



## EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

December 21, 2020

Via Zoom®

100 Park Street South

Mora, MN 55051

### Commission Members Present:

Bob Bollenbeck - Kanabec Co. Public Interest  
Tish Carlson – Isanti Co. Municipalities  
Loren Davis - Isanti Co. Public Interest  
Dave Dillan – Mille Lacs Co. Municipalities  
Kathi Ellis - Kanabec Co. Commissioner  
Linda Evans - Mille Lacs Co. Public Interest  
Gordon Gullixson-Kanabec Co. Municipalities  
Richard Hansen - Isanti Co. Townships  
Robert Hoefert, Mille Lacs Co. Townships  
Tom Lawlor – Chisago Co. Public Interest  
Carri Levitski – Southern School Boards  
Scott Moe - Northern School Boards  
Ben Montzka- Chisago Co. Commissioner  
Genny Reynolds-Mille Lacs Co. Commissioner  
Peter Spartz – Pine Co. Municipalities  
Kevin Stenson-Chisago Co. Municipalities  
Jim Swenson - City of North Branch  
Terry Turnquist - Isanti Co. Commissioner  
Glen Williamson-Pine Co. Townships

### Commission Members Absent:

Carla Dunkley- Tribal Representative  
Jeanette Kester - Pine Co. Public Interest  
Diane Larkin - Chisago Co. Townships  
John Mikrot, Jr. - Pine Co. Commissioner  
Dave Patenaude -Kanabec Co. Townships

### Staff Present:

Bob Voss - Executive Director  
Ashely Eckdahl – Community Development  
Brenda Hughley, Finance Officer  
Karen Onan, Community Development  
Trish Rydlund - Office Manager  
Penny Simonsen – Transportation  
Michelle Thomas – Economic Resiliency Coord.  
Jordan Zeller - Economic Development

1. **WELCOME:** Chairman Montzka called the meeting of the East Central Regional Development Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
2. **AGENDA APPROVAL:** Williamson moved to approve the agenda as presented. Evans seconded - motion carried.
3. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** Stenson moved to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2020 ECRDC Board meeting. Hansen seconded- motion carried.
4. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Executive Director Voss provide a report on the following items:
  - a. CAUCUS/APPOINT KANABEC COUNTY PUBLIC INTEREST REPRESENTATIVE: The Kanabec County Public Interest vacancy was advertised in the legal newspaper for Kanabec County with a deadline of November 23, 2020. Two applications were received for the vacancy. Gullixson moved to re-appoint Bob Bollenbeck for another 2-year term as Public Interest Representative for Kanabec County. Moe seconded – motion carried.
  - b. LEGISLATIVE FORUM: The ECRDC hosted a legislative forum on Economic Development via Zoom on December 17<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. This forum was intended to be an opportunity for newly elected/re-elected officials to hear presentations and have a discussion with local units of government, EDAs, county/city economic development staff etc. about current economic development conditions impacting their communities prior to the 2021 state legislative session.
5. **TREASURERS REPORT:** The Board reviewed the October and November 2020 Treasurer's report. Lawlor moved to approve the Treasurer's Report to include the checks written #10748 through #10824 along with ACH payments from October 1 and November 30, 2020. Levitski seconded- motion carried. General Journals were reviewed and approved for the period October 1 and November 30, 2020.

6. **PERSONNEL AND BUDGET COMMITTEE (P&B):** The P&B met via Zoom prior to the ECRDC Board meeting and brought forth the following recommendations:
- REVISED ECRDC AGENCY-WIDE BUDGET:** The revised agency-wide budget includes the addition of two new CARES Act EDA grants; the deletion of the Veteran's Evergreen Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan; and deletion of the agency car purchase. Davis moved to approve the revised agency-wide budget as presented. Moe seconded – motion carried.
  - ONAN PERFORMANCE REVIEW:** Based on a favorable performance appraisal Davis moved to approve a one-step increase from Pay Grade D Step 5, \$54,271, to Pay Grade D Step 6, \$55,833, effective January 16, 2021 for Karen Onan. Stenson seconded – motion carried.
  - ECKDAHL PERFORMANCE REVIEW:** Based on a favorable performance appraisal Davis moved to approve a one-step increase from Pay Grade C Step 6, \$48,536, to Pay Grade C Step 7, \$49,853 effective January 16, 2021 for Ashley Eckdahl. Evans seconded – motion carried.

7. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Jordan Zeller reported on economic development events and brought forth the following recommendation:
- 5-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY:** A new regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), required as part of our being a Federal EDA Economic Development District, was created with the input of the CEDS Strategy Committee, and made available for public review and comment as prescribed by the Federal EDA. The CEDS Strategy Committee met on December 8th to consider this DRAFT document. The new CEDS was approved by CEDS Strategy Committee. Hansen motioned to approve the 5-year CEDS as presented. Davis seconded – motion carried.
  - REVOLVING LOAN FUND (RLF) AND COVID-19 RLF:** The ECRDC RLF Board met on December 1st and approved a loan for \$32,500 to assist with the sale of the Braham Pizza Pub to their long-time manager. This loan is being made from the new COVID RLF. We anticipate this loan to close within the next few weeks.

The COVID RLF has \$442,500 uncommitted / available to lend. Our Historic RLF has approximately \$145,885.00 uncommitted / available to lend. The RLF made 2 loans this past year and have 12 outstanding loans at this time which are all making payments. With COVID-19 the RLF committee has given authority at this time to defer payments if needed.

8. **ECONOMIC RESILIENCY COORDINATOR UPDATE:** Michelle Thomas reported that we have two COVID-19 RLF loans out at this time. The first is for a \$25,000 participation loan with Glockenspiel located in Lindstrom. The seconded loan was to the Pizza Pub in Braham for \$32,500 at 0% interest for 5 years. The balance of the COVID RLF still available is \$442,500.
9. **TRANSPORTATION:** Penny Simonsen reported on the following items:
- TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE (TA) PROGRAM:** The TA process is underway and the State is accepting letters of intent until October 30<sup>th</sup>. This program is an every-other year cycle. In District 3, Isanti, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs counties, there is \$1.6 million available. This year we have received five letters of intent for the process. The five letters of intent came from the following: the city of Braham for a walking path for a Safe Routes to School project, Mille Lacs County for ADA improvements in Milaca, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe for Phase 2 of a sidewalk project, city of Mora for a pedestrian project, City of Wahkon for improvements for a pedestrian crossing, sidewalks and other enhancements. The total for the five projects equals the \$1.6 million.
  - SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS (STRS) PLANNING GRANT OPPORTUNITY:** The Mora School District has applied for a SRTS planning grant and the ECRDC has been asked by the State to submit a budget and follow-up information for this grant opportunity.

10. **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COUNCIL (ECRTCC):** Karen Onan and Ashley Eckdahl reported on the following items:
  - a. MILLE LACS COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SURVEY: Working on a second survey for specifically the Vineland area in Mille Lacs county. Surveys have been out for about 2 weeks and have received about 30 survey responses. Project is being done in cooperation with TriCap to determine if there is a need to expand the transportation services provided from 5 miles to 12-17 miles.
  - b. GIS FOR RTCC: Meeting with a Geographic Information System (GIS) service through Mn/DOT at the beginning of January. The meeting will include transit service providers in the Region to discuss getting transit routes mapped. The are hope is to have mapping done by the end of January. They will then work with other RTCC in the state to get their mapping done.
  - c. VOLUNTEER DRIVER FORUMS: Two of the seven Volunteer Driver Forum sessions have been held virtually so far. The first forum was on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The second one entitled "Policy Issues and Real-World Stories" was held on December 9<sup>th</sup>. A total of 138 attended the November forum and 133 took part in the December forum. For more information on upcoming forums, you can go to [www.coordinatemntransit.org/events/volunteerdriverforum/2020-21/](http://www.coordinatemntransit.org/events/volunteerdriverforum/2020-21/).
  - d. CHISAGO/ISANTI PUBLIC TRANSIT: The Chisago/Isanti Heartland Express went out to bids for another agency to take over transit services in Chisago and Isanti Counties. Arrowhead Transit submitted a bid and will be taking this over.
  
11. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Montzka announced the next meeting will be February 22, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. Williamson moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the ECRDC at 7:55 p.m. Moe seconded- motion carried.

---

Robert L. Voss, Executive Director

---

Ben Montzka, Chairman