



March 9, 2016

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ahrenstorff called the meeting to order at 4:31p.m. at the Intergovernmental Center in Mankato.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brad Ahrenstorff, James Broich, Terry Genelin, Gerri Lienke, Steve Rohlffing, Phil Schafer, and Gary Sturm

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Eric Anderson, Tom Loveall, and Jim Swanson

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Griensewic Mickelson, LuAnn Vanderwerf, and Ashley Aukes

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Broich moved to approve the agenda as presented, Genelin seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Genelin moved to approve the February 10th, 2016 minutes as presented with the revision of removing Tim Strand from the Roll Call, Sturm seconded. Motion carried.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT

Rohlffing moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented, Broich seconded. Motion carried.

VI. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A. Watonwan County Representative

Chair Ahrenstorff stated that Commissioner Bill Yock, representing Watonwan County Townships, has resigned his position on the Commission. Watonwan County Townships have been notified and the nomination process for a new representative has begun.

B. June Commission Meeting Date

Chair Ahrenstorff mentioned that the previously sent meeting date postcard had an error for the June meeting date. The correct date is June 22nd, 2016 for the Commission to meet and approve the budget for the next fiscal year.

C. Staff Update

Chair Ahrenstorff regretfully announced that Community Development Director Byron Jost has resigned his position effective March 18th, 2016. Ahrenstorff read Jost's resignation letter to the Board.

Ahrenstorff moved to accept Byron Jost's resignation, Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

A. VISTA Update

Griensewic Mickelson reported that Region Nine applied to the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and has been selected to be a host site for an AmeriCorps VISTA member. Resource Development Planner Brent Pearson will be the direct supervisor for this position.

Griensewic Mickelson stated the AmeriCorps VISTA will assist in the development of an Entrepreneur Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP will determine the needs of the region, develop a comprehensive list of available resources, and connect entrepreneurs and partners. This aligns with Region Nine's strategic plan and more updates will come as available.

Discussion followed on the type of person who may fill this position.

B. Communications Update

Aukes reported that on February 18th she gave a presentation on *Marketing, Advertising, and Social Media* as part of the *StartSmart Series* the New Ulm Chamber of Commerce hosted. The presentation was well attended and participants were very engaged.

Aukes stated the Sleepy Eye Chamber of Commerce has contracted with Region Nine to present the *Marketing, Advertising, and Social Media* presentation on March 17th. The Sleepy Eye Chamber has expressed interest in contracting with Region Nine to provide more detailed presentations on social media and marketing in the near future. Due to the publicity from the New Ulm presentation, Aukes has received other inquiries regarding marketing presentations.

Aukes mentioned that the Social Media Breakfast-New Ulm events are in their third year and have been well received by the community and surrounding area. These events provide a way for Region Nine to be active in the community and share Region Nine's services. There is discussion about starting a chapter in Mankato.

Griensewic Mickelson shared that there have been conversations with the City of North Mankato to potentially manage and design their weekly e-newsletter.

Aukes stated that Region Nine also has been utilizing communications to write press releases on behalf of the City of Madelia. This is a service that can be provided to other entities throughout the region that may not have the capacity or knowledge to craft their own press releases.

C. EDA Peer Review

Griensewic Mickelson announced that the EDA Peer Review will be held on March 21st. These reviews are held every three years. Lee Shirey, Economic Development Representative, will be traveling to Mankato from the Chicago Office to conduct the review. A peer from the Buckeye Hills-Hocking Valley Regional Development District will call in to review Region Nine and our Comprehensive Development Strategy. Region Nine staff, Danielle Walchuk and Brent Pearson, will be a part of the process, as well as Chair Ahrenstorff, Diane Halvorson, and Deb Barnes.

Griensewic Mickelson shared that while Shirey is in the region, he will be touring Madelia and discuss what Federal resources may be available.

D. NADO/EDA Conferences

Griensewic Mickelson gave an update on the status of her attending the NADO and EDA conferences. At this time nothing has been confirmed. Jeanette Tamayo, Regional EDA Director, has expressed interested in have Griensewic Mickelson present on the recovery process in Madelia

E. Madelia Fire Update

Griensewic Mickelson gave an overview of how Region Nine has been assisting Madelia since the February 3rd fire that destroyed eight downtown business. Griensewic Mickelson has been meeting

regularly with area media and sending weekly e-mail updates to statewide media, legislators, and other key partners. The investigation is still ongoing at this time. The affected businesses have begun reopening in temporary locations.

