2023 SENATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

SB 2342

2023 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Workforce Development Committee
Fort Lincoln Room, State Capitol

SB 2342
1/26/2023

Relating to an appropriation to the department of commerce for a downtown hospital building grant program and a rural workforce hospital grant program; and to declare an emergency.

3:14 PM **Chairman Wobbema** called the hearing to order**. Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Building planning and design
- Planning grant
- Building revitalization

3:15 PM **Senator Burckhard** introduced the SB 2342 testimony in favor. #17101

3:20 PM **Mark Lyman, Economic Development Specialist, Minot Area Chamber Economic Development Committee,** testified in favor. #17055

3:31 PM **Randy Schwan, Vice President, Trinity Health,** testified in favor. #17091

3:34 PM **Roscoe Streyle, Minot Area Chamber Economic Development Committee Government Affairs,** verbally testified in favor.

3:39 PM **Travis Zablotney,** verbally testified in opposition.

Additional written testimony:
Tom Ross, Mayor, City of Minot in favor. #17058

3:43 PM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the hearing.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

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Relating to an appropriation to the department of commerce for a downtown hospital building grant program and a rural workforce hospital grant program; and to declare an emergency.

10:14 AM **Chairman Wobbema** called the meeting to order**. Senators Wobbema, Axtman, Elkin, Larson, Sickler, Piepkorn** are present.

Discussion Topics:

- Hospital study

10:14 AM **Senator D. Larson** moved **DO NOT PASS**

10:15 AM **Senator Axtman seconded.**

10:17 AM Roll call vote.

Senators	Vote
Senator Michael A. Wobbema	Y
Senator Michelle Axtman	Y
Senator Jay Elkin	Y
Senator Diane Larson	Y
Senator Merrill Piepkorn	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

Motion Passes 6-0-0

Chairman Wobbema carries SB 2342

10:17 AM **Chairman Wobbema** closed the meeting.

Patricia Lahr, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2342: Workforce Development Committee (Sen. Wobbema, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2342 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

TESTIMONY

SB 2342

Senate Workforce Development
Chairman – Senator Michael Wobbema
January 26, 2023

Testimony of:
Mark Lyman
Economic Development Specialist, Minot Area Chamber EDC
mark@minotchamberedc.com
701-852-6000

Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairman Wobbema, members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, I am Mark Lyman, economic development specialist for the Minot Area Chamber EDC. I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 2342.

The Needs

Workforce challenges are great throughout the state, with specific needs in northcentral North Dakota. These include the following items, as discussed by Region 2 partners during the recent North Dakota Regional Workforce Impact Program (ND RWIP) process: affordable childcare slots, more trained nurses/healthcare employees, interest in jobs requiring a CDL, mental health concerns, education repayment, talent attraction, retention in law enforcement positions, upskilling or retraining current employees, etc. This list is NOT all inclusive. The needs are great in our region.

The Opportunity

The Trinity Health main hospital has been a downtown mainstay in Minot for more than 100 years. Trinity Health will be opening their $500+ million new Healthcare Campus and Medical District in just a few months. With that amazing addition to our region, this provides an opportunity to re-purpose a soon-to-be-available building downtown toward our region's largest needs – some of the workforce needs already identified.

A Solution

Our solution to help revitalize a main street, downtown building as well as work toward solving key workforce initiatives and strengthen our community is through a multi-prong approach to repurpose this hospital facility. The building is nearly 240,000 square feet and will be vacant later this year. It's 6 floors, with a unique set-up on the first three floors. Each of these three floors has a separate entrance at each level. This provides a unique ability to house three distinct types of workforce solutions, that don't have to share lobbies or main entrances. We could envision, with these planning dollars, that one of the first three floors could go toward a daycare facility, that one of the first three floors could go toward nursing and healthcare simulators (to take advantage of existing hospital infrastructure and layout), and that a third floor could be for behavioral health. This solution includes a planning process that involves public and private partnerships between key players in the region.

The Challenge

Striking while the iron is hot with a bold, innovative approach to workforce development doesn't happen overnight. A potentially transformative Workforce Development center for north central North Dakota is within view but getting there with the right programs and services in place will take time, effort, and funding.

