



## EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

August 28, 2023  
100 Park Street South  
Mora, MN 55051

### Commission Members Present:

Tom Anderson – Isanti Co. Townships  
Loren Davis - Isanti Co. Public Interest  
Nate George – Isanti Co. Municipalities  
Robert Hoefert, Mille Lacs Co. Townships  
Jeannette Kester - Pine Co. Public Interest  
Tom Lawlor – Chisago Co. Public Interest  
Ben Montzka- Chisago Co. Commissioner  
Dave Patenaude -Kanabec Co. Townships  
Genny Reynolds – Mille Lacs Co. Commissioner  
Peter Ripka – Kanabec Co. Commissioner  
Kevin Schieber - City of North Branch  
Brent Switzer – Pine Co. Municipalities  
JJ Waldhalm, Pine Co. Commissioner  
Dave Waldoch – Chisago Co. Municipalities  
Glen Williamson-Pine Co. Townships

### Commission Members Absent:

Jill Anderson – Southern School Boards  
Carolyn Cagle – Chisago Co. Townships  
Dave Dillan – Mille Lacs Co. Municipalities  
Alan Duff – Isanti Co. Commissioner  
Carla Dunkley- Tribal Representative  
Jeremy Miller – Kanabec Co. Municipalities  
Scott Moe - Northern School Boards  
Sara Treiber – Kanabec Co. Public Interest

### Staff Present:

Bob Voss - Executive Director  
Karen Onan – RTCC Planner  
Darcy Rylander – Finance Director  
Trish Rydlund - Office Manager  
Penny Simonsen – Transportation Planner  
Michelle Thomas - Resiliency Coordinator/RTCC  
Jordan Zeller – Economic Development Planner

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. George seconded - motion carried.
3. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** Kester moved to approve the minutes of the June 26, 2023 annual meeting. Lawlor seconded- motion carried.
4. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Executive Director Voss provided highlights of his report with the following items:
  - A. **Declare Commission Seats Vacant:** There are several seats on the ECRDC Board that have exceeded the number of unexcused absences allowed under the Commission By-laws. Ripka moved to declare the following seats vacant: Carla Dunkley (Native American Tribal Representative); Carolyn Cagle (Chisago County Townships); and Jeremy Miller (Kanabec County Municipalities). Williamson seconded – motion carried. We have not received any applications to fill the Mille Lacs County Public Interest seat but will continue efforts.
  - B. **Safe Road/TZD contract for Mille Lacs and Kanabec Counties:** The ECRDC was notified by the Office of Traffic Safety at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety (DPS) that we will be receiving a Toward Zero Death (TZD) Safe Roads grant starting October 1, 2023 for Kanabec and Mille Lacs Counties. Reynolds moved to authorize Executive Director Voss to enter into contract #A-SAFE24-2024-ECRDC-ML-024 with DPS in the amount of \$38,302. Hoefert seconded – motion carried.
  - C. **Annual Audit:** CliftonLarsenAllen CPA is scheduled to conduct their field work the week of October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

D. USDA RLF: We received final notification on June 28<sup>th</sup> that our application for Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) Program in the amount of \$99,900 to establish another revolving loan fund for small businesses was selected for funding. A segregated savings account has been set up at First Citizens Bank in Mora to receive the federal funds and make it easier to track the performance of the loan proceeds.

5. **TREASURERS REPORT:** The Board reviewed the June and July 2023 Treasurer's report. Williamson moved to accept the Treasurer's Report to include the checks written #11577 through #11630 along with ACH payments for June 1 through July 31, 2023. Lawlor seconded - motion carried. General Journals were reviewed and approved for the period June 1 through July 31, 2023.

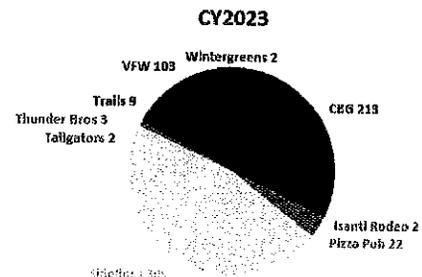
6. **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COUNCIL (ECRTCC):** Karen Onan reported the ECRDC was notified that the ECRTCC grant application was awarded July 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a 2-year grant that commences on July 1, 2023 and continues through June 30, 2025. Other items discussed included:

- A. Public Transportation Survey, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TSHS9NK>, is being conducted to verify the need for public transportation travelers to gain access to adjacent public transportation services to travel further into areas otherwise inaccessible because of public transportation gaps.
- B. ECRTCC Advisory Board meeting will be September 14<sup>th</sup> via Zoom.
- C. Kanabec County Fair participation by staff along with other local transit providers in July. Others transit providers included: Timber Trails Public Transit, Tri-CAP Public Transit, Arrowhead Public Transit, Attaboys Taxi Services, and Northern Light Express Alliance.

7. **ECONOMIC RESILIANCY COORDINATOR UPDATE:** Michelle Thomas reported on the following items:

A. RLF Funding Available:

Loan Fund	Original Loan Amt	Available
Historic RLF	\$400,000	\$69,117
Covid-19 RLF	\$500,000	\$99,856
ARPA RLF	\$500,000	\$205,000



B. Safe Cab Statistics: A handout with statics was dispersed to Board Members with the drinking establishment and the number of rides given.

8. **TRANSPORTATION:** Penny Simonsen gave an update on grant opportunities:

- A. Transportation Alternative (TA) Grants: These grants include Safe Routes to Schools, Scenic Byways, Transportation Enhancements, and several other discretionary programs with a competitive program to be developed by states. Letters of Intent are due in October with applications opening in November.
- B. Active Transportation (AT) Program: This program provides grants and technical assistance to make walking, biking and rolling better. Our program aims to increase the number of people walking and biking to destinations.
- C. Transportation Economic Development (TED) program: The program is a competitive funding program designed to help generate economic benefits through investment in transportation infrastructure. This solicitation is to help fund construction projects. You can use TED program funds only on trunk highway eligible projects.

9. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:** Jordan Zeller reported on Economic Development and brought forth the following item for discussion:

A. Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Assistance for Targeted Industries: At a recent RLF Board meeting, the board discussed offering lower interest rates to targeted industries, such as childcare – an industry in great

demand in the region. Often the RLF does an interest rate that is equal to the rate charged by the lead lender (bank / credit union), most recently 8.5%. Following discussion, Williamson moved to give the RLF Board authority to approve loans for childcare, grocery stores, and transit providers up to \$20,000 at 0% interest and / or to do a blended loan up to \$60,000 with 0% interest up to \$20,000 and the remaining \$40,000 with an interest rate per the "RLF Plan". Lawlor seconded – motion carried.

10. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Montzka announced the next meeting will be October 23, 2023, at the ECRDC Offices. Davis moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the ECRDC. Hoefert seconded- motion carried.



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Robert L. Voss, Executive Director



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Ben Montzka, Chairman