



**MINUTES**  
**Region Nine Development Commission**  
**FULL COMMISSION MEETING**  
**March 12, 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, Bob Schabert, James Stangler, Tim Strand

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dan Kuhns

OTHERS PRESENT: Troy Bonkowske, Reggie Edwards, Linda Giersdorf, Bob Klanderud, Lu Vanderwerf

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Bob Roesler moved to approve the February 13, 2008 minutes as presented. Alvis More seconded. Motion carried.

**IV. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT**

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

**V. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chair Tim Strand reported he attended the Sesquicentennial meeting in St. Peter and felt it was excellent. Chair Strand also attended the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Policy Conference held in Washington, D.C. on February 25-27. He and Executive Director, Reggie Edwards, made legislative visits to Representatives Tim Walz, Collin Peterson, John Kline and Jim Oberstar. Visits were also made with Senators Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar. Chair Strand felt the visits had a positive impact. Finance Director, Lu Vanderwerf, interjected that Senator's Klobuchar's office had called for additional Region Nine contact information. Chair Strand also attended a Region Nine Budget / Personnel Committee meeting.

Chair Strand requested approval of Mayor Joel Albrecht to represent the city of New Ulm on the full Commission. He replaces Ron Fleischmann. Bob Roesler moved to approve Mayor Joel Albrecht as the City of New Ulm representative, Bob Schabert seconded. Motion carried.

## VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Executive Director, Reggie Edwards, presented his monthly activities report. He explained how the asset-based mapping and planning model differs from the deficit-based planning model. Asset-based planning focuses on what is done well in a community and identifies its strengths, while focusing on enhancing its conditions. Deficit-based planning focuses on solving, correcting or altering problems in a community. John McKnight is the originating architect of modern day asset-based planning.

The Budget / Personnel Committee met and discussed the Region Nine office site location options. They charged staff with moving forward on investigating options, including leasing, purchasing an existing building or building a new site. Edwards also reported that the Committee recommended that the mileage reimbursement rate for all programs, employees and Commissioners be changed to the rate the IRS set in January. Charlie Hurd moved that the mileage reimbursement rate increase from .485 to .505 cents per mile in accordance with the IRS rate and Region Nine policy, effective April 1, 2008. Bob Schabert seconded. Motion carried. Edwards stated the Strategic Planning Committee is scheduled to meet following this meeting at 6:00 p.m. Agenda items include continuing to review the Commission by-laws, Phase II of the strategic plan and review of Phase I.

Other items highlighted from Edwards report included - the executive directors of the Minnesota Regional Development Organizations (MRDO) met and discussed statewide issues, including infrastructure, transportation and a statewide Economic Research Request for Proposal by the Federal Economic Development Authority. Edwards will be leading an effort to look into conducting a statewide inventory of the public infrastructure in order to provide gaps analysis information to the State. Staff completed eight of the nine countywide Sesquicentennial meetings, which are being held to engage citizens on behalf of the State 150 year celebration. In areas where there has been low attendance, staff will work with local units of government to reschedule meetings if so desired. Region Nine Area, Inc. staff has visited with the cities of Blue Earth, Sherburn and Truman regarding developing community initiative funds. Edwards said he facilitated the first meeting of the FIRST Grant leadership team. The aim of the initiative is to create a plan that provides strategies for economic development and coordination. The Legislative Rural Forum Planning Committee held its first planning meeting for the December 2008 forum.

Reggie Edwards reported as recommended by the Board, staff communicated with the Governor and State legislators regarding the resolution the Board passed in support of the previous year's Transportation Bill H.F. 946. Not all Region Nine legislators supported the bill because of various additions to the original bill. The Governor vetoed the bill, which was later over-ridden.

Edwards provided an update from the NADO Policy Conference he and Chair Strand attended. He explained earmarks and sub-allocation funding. He reported that Congressmen Walz and Oberstar and Senators Coleman and Klobuchar were supportive of funding for a regional transit corridor study and pilot. The pilot would cover the west Highway 14 corridor between New Ulm and Mankato, while the study would look at the Highway 169 corridor between Mankato, St. Peter and the Twin Cities. Federal officials have requested and are processing competitive applications for the initiative. Staff also encouraged Federal officials and regional organizations

to support sustained funding for the Federal EDA. The Administration has proposed a 53% cut in EDA funding, which would eliminate public works funding. The cutting of these funds would make a disproportional impact on small, rural communities.

## **VII. PROGRAM REPORTS**

### **A. Community Development Update**

Troy Bonkowske, Community Development Director, reported the date of the Loan Review Committee meeting had been changed from March 13 to March 20. The Committee will consider loan requests from the cities of North Mankato, Montgomery and St. Clair. They have also been reviewing drafts of an updated Strategic Plan for the Revolving Loan Fund program.

Highlighted from Bonkowske's report was that an intern was hired by the Small Business Development Center for outreach to programs in Region Nine's Somali communities. The Community Development Department was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship grant from the Economic Development Association of Minnesota to hire an intern to begin outreach efforts with the Somali immigrant population. Staff assisted the City of Gaylord with a Minnesota Design Team grant application and established the Main Street program. Luke Fischer was recently hired as the new Region Nine Downtown Coordinator. He has visited with staff from the City of Amboy and secured a six-month grant with the City to provide economic development services for 24 hours a month. After six months, the contract can be extended on a monthly basis. Staff will meet with the City of Sleepy Eye to finalize a contract to provide assistance with economic development services for approximately 10 hours per week. Staff continues to work with Brown County Economic Development Partners in the pursuit of a regional economic development plan for the County. The plan would require business and residential surveys, public hearings and plan implementation. Region Nine continues to work with the City of Pemberton with a no-interest loan through USDA to fund their community center. Public Hearings to discuss issues in developing the City of Truman Comprehensive Guide Plan have been completed. A final draft will be submitted to the City Council and residents for review.

The Brown and Waseca County Hazard Mitigation Plans have been approved by the State and FEMA and it is expected their local jurisdictions will also approve them. It is anticipated that Martin and Faribault County Plans will be approved by the end of the month. State officials would like to meet with Blue Earth, Sibley and Le Sueur counties to discuss their county goals related to flood conditions. Region Nine will facilitate this meeting.

Bonkowske also reported that the \$50,000 grant from EDA had been renewed for 2008-2009.

### **B. Finance Department Update**

Finance Director, Lu Vanderwerf, shared the RNDC February 2008 Program Summary document. It compares each program's budget with actual expenditures, percent of budget spent and percent of time through each program's fiscal year. She explained any areas where there were unusual variances.

Vanderwerf also reported that the RNDC has signed the lease for the server, which enables the networking of computers and provides data security.

**C. Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging®, Inc.**

Executive Director of MNRAAA®, Inc., Linda Giersdorf, reported that the Board of the Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging voted to inform the Minnesota Board on Aging and the Upper Minnesota Valley RDC (UMVRDC) that they are not supportive of having their Planning and Service Area enlarged to include the five counties of UMVRDC. At this time, it is unknown what the next steps will be regarding UMVRDC's discontent. Giersdorf also reported that she would be presenting the revised 2008 budget to the MNRAAA, Inc. Board on March 17.

**VIII. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

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Timothy Strand, Chairman

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Roger Oldfather, Secretary