



MINUTES
Region Nine Development Commission
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
November 12, 2008

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair James Stangler called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. at the Nichols Building in Mankato.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Leo Bauer, James Broich, Charlie Hurd, Dwayne Krenz, Dan Kuhns, Alvis More, Roger Oldfather, Bob Roesler, Bob Schabert, James Stangler

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tim Strand

OTHERS PRESENT: Sarah Reichwald Beiswanger, Troy Bonkowske, Reggie Edwards, Linda Giersdorf, Bob Klanderud, LuAnn Vanderwerf, Cheryl Weston

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Leo Bauer moved to approve the October 15, 2008 minutes as presented. James Broich seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT

James Broich moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Alvis More seconded. Motion carried.

V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There was no report.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Reggie Edwards noted that all the R9 Commissioners that ran for reelection were successful. Leo Bauer representing Sibley County Commissioners and Janet Holicky representing the Minnesota Council of Governments will be retiring in January. Leo Bauer noted that there is a retirement gathering for Sibley County Commissioners December 26 in the Courthouse basement from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Edwards reported that the R9 Legislative Committee has been meeting and a legislative talking document has been completed that highlights issues raised in R9's recent community-wide survey that was directed at local units of government. He said

it should be a good platform on what is going on in the region. Another survey is also being distributed through the Internet to businesses, chambers, non-profits and others.

The feedback from the surveys will lead R9 in shaping the second phase of its strategic plan. The Budget / Personnel Committee has been meeting and completed the evaluation of the Executive Director; finalized the draft of the Personnel Policy Manual and narrowed the focus of the office site relocation process. Blue Earth County will be sending notices in 2009 that the Nichols Building will be vacated. Two sites were discussed at the Committee meeting – Intergovernmental Center and the Technology Plus Building. Any decisions on the office site relocation will be voted on from a recommendation from the Budget / Personnel Committee who will present the recommendation to the Board, then to the full Commission for their review.

Reggie Edwards said the Budget / Personnel Committee recommended approval to hire Ronda Allis as the Community Development and Transportation Director. She has been on a six-month probationary period that has gone very well. Bob Schabert moved to hire Ronda Allis, Bob Roesler seconded. Motion carried.

VII. PROGRAM REPORTS

A. Accessing Grant Funding

Sarah Reichwald Beiswanger, Resource Development Coordinator, gave a presentation on accessing grant funding for RNDC, organizations and communities. She mentioned the importance of networking with agencies such as the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund, Minnesota Valley Action Council, etc. Also, funding does not always mean receiving dollars, for example, the city of Pemberton needed books for their new library and Beiswanger said she contacted the Friends of the Library in Mankato who donated books. KMSU Radio is donating airtime the second Wednesday of every month to publicize R9 projects and community events. Beiswanger said that several informational workshops have been held that included Broadband informational sharing and a workshop where the staff from the Small Cities Program, USDA, SMIF, and MPCA were present to give information on their funding criteria. Beiswanger said she also assists non-profits and communities to utilize the Region Nine Area, Inc. services.

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

MNRAAA®, Inc. Director, Linda Giersdorf, said the 2009 Area Plan was recently submitted to the Minnesota Board on Aging (MBA). The Plan includes work activities for the 27 county area of MNRAAA®, Inc. MBA staff comments regarding the Plan will be available for review next week. December 4 there is a MBA Program Operations Committee meeting where staff will conduct a presentation on the Plan. On December 5, the MBA will meet, review the Plans from the area agencies on aging, and vote on their approval.

Giersdorf said the by-laws of the MNRAAA®, Inc. specifies that two members of the RNDC be appointed to the MNRAAA®, Inc. Board and an alternate may be appointed to serve on the Board when a member cannot attend. James Broich and James Stangler currently serve on the board and Candace Fenske serves as liaison. Bob Schabert moved to reappoint James Broich, James Stangler and Candace Fenske as the alternate. Bob Roesler seconded. Motion carried. The appointments are effective January 2009.

C. Small Business Development Center Update

SBDC Director, Bob Klanderud, distributed the Minnesota Small Business Development Centers 2007 annual report that contained information on the services of the SBDC and the nine centers in the state of Minnesota. The South Central SBDC highlighted a business they assisted from St. Peter. Noted was that in 2007 they assisted 285 clients and had a Cost to Benefit Ratio of \$9.67.

Klanderud said recent training sessions held included October 27 on website development; November 5 session on QuickBooks in St. James and November 11 a basic business session in Fairmont. December 2 there is a session regarding Employee Handbooks at their offices at the Technology Plus Building.

Klanderud announced a new assistance to clients with the partnering of Legal Core from Minneapolis that offers two hours on the 3rd Wednesday of each month (30 minutes per client) of free legal advice. Six area attorneys have volunteered. He added that, together with several partners, they are working on an Entrepreneur Marketplace Expo that will be held February 21, 2009 at the Alltel Civic Center.

D. Finance Department Update

Finance Director, LuAnn Vanderwerf, presented for review a summary of R9 program budgets as of October 2008.

She reported that the 2007 and 2008 audit reports would be presented for approval at the December Board meeting. The Budget / Personnel Committee has reviewed the 2007 audit report.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Economic Development Director, Troy Bonkowske, said he is assisting a business with their micro entrepreneur application with SMIF. He is working on hiring someone part-time by the end of the year to coordinate the Main Street Program. Bonkowske said the Chicago EDA office has a funding program that of the nine counties, Sibley County is the only county eligible. The funding program may be able to assist the city of Gaylord with their incubator for startup businesses and the city of Winthrop for their industrial park.

Bob Roesler said that in light of the State's projected economic downturn, he wanted to know if any other cities were making tentative plans if there is further reduction in Local Government Aid to cities. Discussion followed. City representatives said they have discussed the issue. Roesler asked if there is a way to work together regarding planning, sharing ideas, collaborating, etc. Also included is counties, townships and other entities that may need assistance in how to deal with less state funding. Reggie Edwards said that R9 could act as a facilitator for bringing entities together to come up with strategies.

Alvis More noted that the delay of the opening of the ethanol plan in Janesville is a great disappointment to the area.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Timothy Strand, Chairman

Roger Oldfather, Secretary