

## Mary Sue Hibbs

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**From:** Mickey Shields <mickeyshields@iowaleague.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2018 2:47 PM  
**To:** earlhamcityhall@mchsi.com  
**Subject:** Re: economic development board  
**Attachments:** EconDevelopmentGroupBylawsPolkCity.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi Mary Sue,

Great to hear from you, I hope it's not too wet in your area!

Cities have a lot of options when it comes to forming its own economic development group or participating in an "outside" agency. From what I see, most smaller and medium size communities belong to an outside group, including some regional ones that serve a wider area (typically with a handful of cities involved). It's pretty common for these groups to form as a nonprofit public entity, which requires them to officially file with the IRS and Iowa Secretary of State, as that gives tax-exempt status.

I think the big thing early on for the city is to figure out who might be interested in participating in a economic development commission. In a lot of cases, chamber of commerce folks would be interested given the overlapping missions. You may also receive interested from individual businesses, developers and residents that want to support local economic development efforts. In addition, it's usually a good idea to contact the local school board and county supervisors to gauge their interest.

From there, you likely will get a better understanding of local interest and that will help determine what type of organization makes the most sense. Again, most cities belong as a member to an outside economic development commission, but in some cases it's truly a city-run organization. So you can see one nearby example, I've included the bylaws from Polk City's economic development corporation.

As far as getting some help, you're right that Jeff Schott has retired and the Institute of Public Affairs at UI is now closed (which is shame in its own right, but especially in this case as that is who I would've referenced). However, many of the services the Institute provided were transferred to ISU Extension, so it may be worth contacting Eric Christianson to see what they can offer: [ejchr@iastate.edu](mailto:ejchr@iastate.edu); (515) 294-8397.

Hopefully that helps get you started, but please let me know if you have any other questions. Thanks!

Mickey Shields  
Assistant Director of Membership Services  
Iowa League of Cities  
Direct: (515) 974-5316

Iowa League of Cities | 500 SW 7th Street, Suite 101 | Des Moines IA 50309-4506  
Main: (515) 244-7282 | Fax: (978) 367-9733 | <http://www.iowaleague.org>

## Mary Sue Hibbs

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**From:** Christianson, Eric J [COMXT] <ejchr@iastate.edu>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2018 12:12 PM  
**To:** Mary Sue Hibbs  
**Cc:** Oltmans, Shelley J [COMXT]  
**Subject:** Re: economic development

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Hello Mary Sue,

We would be happy to help with any or all of that!

I am also bringing Shelley Oltmans in on this. She is one of my colleagues who does double duty as a Chamber director.

On the question of whether it makes sense for this to be a city board or something more like a chamber of commerce, it is difficult to say without a clear direction. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. Shelley can help you more with details about the various ways to set up a chamber if you have any questions.

I do think it is important to get your vision and goals for this new board set from the beginning. That might even determine the best way to set it up. One of the services we could provide is to facilitate a meeting and help you develop a strategic direction. We have some details about the process here: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/goal-settingstrategic-planning>

Once members are appointed, we could also provide a board orientation training. Let me know what you're thinking and we can get something scheduled.

Thanks for getting in touch,

Eric Christianson  
Local Government Field Specialist  
Iowa State University Extension & Outreach  
383 Collins Rd NE #201, Cedar Rapids, IA 52402  
[ejchr@iastate.edu](mailto:ejchr@iastate.edu)  
(515) 231-6513

On Sep 6, 2018, at 11:14 AM, Mary Sue Hibbs <[earlhamcityhall@mchsi.com](mailto:earlhamcityhall@mchsi.com)> wrote:

Good Morning Eric,

My Mayor, council and representatives from our school district, are talking about putting together some type of economic development board/commission for the City of Earlham. Right now, they are considering amending our Code of Ordinances to create an Earlham Economic Development Commission, giving the Mayor the authority to name the members. (I'm not sure if the proper term here is "board" or "commission".)