



EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

October 26, 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  
Linda Evans - Mille Lacs Co. Public Interest  
Gordon Gullixson-Kanabec Co. Municipalities  
Richard Hansen - Isanti Co. Townships  
Jeanette Kester - Pine Co. Public Interest  
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  
Glen Williamson-Pine Co. Townships

Commission Members Absent:

Carla Dunkley- Tribal Representative  
Kathi Ellis - Kanabec Co. Commissioner  
Robert Hoefert, Mille Lacs Co. Townships  
Diane Larkin - Chisago Co. Townships  
John Mikrot, Jr. - Pine Co. Commissioner  
Dave Patenaude -Kanabec Co. Townships  
Terry Turnquist - Isanti Co. Commissioner

Staff Present:

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

Others Present:

Doug Host, CliftonLarsonAllen  
Eric Smedsrud, CliftonLarsonAllen

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. Hansen seconded - motion carried.
3. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** Moe moved to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2020 ECRDC Board meeting. Evans seconded- motion carried.
4. **PRESENTATION ON FY 2019-2020 YEAR END AUDIT:** CliftonLarsonAllen LLP conducted the field work for the FY2020 year-end audit in September. Doug Host presented the results of the audit which indicated that \$54,848 was added to the Commission's General Fund balance increasing the total from \$230,534 to \$285,382. The Revolving Loan Fund balance increased by \$10,582 from to \$371,929 to \$382,511. No deficiencies were noted. Motioned by Stenson to approve to the audit as presented. Hansen seconded – motion carried.
5. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Executive Director Voss provide a report on the following items:
  - a. **REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FORUM:** The ECRDC has, in the past, conducted regional forums on such topics as economic development, transportation, etc. prior to the start of the State legislative session for newly elected/re-elected officials. Those invited often include local elected officials, EDAs, county/city economic development staff, etc. It was suggested that a similar forum be conducted in early-mid December after the general election and just prior to the start of the 2021 State legislative session. Possible topics of interest might include COVID-19 assistance, business regulations, DEED and other State programs and incentives, Local Government Aid, and federal programs and incentives. Gullixson moved to host a legislative roundtable prior to the 2021 legislative session. Seconded by Kester – motion carried.

- b. KANABEC COUNTY PUBLIC INTEREST REPRESENTATIVE: The term for the Kanabec County Public Interest position currently held by Bob Bollenbeck is set to expire at the end of 2020. The seat has been advertised in the local newspaper and posted on the ECRDC web site. The deadline for application is November 23, 2020.
  - c. BUDGET AMENDMENTS: A few changes have occurred since the Commission approved the FY 2020-2021 budget at the annual meeting in June. First, the Commission was awarded two CARES Act EDA grants that were not originally included. The MnDOT Scenic Byway office has also indicated that funding for the Veteran's Evergreen Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan project will likely be postponed for another year. Finally, due to the pandemic and reduced staff travel, replacement of the agency car should be postponed until next year. Staff is working on a revised budget reflecting these changes for review by the P&B at their next meeting in December. If acceptable, it will be forwarded to the full ECRDC Board for approval on December 21<sup>st</sup>.
6. **TREASURERS REPORT**: The Board reviewed the August and September 2020 Treasurer's report. Moe moved to approve the Treasurer's Report to include the checks written #10711 through #10747 along with ACH payments from August 1 and September 30, 2020. Lawlor seconded- motion carried. General Journals were reviewed and approved for the period August 1 and September 30, 2020.
6. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**: Jordan Zeller reported on economic development events and brought forth the following recommendation:
- a. COVID-19 RLF Plan: The EDA has requested further revisions to the COVID-19 RLF Plan that the ECRDC submitted earlier. Essentially, the change would replace the original draft with a version that simply adds an addendum to our regular RLF plan that summarizes the additional terms specific for the CARES Act ("COVID-19") loans. For example, allowing loans down to a 0% interest, deferring monthly repayment for a period of up to six months, etc. Stevenson moved to approve the revised COVID-19 RLF Plan with the addendum. Moe seconded – motion carried.
  - b. INVENTORS & ENTREPRENEUR CLUB: After a summer vacation, the Regional Inventors & Entrepreneur (I&E) Club returns on Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> with a presentation by Greg Bergman of the Small Business Development Center. Due to the pandemic this event will be held exclusively in an online format.
7. **ECONOMIC RESILIENCY COORDINATOR UPDATE**: Michelle Thomas reported that Zeller, Voss, and her have conducted regional "barnstorming" visits with local City Clerks/Administrators, County Economic Development staff, and lending institutions. The visits were an opportunity to introduce new staff (Michelle), provide information and answer questions on the new COVID RLF program; and make available an updated Business Assistance Directory. In October, visits were made in Chisago, Pine, and Mille Lacs Counties. Thomas also reported that she started an economic development finance course through the National Development Council. Thomas has also been participating in "cohort" meetings with other COVID planners in the state to share ideas and best practices.
8. **TRANSPORTATION**: Penny Simonsen reported on the following items:
- a. 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 on an every-other year cycle. In District 3, Isanti, Kanabec, and Mille Lacs counties, there is \$1.6 million available.
  - b. SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS): There is planning grant money available for Safe Routes to Schools projects. The solicitation process has already started. If interested contact Penny.
9. **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COUNCIL (ECRTCC)**: Karen Onan and Ashley Eckdahl reported on the following items:
- a. The Northern Mille Lacs survey is out. This includes areas of Isle, Wahkon, Onamia. This project is being done in conjunction with TriCap. The survey is being done to expand the reach of transportation provided from 5 miles to 12-17 miles.

- b. Volunteer Driver forum series will kick off November 18<sup>th</sup>. This will be a monthly on-line meeting. This was done in conjunction with MCOTA and the University of Minnesota and the Volunteer Driver Coalition.
  - c. Transit Provider Directory is available on the ECRDC website, [www.ecrdc.org](http://www.ecrdc.org).
  - d. The Chisago/Isanti Heartland Express went out to bid and was extended two weeks because they did not receive any bids. At this time, they have received one bid.
10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Montzka announced the next meeting will be December 21, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Davis moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the ECRDC at 7:55 p.m. Stenson seconded- motion carried.

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Robert L. Voss, Executive Director

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Ben Montzka, Chairman