relates to small business entrepreneurship training is taking place between VBEC and COSTI. A future specialized seminar for individuals with learning disabilities wanting to start a business is the desired outcome of the initiative. The York Region Learning Disabilities Association will be contacted to partner in the initiative.

#### Conferences/EXPO:

VBEC has participated/hosted two Conferences during the reporting period. The "Going Global Import/Export Conference" took place on April 16, 2010 and was very well received with 164 registrants.

VBEC hosted an E-business Conference on May 8. This half-day conference consisted of two presenters speaking on social media to assist business owners understand new social media tools to help grow their business. Anticipated attendance based on the previous year was estimated at 65, a record 96 attendees participated in the event this year.

VBEC also participated at a School Board Conference on May 10 speaking to 184 Grade 12 Graduating students entering apprenticeship or alternate programs.

VBEC will be holding its Annual Business Expo on February 16, 2011. The proposed topic will focus on e-business.

#### **YOUTH INITIATIVES**

##### Summer Company

Students aged 15 to 29 returning to school in the fall have an opportunity to commence their own business during the summer. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade provides a grant of up to \$3,000 to approved students.

In total, 46 local students applied to the Ministry's Summer Company Program through VBEC. A record 12 Summer Company students received approval by the Ministry for Summer Company funding this year. The quality of business plan submissions recommended by VBEC staff resulted in the Ministry providing a very quick turnaround time on approvals being granted.

Throughout the summer months, Summer Company utilizes a great deal of staff resourcing time. As part of the program deliverables throughout June, July and August, VBEC's Summer Company students receive business ownership training, mentoring and advice. Eight mandatory meetings, along with daily journal entries by both students and VBEC staff take place for each student to ensure business plan goals are being met. Professionals in specialized areas of practice are mentors for all 12 students.

VBEC is very pleased that eight mentors are registered for the 2010 Summer Company initiative, three of which are new. These mentors are made up of business professionals who believe in giving back to the community and who act as positive role models for the youth entrepreneurs.

#### Youth Week

New liaison and cross promotion opportunities have taken place between VBEC and Recreation and Culture programming. VBEC participated in two Youth Week Outreach Initiatives. The following year VBEC will be represented in the Youth Week Publication materials and Youth Week will be highlighted in VBEC's youth section on the website.

#### Business Plan Challenge Update

The Business Plan Challenge is an initiative that the Ministry has phased out and will not be offering. Emphasis is being placed on growing the Summer Company initiative.

#### Co-Op Program

VBEC provides the opportunity for high school and university co-op placements in order to assist youth in learning business development skills and furthering their knowledge in entrepreneurship. VBEC's current placement has been with the Centre for a four month period earning four course credits in the process. The partnership is a mutually rewarding experience and continues to develop VBEC's reputation within both School Boards and local post-secondary educational institutions. VBEC offers a quality placement for high achieving students interested in the field of business.

### **OPERATIONS**

#### Operational Efficiencies

The Director of Economic Development and Manager of VBEC have been reviewing administrative and financial processes to better align the operations of the Centre with City policy and procedures.

In addition, the operational roles and responsibilities of all three staff members are being reviewed in an effort to improve operational efficiencies and effectiveness (functions/services/information flow). As part of service excellence to our clients, cross-training of duties/responsibilities has taken place ensuring that operational requirements are met and exceeded.

VBEC Staff have recently begun compiling a breakdown of the individual consultations by Sector. This will give staff an opportunity to better align future programs, workshops and initiatives that better match the needs of the small businesses in Vaughan. This information is also now a part of the reporting function to the Ministry.

#### Information Technology

Updates to the technology infrastructure are scheduled to be completed during June and July. The IT update will transition VBEC into the City of Vaughan IT infrastructure. This linkage will allow for greater accessibility and efficiencies.

To reduce VBEC's carbon footprint, a reduction in electrical usage, toner requirements and unwanted paper waste within the Centre was achieved through phasing out individual staff printers and moving to a single centralized copier.

VBEC's current website was updated in May with content and section updates. Development of the Vaughan On-Line VBEC page is currently underway and the current website will be migrated into the City of Vaughan's Economic Development Page, titled, "Small Business Development - VBEC". This positioning will dramatically enhance VBEC's marketing potential as the small business development arm of Economic Development.

VBEC currently offers Wi-Fi FREE to clients working in the VBEC boardroom on development plans/research and utilizing the Centre's business library. This benefit has attracted clients to the Centre and made it easier for them to keep in touch with their businesses while performing necessary research.

#### Service Standards

VBEC's current client service standards meet and exceed established best practices as set by the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade.

