

MINUTES
Region Nine Development Commission
FULL COMMISSION MEETING
March 9, 2005

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair James Broich called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Nichols Office Center in Mankato.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Larry Anderson, Leo Bauer, Jim Berg, Eldo Brandenburg, James Broich, Kip Bruender, Alvin Dietz, Ron Fleischmann, Terry Genelin, Harlan Gorath, Ken Hanson, Jerry Hawbaker, Janet Holicky, Frederick Juni, Norbert Kaufmann, Dwayne Krenz, Tom Loveall, Terri McGee, Alvis More, Dennis Nelson, Roger Oldfather, Brenda Pautsch, Bob Roesler, Mary Jean Rohlfing, Dan Schmidtke, James Stangler

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Wendell Armstrong, Candace Fenske, Jack Fitzsimmons, David Lynch, Mick McGuire, Patricia Steckman, James Stenson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Janie Flores, Jeff Kagermeier, Lynette Martin, Bob Schabert, William Stangler

OTHERS PRESENT: Reginald Edwards, Linda Giersdorf, Susan Jaeger, Wes Judkins, Bob Klanderud, Robin Thompson, Linda Wallace, Cheryl Weston

IV. GUEST INTRODUCTIONS

Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA) regional director, Linda Giersdorf, introduced Robin Thompson who was recently hired to fill the Senior Outreach Specialist position.

R9 finance director, Susan Jaeger, introduced Linda Wallace who is R9's accountant.

V. GUEST SPEAKERS

Paul Stelter, South Central Minnesota Emergency Medical Services director, gave a presentation on the production and dangers of methamphetamine. A question and answer period followed.

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry Anderson moved approval of the January 12, 2005 minutes as presented. Jerry Hawbaker seconded. Motion carried.

VII. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Leo Bauer moved approval of the treasurer's report as presented. Eldo Brandenburg seconded. Motion carried.

VIII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chair James Broich requested approval of new commissioner, Terri McGree, who replaces Lowell Sieberg as the city of North Mankato representative. James Stangler moved approval, Jim Berg seconded. Motion carried.

Chair Broich reported on several meetings he attended. (1) Attended Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA) Joint Powers Board and Memorandum of Understanding meetings in Redwood Falls. (2) Attended a R9 Small Business Development Center meeting regarding budget issues and working on alternative funding. (3) Attended an Area Transportation Partnership meeting in Windom with Mn/DOT to discuss transportation issues. (4) Met with the R9 Transportation Advisory Committee to rate enhancement applicants for the year 2009. (4) Attended a R9 Budget / Personnel Committee meeting to evaluate the resignation of the finance director and other budget concerns.

Chair Broich said Congressman Norm Coleman was calling cities to gather input on various issues. As mayor of the city of Sleepy Eye, the Congressman called him. Broich reported on several issues he questioned the Congressman on including Homeland Security that involved increasing unfunded training hours for fire and EMT volunteers, agriculture, the new farm bill and talked to him about Highway 14 being extended to the west to Highway 71.

IX. COUNTY AREA SHARING – Watonwan County area representatives

County commissioner, Dwayne Krenz, reported that the 4-year project of updating the County Human Services building is complete. The county is now researching the idea of a jail expansion. Krenz said that the St. James Hospital continues to be a satellite site to service veterans that would otherwise have to travel to the state Veterans Administrations Hospital in the cities. The Madelia Community Hospital received a grant for capital improvements from the Minnesota Office of Rural Health Care that will be used to replace their boiler system. A private clinic will be built in the city of Madelia in their JOBZ area. Also, the former Van Den Berg Food building is seeking tenants. Krenz said he recently visited the state Capitol seeking funds for a ditch drainage project.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive director, Reginald Edwards, presented highlights from his report. He said the trip to the Capitol by commissioners and staff was successful. The commissioners were organized and effective in delivering the message regarding R9's legislative agenda.

Edwards announced that Janet Froslan, who represents townships for Watonwan County and Clell Hemphill, who represents cities under 10,000 in Blue Earth County both resigned from R9's Commission. Their replacements are being sought.

Edwards presented the following staff transitions. Evelyn Carrasco was recently hired for the Community Outreach Specialist position with Salud projects. Finance director, Susan Jaeger, resigned to take a position with the Lake Crystal Ethanol Plant. Linda Wallace, who has assisted Susan for the past 2.5 years, will be taking on Sue's responsibilities. Lois Gekeler, who previously worked in the accounting department has agreed to come back to take Linda's position. Fred Juni moved approval of the staff transitions, Dennis Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

Edwards reported that a grant application was recently submitted to the USDA Rural Utility Services for Telehealth, distant learning and economic development. This program will be piloted in the Henderson, Gaylord and Arlington areas. Staff has met with various partners regarding an alternative energy task force. A pre-application for reauthorization for R9 serving as an EDA District has been submitted and accepted. The final application is due this month.

On March 14 Edwards said the Minnesota Regional Development Organizations (MRDO) would be meeting with state legislators to present their legislative agenda items. In April, Chair Broich and Edwards will be attending the National Association of Development Organizations National Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. Two issues that will be discussed at the federal level include the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, which provides funding for services to seniors and continuation of the Economic Development Administration funding.

XI. PROGRAM REPORTS

A. Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging Update

MNRAAA regional director, Linda Giersdorf, said the aging program transition is going well. The 27-county area, including the 9 counties of Region Nine, is now called the Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging. R9 staff, Rhonda Hiller Fjeldberg, is doing the grants / contract management for the area and Giersdorf has conducted orientation for the advisory committees, which are located in Willmar, Appleton, Slayton and Mankato. There was a Joint Powers Board meeting in February and there will be a retreat in April. The MNRAAA is in the process of establishing funding priorities and approval will be sought at the April Board of Directors meeting. MNRAAA will be hosting a regional White House Conference on Aging Forum on April 4. Topics discussed will be Social Security and consumer directed care.

Giersdorf said she and the aging staff commend finance director, Susan Jaeger, for her dedication to the aging program.

XII. OTHER BUSINESS

Harlan Gorath noted the news article item of the Small Business Development Center business client that was located in Iowa. SBDC director, Bob Klanderud, said the owner of the business lives in North Mankato.

Chair Broich reminded Commissioners that there is only a Board of Directors meeting in April, no full Commission meeting.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

James J. Broich, Chairman

Roger Oldfather, Secretary