Meeting about forming an Innovation Group/Scrum housed within MDA or MDH

Orville Freeman Building

October 13, 2016; noon – 2 pm

Present:

Linda Prail, MDH  
Sarah Leach, MDH  
Val Gamble, MDA  
Cecilia Coulter, MFMA  
Jane Jewett, MISA  
Tracie Zerwas - MDH  
Kathy Zeman (phone), MFMA

Reason for the group:

* Figure out applicable statutes and licensing for new business models
* Go through everything related to the model
* “Time-boxed” so you don’t lose momentum
* Fluid enough to bring in the right people for the task at hand
* Similar in structure and function to the “enforcement forum” within MDH, although this would deal with business development rather than enforcement.
* Similar to the group within MDA that has begun meeting every other week to deal with complex licensing questions.
* Needs to include non-regulatory representatives; i.e. SFA, RTC, MFMA, MISA. Those groups can do some advocacy: help the entrepreneurs ask the right questions, connect regulatory and non-regulatory dots.
* If housed within a regulatory agency, this group won’t be able to deal with all of the business planning/insurance/finance/marketing questions – those are another sphere – but need to connect the spheres.
  + Fluid group membership could help; bring in the right experts.

Recommendations:

* Answer two main questions:
  + Why do you need this? (And, why NOW?)
  + What is the greater good if this is approved?
* State very clearly:
  + WHAT is the problem
  + HOW will you solve it
  + WHO will you solve it with
  + WHO will you solve it for
* Present 5 tight arguments; 4 of them with numbers. Suggested talking points:
  + Needed and necessary; this is a pressing problem
  + Timeliness
  + Improve the economy
  + Help underserved populations
  + Contribute to equity
  + Regulatory reform >> connected to expanded business opportunities
  + Public vs. private funding; provide rationale
  + Answer the question: Why do some businesses need this and others navigate the system okay?
    - Tie to innovation; pushing the envelope = need more help
    - Tie to equity; level the playing field for small-scale food entrepreneurs

More things to consider or hash out re: design of the concept:

* Complexity of delegated authority involvement
  + DON’T suggest elimination of delegated authority.
  + Make them required to be part of the group.
  + Leverage for that could be via involvement of MDH’s Environmental Health Continuous Improvement Board.
    - Local public health agencies are a strong voice within EHCIB
    - Formed 2 yrs ago and is still defining its role, but momentum is in the direction of working together on things like performance measures and evaluation

http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/local/cib/

* Justification for both Delegated Authority and Agency involvement could be via referencing of the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards:
  + Standard #1 – Regulatory Foundation
  + Standard #7 – Industry & Community Relations

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/RetailFoodProtection/ProgramStandards/ucm245409.htm>

Or the Public Health Accreditation Board Standards & Measures:  
<http://www.phaboard.org/accreditation-process/public-health-department-standards-and-measures/>

* Focus on MDA first, rather than MDH.
  + MDH has fewer license categories
  + MDH perceives their biggest problem as people coming in without business plans.
  + Also an agency problem; not enough funding for enough staff to do consulting with applicants.
* Funding
  + Ask for 2 years
  + Don’t ask to split it between agencies; have it all in one agency.
  + Outside funding is permitted in agencies, but it’s difficult. It still has to be approved by the Legislature.
  + Funding for a new position like a facilitator for the group could come from outside funding held by an organization; similar to Bush grant; place a person in the agency but have someone else pay them.
    - BUT, with this scenario, would still need dedicated time from agency staff.
  + Ask for FTE’s – worth of time. That’s flexible; then you can have several people contributing time.
  + Require a report or timeline with specific indicators. Helps with Legislators’ concerns re: accountability.
* Terminology/Model
  + “Task Force” vs. “Advisory Committee” – look at some models of other state-level committees
  + “Pilot Project” – these can actually last for a long time.
  + Sub-group of Food Safety & Defense Task Force?  
    <https://mn.foodprotectiontaskforce.com/>
  + Look at Dairy Diagnostic Teams as a model. Kathy Zeman has an older report on that model. Currently called “Dairy Profitability and Enhancement Teams:”  
    <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/diagnostics.aspx>
* Build in a feedback aspect that will benefit the agencies – smart process
  + Surveying or interviewing of entrepreneurs to determine where & how information should be presented to them
  + Collect information about effective messaging