#### Sustaining Partnership

VBEC's services were strengthened through funding received from two sustaining partners, Powerstream and CIBC. In-kind sponsorship is another benefit to both VBEC and local businesses and VBEC is pleased to have received in-kind sponsorship from Sharp Canada.

#### City Cross-Promotion Activities

VBEC has created new partnership opportunities with various City of Vaughan Departments. The cross-promotion of initiatives assists not only in the promotion and dissemination of materials as a whole but fosters further linkages with small business and City of Vaughan programs. The in-kind support received through the Recreation and Culture Department, Vaughan Public Library and Access Vaughan have been paramount in continuing to grow VBECs outreach into the Community.

#### Library Services

VBEC is very pleased to have the Vaughan Public Library as an educational resource partner. The Library provides in-kind services regarding the Library Guide for VBEC services and courses. Special seminars are arranged at the various Libraries across the City to ensure that clients in all communities have an opportunity to attend VBEC seminars close to home. The Library is also providing in-kind services where it will be reviewing the VBEC Resource Library catalogue.

#### Recreation and Culture - Online Course Registrations

Through an in-kind partnership with Recreation and Culture, a first for VBEC's is the technological advancement of online seminar registration. Beginning in August of 2010, VBEC seminars will be highlighted in the Recreation and Culture Guide and online seminar registration will be implemented. This is an innovative and improved service that VBEC is able to offer its clients and highlights the Vaughan Vision of Departments across the City working together and collaborating to enhance productivity, cost effectiveness and innovation while pursuing excellence in service delivery.

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

### Social Media

The Ministry is currently researching and promoting the use of social media within SBEC locations. Some of the SBEC locations have begun the process of creating a policy document that could eventually be used as a framework document for use across the SBEC network.

VBEC has promoted two E-Business Conferences highlighting how important the internet is for business development and growth in small businesses and the topic has also been chosen as the theme of the upcoming Business Expo in February 2011. Many Vaughan residents and business owners are currently utilizing social media sites. Therefore, VBEC will explore opportunities to utilize the social media that it teaches within its seminars and conferences.

One of the most important considerations with the use of social media is the support it may offer in targeting one of VBEC's core audiences – Youth. Social media may give VBEC the opportunity to grow the Summer Company Program as well as highlighting VBEC services for young entrepreneurs.

### Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020

This report is consistent with Vaughan Vision 2020 Goal: *Plan and Manage Growth and Economic Vitality.*

### Regional Implications

Not applicable

### Conclusion

Small business growth remains an important aspect of economic development for the City of Vaughan. Vaughan's economic prosperity and growth in population will continue to expand and small business development will continue to grow exponentially in Vaughan for a number of years. VBEC is committed to quality service, innovative program development aimed at building and supporting the small business community and fostering economic development in Vaughan.

### Attachments

1. Ministry of Economic Development and Trade Snapshot of Ontario's Small and Medium Enterprises
2. VBEC Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, January 22, 2010
3. VBEC Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, March 26, 2010

### Report prepared by:

Lorena Marcucci, Senior Business Consultant/Manager, Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Simmonds  
Director of Economic Development



Most businesses in Ontario are small and medium enterprises (SMEs), firms with fewer than 500 employees. These businesses have a major impact on Ontario's economy in terms of jobs, investment, trade, innovation and prosperity.

### Over 379,000 Small and Medium Employer Businesses are Located in Ontario

- In Ontario, there were 379,385 small and medium businesses with employees on their payroll in December 2009, representing 99.7% of employer businesses in the province.
- Over one-third (35%) of small and medium employer businesses in Canada are located in Ontario. The next largest number of business establishments are in Quebec (238,574) and British Columbia (170,481).
- About 80% of Ontario's small and medium employer businesses are located in the province's 15 largest metropolitan areas. More than 178,000 (47%) are located in the Toronto metropolitan area, which is more small and medium employer businesses than in all other provinces in Canada except Quebec.
- Small and medium businesses with employees on their payroll operate across all sectors of Ontario's diversified economy, from cutting-edge biotechs to fly-in camps and everything in-between. Over 308,000, or 81%, of all Ontario small and medium employer businesses are in service industries. The remaining 19%, or 71,000 Ontario small and medium employer businesses operate in goods-producing industries.
- The greatest concentration of employer establishments is in the business services sector (71,808).

