



MINUTES
Region Nine Development Commission
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
February 13, 2008

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tim Strand called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. at the Nichols Office Center in Mankato.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Leo Bauer, James Broich, Charlie Hurd, Dwayne Krenz, Alvis More, Roger Oldfather, Bob Roesler, James Stangler, Tim Strand

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dan Kuhns, Bob Schabert

OTHERS PRESENT: Troy Bonkowske, Reggie Edwards, Linda Giersdorf, Bob Klanderud, Cheryl Weston

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

James Broich moved to approve the December 12, 2007 minutes as presented. James Stangler seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Leo Bauer moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Bob Roesler seconded. Motion carried.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chair Tim Strand reported that since the Board of Directors last met in December, the full Commission met January 9 followed by the holiday gathering. He felt the event was a success – good food, entertainment, getting to know staff and commissioners. Also, January 31, the second mayors' gathering was held. The event focused on mayors meeting with area legislators to discuss various issues in a roundtable format. Chair Strand said the attendance could have been better, but he received many good comments about the gathering.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director, Reggie Edwards, presented his monthly activities report. He noted the section on mission statements. In working with various community organizations, non-profits and government entities, he is finding that their mission statements are very similar or all are saying the same things. The purpose of mission statements is to articulate the fundamental

and/or specific reason for which the organization exists or that it is charged to do. This is very different than a vision statement, which describes the degree, scope, height and breathe of what an organizations wants to achieve.

Edwards said he would be giving several presentations on Black History Month. If anyone is interested in the hour-long cultural diversity talk, let him know. Other activities included – staff contracting with the Madelia Renewable Energy Project to develop a business profile/plan for the project; staff met with Brown County Economic Development leaders to discuss a possible county-wide economic development strategy plan that would involve all jurisdictions and partners from all sectors; staff has started the nine countywide Sesquicentennial meetings to engage citizens in the visioning of the area over the next two generations and reflection upon past contributions made to the state of Minnesota.

A staff committee has been formed to look at the site location of the R9 offices because Blue Earth County is in discussion that it may demolish the Nichols Office Center, where some of the R9 offices are housed. The committee has developed a report and presented it to management and staff. The next step will be for the report to be presented and discussed at the next Budget / Personnel Committee meeting, then to the full Commission.

The FIRST grant, which entails creating a regional economic development plan with strong leadership provided by the private sector, is moving forward. Two aims of the initiative are to create a plan that provides implemented strategies for economic development and coordination of the various institutions throughout the region.

Reggie Edwards announced that the Region Nine Area, Inc. hosted a “philanthropy index and federal government funding” retreat on January 22 that was attended by citizens representing businesses, community foundations and government. He distributed for review a copy of The Philanthropy Index for Small Towns and Rural Areas that was given to all participants. The index is a tool for local leaders who are building local philanthropic assets and how funding is distributed throughout the state and nation on a county-by-county basis.

Edwards presented the following out-of-state travel requests. (1) Preliminary approval was given at the last Board meeting for the chairman and executive director to attend the National Association of Development Organization (NADO) conference in Washington, D.C. February 24-28. The estimated amount approved was \$1,537, but it did not include food, parking, etc. An amendment to the motion was presented for the finalized request for \$1,750. James Stangler moved approval of the requested amount, Bob Roesler seconded. Motion carried. (2) Reggie Edwards, John Considine and Elaine Spain to attend The Art of Hosting and Convening Conversations training March 13-15 and held in Oacoma, South Dakota, March 13-15. The cost is \$850 per person. James Broich moved approval of the travel request, Dwayne Krenz seconded. Motion carried. (3) Brent O’Neil to attend the NADO Transportation Council of Peers meeting in Washington, D.C. March 9-11. The request is for \$850. Alvis More moved approval of the travel request, James Stangler seconded. Motion carried. All funds are available in their perspective budgets.

Reggie Edwards announced that Linda Wallace has rejoined R9 as a financial accountant. Linda previously worked as an accountant and interim finance director for R9 over two years ago. She will be working on an interim basis until the position is permanently filled. The position is open due to the transition of Michal Clobes.

VII. PROGRAM REPORTS

A. Small Business Development Center Update

SBDC Director, Bob Klanderud, presented a preliminary report on activity results for 2007. There were 285 clients served with 2,570 hours of business consultation. Twenty-four seminars were held where 358 people attended. In 2007, there was \$6.9 million in completed loans and equity invested in the Region Nine area.

Klanderud shared that the SBDC is working with a bilingual consultant that is assisting with the Hispanic populations in the St. James area and a bilingual intern is assisting with the African immigrant populations in the Mankato area. He also announced upcoming training sessions that are scheduled February through April. Klanderud distributed a brochure of the annual free South Central Small Business Resource Fair that will be April 24 and held at the Rasmussen College in Mankato. The brochure listed the business management, technical topics and business developments seminars that will be held throughout the event.

B. Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc. Update

MNRAAA®, Inc. executive director, Linda Giersdorf, presented the recommendations for appointments to the Advisory Council on Aging (ACA) that were based upon the information gained during interviews with applicants and / or from the membership applications. Representing: At-Large position – Sharon Pinney; Blue Earth County 60+ position – Marjorie Larson; Nicollet County 60+ position – Jo Cattrysse; Sibley County 60+ position – Richard Peterson. Leo Bauer moved to approve the recommendations as presented to fill the ACA positions, Bob Roesler seconded. Motion carried. The appointments began on January 1, 2008 and are effective for three years except for the Nicollet County position, which is for one year. Linda Giersdorf said two representatives from the Region Nine Development Commission need to be appointed to serve on the ACA. Currently, James Berg and Candace Fenske are RNDC voting members on the ACA. Bill Stangler is the alternate RNDC member. James Stangler moved to reappoint Berg and Fenske to the ACA and for Stangler to be the alternate. James Broich seconded. Motion carried.

Linda Giersdorf updated Commissioners on happenings with the redesignation process of the planning and service areas. The Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA) has held fifteen public hearings to gather input on the issue of changing statewide service areas. A decision will not be made by MBA until July.

C. Community Development Update

Community Development Director, Troy Bonkowske, reported that Luke Fischer, was recently hired to fill the Regional Development Planner position. The city of Gaylord participated in the hiring process. There are two loan applications in process for the Revolving Loan Fund Program. As reported earlier of the rehire of Linda Wallace, Bonkowske said he is looking forward to Wallace working in the RLF Program.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Charlie Hurd shared with Commissioners that the city of Mankato is selling its surplus phosphorus credits to other organizations and jurisdictions. Mankato has a surplus of phosphorus credits because it recently updated its infrastructure so pollution levels are well below required standards.

Reggie Edwards mentioned that at the January 9 full Commission meeting the RNDC unanimously passed a resolution in support of Legislative passage and executive acceptance of Transportation Finance Package through enactment of H.F.946 within the first 10 days of the 2008 Minnesota legislative session. He said the letter with the resolution was sent to area legislators. Edwards asked if Commissioners do hear of any happenings on the bill to contact him.

Chair Tim Strand noted the new R9 newsletter that will be produced quarterly. It also can be found on R9's website.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Timothy Strand, Chairman

Roger Oldfather, Secretary