Our Ask

We would ask that the North Dakota State Legislature provide up to $2.25 million in a grant to allow the Minot Area Chamber EDC to properly plan for and design at least the first three floors of the Trinity Health hospital building in downtown Minot to address workforce concerns. We recognize the need for local "skin in the game" and would secure funding of one dollar for every four dollars provided by this North Dakota Department of Commerce grant. With approval on section 2 of this senate bill, we would then plan to apply for all or a portion of the funding, depending on the results of the planning grant.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we want to be smart and deliberate with addressing the highest workforce concerns for the region. These planning dollars will help us do that.

We want to be smart and deliberate on how we, as a community, revitalize this hospital space to serve our workforce for generations to come. The up to $20 million in the workforce hospital grant program will help us do just that.

I ask for your support of SB 2342 and will stand by for any questions that you may have.

North Dakota Senate
Workforce Development Committee
Chairman Michael A. Wobbema

By: Tom Ross
Mayor, City of Minot
tom.ross@minotnd.gov
701-857-4750

In Support of SB 2342

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee, my name is Tom Ross and I am the Mayor of the City of Minot. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on behalf of my community.

Minot's health care sector is undergoing a major expansion and upgrade with the construction of Trinity Health's new medical campus in the southeast section of our city. The new hospital is scheduled to open later this year, creating unique opportunities with several former Trinity Health buildings in downtown Minot.

The Downtown Hospital Building Grant Program and the Rural Workforce Hospital Grant Program created by SB2342 would provide Minot and other communities with assistance to renovate and repurpose former medical buildings into facilities that would support rural workforce development efforts.

In Minot, a community committee is discussing the potential to redevelop and repurpose former downtown Trinity Health buildings into, among other things, a school of nursing, a childcare facility, and a behavior health clinic. Expanding these types of programs would greatly enhance Minot's ability to attract, train, and retain qualified employees across a wide spectrum of industries.

This innovative approach to solving North Dakota's workforce development concerns is truly a private/public partnership that involves local cost-sharing elements as part of the grant process. That means Minot will have skin in the game, too, as we work to revitalize soon-to-be-vacant medical facilities in the center of our community.

We appreciate the previous funding from the Legislature on issues of great importance to Minot. We hope you continue to find value in supporting our community as we work to become a more resilient, responsive, and progressive city. We urge a DO PASS recommendation on SB2342.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

I'm Randy Schwan, and I am a Vice President at Trinity Health in Minot. I'm here to express support for SB2342 on behalf of our healthcare entity and as one of many employers because it could have a significant impact on workforce development in Minot and North Dakota.

Even prior to the global Covid 19 pandemic, Workforce Development was one of Trinity's strategic priorities. Today that priority has only intensified as worker shortages continue to threaten many businesses in ND.

Trinity Health wholeheartedly supports these community leaders and their vision for repurposing the downtown hospital facility - a building that has outgrown its capacity to serve as a modern hospital but could help boost the economy of the entire region through workforce training and support for businesses.

While Trinity's investment in this endeavor would include the building itself, we have the opportunity to leverage our collective investment for the greater good of the whole region and state.

We are excited about the potential to increase training opportunities in nursing and other clinical and non clinical, non-healthcare professions and seek your support of SB2342 to that end.

Senate Bill 2342 Bill Sponsor Senator Burckhard

Minot Hospital Reuse Bill

Talking Points

- The Bill does the following:
  - One-time funding
  - The first portion of the bill provides up to $2.25 million for a planning/design grant to improve a downtown hospital building – to address workforce development concerns.
  - The organization that gets the grant must provide 25% match, part can be gift-in-kind
  - The second portion of the bill provides for a workforce hospital grant program, with funding of up to $20 million – this competitive grant would be for an organization committed to improving a downtown hospital of at least 100,000 square feet for workforce development.

This is great for North Dakota because …

- Innovative approach to solving workforce development concerns
- Helps revitalize/repurpose a soon-to-be-vacant unique hospital structure
- Is truly a private/public partnership to better the community
- Involves local cost sharing in the planning grant process