### SMEs Employ More Than 2.8 Million Ontarians

- In 2009, there were more than 2.8 million Ontarians working for SME employers across the province. Large enterprises with 500 or more employees employed 2.7 million individuals in 2009.
- SMEs employ over half of all Ontarians working for businesses.
- Manufacturers are the largest SME employer in Ontario. They employ approximately 387,500 individuals in the province, accounting for close to 14% of SME employees.
- In 2009, SMEs lost approximately 98,000 jobs compared with a loss of almost 36,000 jobs by large firms. SME manufacturers accounted for 43% of the SME job losses.

## Snapshot of Ontario's Small and Medium Enterprises

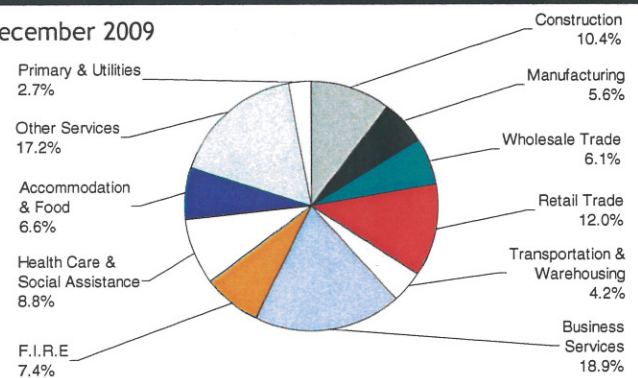
### Number of Employer Businesses in Ontario by Size

Employment Level	Number of Establishments	Percent of Total
<b>Small and Medium (&lt;500)</b>	<b>379,385</b>	<b>99.7</b>
Of Which:		
1-4	213,194	56.0
5-9	73,065	19.2
10-19	45,397	11.9
20-49	29,179	7.7
50-99	10,509	2.8
100-199	5,248	1.4
200-499	2,793	0.7
<b>Large (≥ 500)</b>	<b>1,216</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Employer Total</b>	<b>380,601</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns.

### Small and Medium Establishments in Ontario by Sector

December 2009

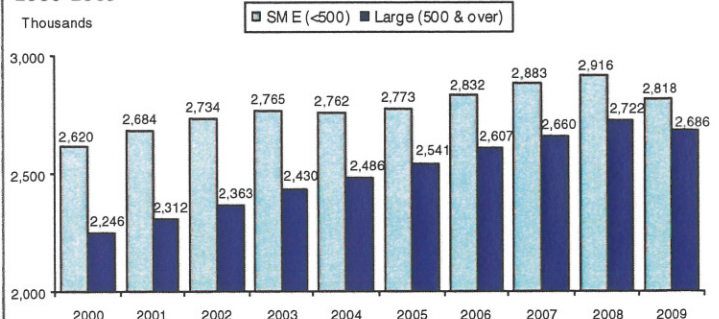


F.I.R.E: Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing.  
Business Services: Professional, scientific and technical services; management of companies and enterprises; administrative and support; and, waste management and remediation services.  
Shares may not add up due to rounding.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns.

### Number of Employees in Ontario by Size of Enterprise

2000-2009



Note: Data by size of enterprise excludes unclassified employees

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours





### Ontario SMEs are Important Exporters

- In 2006, there were about 17,000 SMEs in Ontario that exported goods to international markets, accounting for 96% of all goods exporters in the province. Ontario SMEs exported over \$50 billion in goods to international markets in 2006, accounting for 29% of total goods exported.
- The U.S. is the most important trading partner for Ontario businesses of all sizes. In 2006, 81% of goods exported by Ontario SMEs were shipped to the U.S. The U.S. was the destination for 88% of the goods exported by the province's larger exporters in 2006.

### Financing Challenges Ontario SMEs

- Personal savings were the most common source of funds for business financing used by new and existing Ontario SMEs in 2007.
- In addition to personal and commercial sources of financing, SMEs also obtained loans from friends and family members, and "angel" investors.
- The average loan amount requested by Ontario SMEs was approximately \$300,000 in 2007.

### Economic Contribution of Ontario SMEs

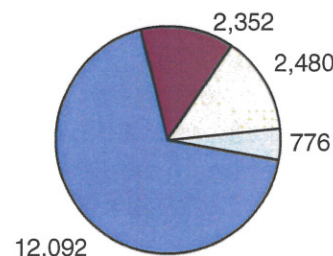
- Ontario SMEs account for more than 40% of economic activity in the province, equivalent to approximately \$245 billion in 2009.

### Diversity of Ontario SME Owners

- In 2007, women owned, or co-owned, almost 48% of SMEs in Ontario.
- Visible minorities held a majority ownership in 12% of Ontario SMEs in 2007. Ontario has the second highest share of minority-owned SMEs in Canada.
- In 2007, recent immigrants held a majority ownership in 3% of Ontario SMEs, where a recent immigrant is defined as a person who has resided in Canada for less than 5 years.

