

**COUNCIL ACTION FORM**

**SUBJECT:**           **ENTREPRENEURSHIP WORKSHOP PLANNING**

**BACKGROUND:**

During its 2015 Goal-Setting Session, the City Council directed staff to plan a workshop regarding entrepreneurship. The purpose of this workshop would be to discuss the existing entrepreneurship environment in Ames, identify successes and assets in the Ames community, and understand what role the City can play in fostering the entrepreneurial environment in the future.

The City Council allocated funds in the FY 2015/16 budget to host this and another workshop regarding youth collaborative planning. City staff has developed a framework for how the entrepreneurship workshop might take place, and now requires specific direction to proceed.

**Consulting Organization**

City staff proposes that a key component of this workshop involve guidance from an organization with experience in local public policy that fosters entrepreneurship. The Kauffman Foundation, located in Kansas City, MO, is an organization that works in this field. City staff has contacted the Kauffman Foundation, and has been told that the Kauffman Foundation could provide a staff person to outline national trends transferable to Ames in creating entrepreneurial environments. City staff has been told that, as an endowed foundation, the Kauffman Foundation could provide an expert to discuss this topic at no cost to the City.

**Other Experts**

To understand factors unique to Ames regarding entrepreneurship, staff proposes inviting key leaders from Iowa State University to discuss the importance of entrepreneurship to the University, as well as policies or activities that could be undertaken by the City to help encourage entrepreneurship. Additionally, several local entrepreneurs would be invited to share their experiences in developing their businesses in Ames.

**Location and Timing**

Because of the connection this topic has to the University, and the interest that the local business and academic community might have in this topic, City staff proposes hosting this workshop in the Scheman Building at the Iowa State Center. Rates for hosting this discussion range from \$450 for a conventional room to \$775 for the use of the Benton Auditorium. An additional \$250 fee would apply for the use of a projector in the auditorium. City staff proposes that an additional \$500 be allocated for refreshments and any contingency costs.

Because of the number of schedules that must be coordinated to host a workshop of this scale, City staff proposes hosting it in November. This appears to be the earliest timeframe which will work for several of the key invitees.

**Invitees**

City staff will work to identify the final line-up of speakers and participants between now and when the workshop is held. However, many individuals and organizations might benefit from being specifically invited to attend this workshop. City staff proposes that, as a starting point, the following be invited to attend:

The Ames Economic Development Commission, the Ames Chamber of Commerce, Ames Seed Capital coordinators, the Ames Community School District staff and board members, ISU Research Park staff and board members, the ISU Entrepreneur Club, and the DMACC Entrepreneurship Program staff. The City Council may modify this list or identify other organizations or individuals who might benefit from an invitation.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Authorize staff to do the following:
  - a. Spend up to \$1,600 from the City Council’s FY 2015/16 workshop budget to secure a room in the Scheman Building
  - b. Retain the services of the Kauffman Foundation to provide expert information regarding entrepreneurship trends
  - c. Request the participation of representatives from the local entrepreneurial community and University leaders
2. Direct staff to develop alternative proposals for this workshop.

**MANAGER’S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The City Council has indicated that it is interested in hosting a workshop regarding entrepreneurship that engages national experts and provides the City Council with feedback regarding how entrepreneurship in Ames can be fostered and grown. The Kauffman Foundation has experts in the field of entrepreneurial policy, and University and local entrepreneurs can help provide their perspectives regarding how Ames’ unique features can encourage entrepreneurship. Hosting this workshop at the University provides for a larger, more collaborative space to discuss the topic and also illustrates the importance of the University in addressing this topic.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby authorizing staff to spend up to \$1,600 from the City Council’s FY 2015/16 workshop budget to secure a room in the Scheman Building, retain the services of the Kauffman Foundation to provide expert information regarding entrepreneurship trends, and request the participation of representatives from the local entrepreneurial community and University leaders.