Griensewic Mickelson reported on the amount of staff time that has been involved in the assistance. The Blandin Foundation has granted Region Nine funds to complete a comprehensive plan for the city. Additional resources, however, are needed to continue to provide the level of technical assistance that is currently being given. The City of Madelia, Representative Cornish, and Senator Rosen have expressed interest in having Region Nine continue to play a role in the recovery.

Discussion followed on Region Nine's role throughout the recovery.

F. Community Development

a. Projects, Contracts, and Staffing Timeline

Griensewic Mickelson listed the current projects and contracts the Community Development Department is working on their timelines.

b. TAC Update

Griensewic Mickelson stated that there are some vacancies on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Community Development Planner Sam Parker is reviewing the bylaws and structure of the TAC to ensure the committee's effectiveness. Letters were sent to Faribault County in an attempt to fill the current vacancy. No response has been received at this time.

Griensewic Mickelson reviewed the current organizational structure with the recent staffing changes. The Executive Director is now the direct supervisor for all staff, with the exception of the Senior Financial Accountant who reports directly to the Finance Director. Staff reviews did not occur in February and therefore will be completed later this spring.

Griensewic Mickelson informed the Board that the Strategic Planning Committee and the Legislative and Communications Committee have not met recently.

VIII. PROGRAM REPORTS

A. Finance

Vanderwerf announced that a local firm has contracted with Region Nine to complete Davis-Bacon monitoring. The firm is using federal funds for a project and therefore requires monitoring of the prevailing wage. Finance staff are going through training to be able to provide this service.

Vanderwerf stated that the budget process is beginning and a tentative schedule will be distributed soon.

a. MNRAAA Update

Vanderwerf reviewed a list of MNRAAA project funds that are still on the Region Nine ledger. This is the last batch of funds that are owed to MNRAAA. Vanderwerf has arranged with MNRAAA for Region Nine to retain funds from one of the listed projects to cover any negative balances that could be remaining when the books are closed out in June. Vanderwerf requested approval to retain the Admin Consortium project funds and pay the remaining funds.

Rolfing moved to approve retaining the Admin Consortium funds and paying the remaining owed funds to MNRAAA, Sturm seconded. Motion carried.

Vanderwerf reported the accrued annual leave has been paid to MNRAAA as well as payment for the Pre-Admission Screening build-out.

Vanderwerf gave an update on the vacant office space. Discussion are ongoing with the City of Mankato to get the space filled.

b. **Revolving Loan Fund Update**

Vanderwerf reported the Revolving Loan Fund Committee has approved three loans. There are an additional two loans in the coaching process at the Small Business Development Center before being brought forward to the committee.

Vanderwerf gave an update on the Revolving Loan Fund Committee term limits stating it was decided to move forward with two four-year terms. The years of service of current members of the committee were reviewed. There are three members representing Brown, Le Sueur, and Martin Counties who will need to step down once a replacement is found. The Martin County representative has already been replaced.

c. **Region Nine Area Inc.**

Genelin stated Region Nine Area Inc. is in the process of reviewing their bylaws and term limits. Genelin announced he will be stepping down from Region Nine Area Inc. and Todd Stromsvold will be filling his position. There are several others who have also expressed interested in joining the Region Nine Area Inc. board.

Vanderwerf listed the current entities Region Nine Area Inc. is the fiscal sponsor for.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

Chair Ahrenstorff mentioned there are ongoing conversations in Blue Earth County regarding the future and direction of fire departments. Discussions include cities joining fire departments or forming joint power boards. This has become a controversial topic and something to keep top of mind.

Genelin mentioned Region Nine is still a part of the HWY 169 coalition and gave a brief update on the projects the coalition is working on.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Ahrenstorff moved approval to adjourn the meeting, Broich seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.


Brad Ahrenstorff, Chairman


Gary Sturm, Secretary