### Number of Exporting Enterprises in Ontario by Employment Size

2006



■ 0-49 ■ 50-99 □ 100-499 □ 500+

Source: Statistics Canada, Exporter Registry (custom tabulation)

### Types of Financing Instruments Used by Ontario Small and Medium Enterprises

2007

	Start-up (Percent)	Ongoing Operations (Percent)
Personal savings of business owner(s)	77.0	60.1
Commercial or personal loans from financial institutions	45.9	59.7
Leasing	15.6	26.3
Trade credit owing to suppliers	10.3	21.9
Loans from friends and/or relatives of business owner(s)	5.9	8.5
Loans from individuals unrelated to the firm or its owner ("angels")	2.4	4.6
Government, lending agencies/grants	2.3	6.5
Other sources of financing	2.0	3.8
Micro-credit	0.3	1.2
Retained earnings	N/A	54.9
Loans from employees	N/A	1.7

N/A: Not applicable

Source: Statistics Canada, Survey on Financing of Small and Medium Enterprises.

May 2010

Statistics Canada compiles statistics on business activity by conducting surveys and obtaining data from Canada Revenue Agency administrative files. Data is published by business units, which include enterprises, establishments, and locations. An enterprise is any unit of a business that directs and controls the allocation of resources for its domestic operations: the enterprise is the level at which consolidated financial and balance sheet accounts are maintained. Producing units are described as establishments. The enterprise and the establishment are identical for most SMEs. The activities of an establishment are generally performed at a single location, but an establishment may have more than one location.

This report publishes the number of business establishments by size. Employment, demographic, financing estimates, and the number of exporters are published by size of business enterprise.

January 22, 2010

**MINUTES**

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A meeting of the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre (VBEC) Advisory Committee was held on Friday, December 4, 2009 in the VBEC offices with the following in attendance:

**Members**

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati  
Councillor Bernie DiVona  
Deborah Bonk-Greenwood, Vaughan  
Chamber

**Staff**

Tim Simmonds, Economic Development  
Dolores Rotondo, Economic Development  
Sandra Volante, Economic Development

**Regrets**

Tom Stoyan, Canada's Sales Coach  
Lyn Doering, (MEDT)

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m.

1. **CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

There was no disclosure of interest by any member present.

3. **ADOPTION / CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

4. **PRESENTATIONS & DEPUTATIONS**

There were no presentations or deputations.

5. **ITEMS REQUIRING THE DISCUSSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

5.1 **VBEC Activity – Update**

Staff informed the committee that activity at the centre has been very active. A tracking sheet was distributed to the group based on VBEC inquiries from January 4 to January 20, 2010. The activity was tracked by a combination of telephone calls, walk-in's and emails. The centre has provided 35 registrations and 88 consultations to date. The committee discussed the importance of follow up in order to monitor patterns within the industry.

5.2 **VBEC Advisory Committee – Update**

The Director of Economic Development informed the committee that the Economic Development Strategy will specifically identify small business. Therefore, it is best to wait for the strategy and make decisions based on its recommendations including processes and main target. The VBEC committee members were advised that they will be approached by Economic Development Strategy consultants within the coming months to provide their input on the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre.

### 5.3 VBEC Client Events/Programs - Update

The committee was provided with an update on upcoming events which included: Tax Basics, Selling Techniques, Business Planning, Peak Usage Billing, HST, Import/Export Conference, VBEC BBQ, Vaughan Expo, E-Business Conference, Summer Company, Opportunity Audit, Vaughan Expo and Doors Open Vaughan.

The committee discussed the possibility of coordinating an HST event. The event could be partnered up with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, Deloitte and MPP Greg Sorbara and use the media as a tool to market the event. It may be best to divide the event into different session that would target small, medium and large businesses.

**ACTION: Determine the best way to facilitate such an event by using partnership possibilities with VCC, MPP and Media.**

### 11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 19, 2010 at 9:35 a.m in the VBEC Boardroom.

### 12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

March 26, 2010

**MINUTES**

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A meeting of the Vaughan Business Enterprise Centre (VBEC) Advisory Committee was held on March 26, 2010 in the VBEC Boardroom with the following in attendance:

**Members**

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati  
Councillor Bernie DiVona  
Deborah Bonk-Greenwood, Vaughan Chamber  
Elizabeth Cornish, MEDT  
Tom Stoyan, Canada's Sales Coach

**Staff**

Tim Simmonds, Economic Development  
Lorena Marcucci, Economic Development, VBEC  
Dolores Rotondo, Economic Development, VBEC

**Regrets**

Elizabeth Cornish, MEDT  
Deborah Bonk-Greenwood

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m.

