



## EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

December 16, 2024  
100 Park Street South  
Mora, MN 55051

### Commission Members Present:

Tom Anderson – Isanti Co. Townships  
Dave Dillan – Mille Lacs Co. Municipalities  
Alan Duff – Isanti Co. Commissioner  
Jack Edmonds – Mille Lacs Co. Public Interest  
Nate George – Isanti Co. Municipalities  
Robert Hoefert, Mille Lacs Co. Townships  
Shelly Johnson – Southern School Boards  
Jeannette Kester - Pine Co. Public Interest  
Scott Moe - Northern School Boards  
Ben Montzka- Chisago Co. Commissioner  
Dave Patenaude -Kanabec Co. Townships  
Genny Reynolds – Mille Lacs Co. Commissioner  
Kevin Schieber - City of North Branch  
Sara Treiber – Kanabec Co. Public Interest  
Dave Waldoch – Chisago Co. Municipalities  
Dave Youngquist – Kanabec Co. Municipalities

### Commission Members Absent:

Bruce Fitzwater – Chisago Co. Townships  
Peter Ripka – Kanabec Co. Commissioner  
Brent Switzer – Pine Co. Municipalities  
JJ Waldhalm, Pine Co. Commissioner  
Glen Williamson-Pine Co. Townships

### Staff Present:

Bob Voss - Executive Director  
Nicole Klosner, Regional Dev. & Grant Specialist  
Karen Onan, RTCC  
Darcy Rylander – Finance Director  
Trish Rydlund - Office Manager  
Penny Simonsen – Transportation Planner  
Jordan Zeller – Economic Development Planner

### Others Present

Eric Smedsrud, CliftonLarsenAllen LLP

- A. **WELCOME:** Chairman Montzka called the East Central Regional Development Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.
- B. **AGENDA APPROVAL:** Moe moved to approve the agenda as presented. Duff seconded - motion carried.
- C. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** George moved to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2024 meeting with a change to reflect Dave Youngquist was in attendance. Kester seconded- motion carried.
- D. **FY 2024 AGENCY-WIDE AUDIT PRESENTATION:** Eric Smedsrud of Clifton Larson Allen presented the results of the FY 2024 agency-wide year end audit. CLA noted no significant difficulties during the audit and received full cooperation from the staff. No significant deficiencies were noted. The results indicated a \$257 increase in the Commission's Fund balance from \$534,779 to \$535,036. Also, an increase in the Revolving Loan Fund balances of \$80,770. Motioned by Hoefert to accept the FY2024 single and year-end audit as presented. Kester seconded – motion carried.
- E. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Executive Director Voss brought before the Commission the following items:
1. Isanti County Public Interest Representatives: Notices were sent to local newspapers and media to fill the Isanti County Public Interest position. One application was received for this position. Motioned by George to approve Wallace Bengston as the Isanti County Public Interest Representatives. Anderson seconded – motion carried.
  2. Hwy 23 Coalition: Hosted the Hwy 23 Coalition on November 22. This Coalition is advocating for a continuous 4-lane highway from Sioux Falls to Duluth/Superior. The Coalition is seeking \$3 million in funding for a 36.4 feasibility study between Foley and Mora citing improved access and safety concerns.

- F. **TREASURERS REPORT:** The Board reviewed the October and November 2024 Treasurer's report. Trieber moved to accept the Treasurer's Report to include the checks written #11998 through #12044 along with ACH payments for October and November 2024. Kester seconded - motion carried. General Journals were reviewed and approved for the period October and November 2024.
- G. **RURAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER:** Rylander reported on the following items:
1. Rylander and Klosner are collaborating in writing a Good Food Access Grant for Duquette Market to secure funding for coolers/freezers.
  2. Zeller and Thomas are arranging a training session for meat cutters to take place this spring or summer.
- H. **CLIMATE AND ENERGY (C&E):** Nicole Klosner reported on the following:
1. Working with the City of Brook Park on a Small Cities Development Grant on a wastewater grant for new water meters.
  2. Providing technical assistance for Future Farmers grant with a first-year grant.
  3. Also providing technical assistance to an area farmer involving Regional Food Business Center Grant.
- I. **TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:** Penny Simonsen reported on the following:
1. The Cities of Mora and Pine City, along with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, are each submitting applications for Active Transportation Grants.
  2. The City of Finlayson's comprehensive plan update community surveys are out, and the updating workshops are proceeding toward the plan update completion goal of June 2025.
- J. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE:** Jordan Zeller reported on following items:
1. Zeller provided the Board with an update on the 2024 ECRDC RLF Year in Review. Moe moved to accept the 2024 ECRDC RLF Year in Review. Edmonds seconded – motion carried.
  2. The RLF Board approved a new \$40,000 loan to Riveras Real Estate LLC / El Jalisco Mexican Restaurant in Milaca.
  3. The ECRDC hosted a familiarization event and tour of the region for Darrin Fleener, Federal EDA representative. They looked at potential / underway projects in Rush City, Pine City, Hinckley, Sandstone, Mora, Isle and at the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.
- K. **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION COUNCIL (ECRTCC):** Karen Onan reported on the following:
1. Staff assisted the University of MN in holding Stakeholder, Provider, and Riders/Would-Be Riders Focus Group meetings at the ECRDC office.
  2. Working with Jefferson Lines in starting a pilot project route from Pine County to St. Cloud.
- L. **ECONOMIC RESILIENCY COORDINATOR UPDATE:** Karen Onan reported on the following items:
1. Working with Mille Lacs County, Initiative Foundation, and Small Business Development Center to provide business training workshops during our appreciation event.
  2. MnDOT reached out to ECRTCC Staff to participate in the Dynamic Transportation Options study. The purpose of this study is to evaluate current transit conditions in rural Minnesota and identify opportunities for improving service.
- M. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Montzka announced the next meeting will be February 24, 2025, at the ECRDC offices. Kester moved to adjourn the meeting. Waldoch seconded- motion carried.



Robert L. Voss, Executive Director



Ben Montzka, Chairman