**1. CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA**

Agenda was confirmed by Councillor DiVona and seconded by Councillor Rosati.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

There was no disclosure of interest by any member present.

**3. ADOPTION / CORRECTION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of January 22, 2010 were adopted.

**4. PRESENTATIONS & DEPUTATIONS**

There were no presentations or deputations.

**5. ITEMS REQUIRING THE DISCUSSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

5.1 VBEC BBQ Date

The date for the VBEC BBQ is confirmed as June 30, 2010 from 12:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. The event this year will be expanded to include small business networking and highlighting the Summer Company students as well as community partners having a booth at the event. Can be expanded to be a kick-off to Summer leading to a larger tourism event in the future.

## 5.2 VBEC EXPO Date

Further to the election, inauguration and festive closure, the Committee agreed that the VBEC Expo date will take place on February 16, 2011. The Committee discussed the objective of the event as a whole and the core value that the Expo aims to achieve. Three goals for the event along with an agenda with target deliverables will be developed to review the Expo mandate ensuring future growth of the Expo and developing relationships. The February date provides ample time for pre-registration and planning.

## 6. ITEMS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE

Administrative efficiencies were met by:

- coordinating computer administrative files into one central repository
- analysis and compilation of 10 years of VBEC historical files completed ensuring City records management process adhered to
- unlocking pass code to historical phone message which allowed VBEC to update the telephone message recording. Marketing of seminars dates on the telephone recording will enhance registration
- IT integration of VBEC to the City of Vaughan computer system is scheduled for implementation by June
- website review underway with updates being completed first quarter (April-June) and migration to the Vaughan On-Line system in the 2011/2012 year
- excess office furniture and dated equipment removed from the building
- environmental and budget efficiencies achieved by removing printers and fax machine and leasing economical photocopier
- exterior signage will be updated once the new City logo has been launched.

Committee indicated that the Centre needs to attain a higher level of visibility in the community. Updated signage indicating a closer linkage with Economic Development and the City will provide increased credibility and visibility.

### a) Statistical Update

VBEC continues to be a strong performer among the other Small Business Enterprise Centres.

### b) Business Plan Update

VBEC Business Plan has been completed and is being submitted to the Ministry.

### c) Partnership Update

CIBC will be partnering with VBEC. Deloitte may be a potential sponsor.

### d) Updated Calendar Distribution

Yearly seminar calendar is being developed and will be included in the Recreation and Culture Guide. Online course registration will also be instituted.

### e) Update on VBEC Staffing

Interviews took place and a full staffing complement will be in place by mid-April.

### f) Powerstream and HST Seminar Update

Powerstream seminar was successful with 50 registrants and the HST seminar had 34 registrants. Continued Powerstream specialized seminars will be developed throughout the year. HST seminars will be offered through VBEC and partnership development with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce will take place to offer this seminar at the Chambers offices.

The Committee indicated that a review of alternate locations for meeting rooms across Vaughan should be researched. Local 183 which has a formal classroom set up as well as other locations will be further researched. The Carpenters Union has been contacted already and further partnering opportunities will be developed.

The Committee indicated that news releases regarding VBEC seminars should be sent out. News releases are only sent out by Corporate Communications with Council approval. VBEC will utilize all media opportunities available to market seminars and events.

g) Summer Company Update

VBEC's goal for summer company students is eight for the 2010/11 year. This number is based on the quality of submissions received. Professional mentors are being scouted to enhance the VBEC mentorship program.

h) Import/Export Conference Update - April 16, 2010

VBEC has partnered with all the York Region SBEC's and Councillor Racco will be providing welcoming remarks.

i) E-Business Conference Update - May 8, 2010

The proposal for the Conference has already been prepared and VBEC is awaiting Ministry approval for funding.

j) Quarterly Report to the Economic Development Committee

VBEC is in the process of preparing the report for the Economic Development Committee providing an update for the January - end of May timeframe. A report will be submitted to the Director the beginning of June.

The Opportunity Audit was discussed along with the Economic Sector Strategy. Opportunity for improvements to VBEC within the Opportunity Audit are being reviewed and a plan is being set to implement processes and efficiencies.

**11. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting scheduled for April 16, 2010 at 9:35 a.m in the VBEC Boardroom is cancelled due to the Import/Export Conference taking place.

The following meeting is scheduled for June 18 at 9:35 a.m.

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.