

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laven called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, MN.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**III. APPROVAL OF NEW COMMISSIONERS**

- A. Dave Borchart – Brown County
- B. Shanon Nowell – Mayor of St. Peter, Nicollet County Cities over 10K
- C. Rob Wilkening – Mayor of Waldorf, Waseca County Cities under 10K

Belgard moved to approve the New Commissioners. Pfeil seconded. Motion carried.

IV. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Elliot Belgard, Andrea Boettger, Dave Borchert, Jim Branstad, Steve Cooling, Marie Dranttel, Lyle Femrite, Elroy Glidden, Robert Goblirsch, Paul Harris, Dawn Kratzke, Mike Laven, Christian Lilienthal, Tom Loveall, Mary Milbrath, Blair Nelson, Bob Nielsen, Lisa Norton, Shanon Nowell, Patty O'Connor, Keira Oeltjenbruns, Richard Peterson, Mike Pfeil, Gary Richter, Steve Rohlfing, Phil Schafer, Scott Schlueter

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Chris Dalton, Ayan Omar, Doug Trytten

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Holmseth, Michele Miller

MEMBERS RESIGNED: Pam Rodewald, Chera Sevcik, Brigid Tuck

OTHERS PRESENT: Brad DeVos, Bree Maki, Layne Kockelman Nicole Griensewic, Ky Battern, Leah Petricka, Nate George, Frances Long, Heather Bartelt

There was a quorum.

V. APPROVAL OF REVISED AGENDA

Chair Laven noted that the Chicago Regional Director for the Federal EDA is unable to be present at the Commission Meeting this evening due to an illness.

Rohlfing moved to approve the revised agenda as presented, Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

VI. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 11, 2023 MINUTES

Schafer moved to approve the January 11, 2023 minutes as presented, Milbrath seconded. Motion carried.

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT

Dranttel presented the Treasurer's Report.

Rohlfing moved to approve the Treasurer's Report, Harris seconded. Motion carried.

VIII. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. Audit Report

Kockelman, representing Abdo, overviewed RNDC annual audit results and stated the audit was clean, with no findings.

Nelson moved to approve the audit as presented. Norton seconded. Motion carried.

B. Resolution 2023 – 05 – Defederalized Revolving Loan Funds

Battern announced that RNDC was granted permission by the EDA to defederalize the RLF in December 2022, which means that reporting obligations, interest rate limitations, and fund classification restrictions have been lifted. Battern shared that currently there are five revolving loan funds (RLF) and with the defederalization, RNDC will be able to transition from five RLF's to two. Discussion followed.

Belgard moved to approve Resolution 2023 – 05 as presented. Goblirsch seconded. Motion carried.

VIII. CHAIR'S REPORT

A. Introduction of New Commissioners

Laven welcomed the new commissioners. The Chair then asked Borchert and Nowell to introduce themselves. New commissioner, Rob Wilkening was excused.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Griensewic asked Leah Petricka to share news with the Full Commission. Petricka noted that she will be resigning from RNDC effective April 14th. Petricka thanked the Commission for her time at RNDC.

Griensewic noted that RNDC has been having conversations with the MN Department of Ag. regarding the possibility of creating a biozone in Brown and Watonwan County or region wide. This designation would help attract anaerobic biodigester companies to build in the region as an example. Griensewic shared that RNDC can supply those interested in learning more about anaerobic biodigesters with more information from Dr. Christof Wetter, Professor University of Münster, program partner with Climate Smart Municipalities, (CSM).

Griensewic asked the commissioners who attended the March 26th Business to Business event in Minneapolis, MN to share their experiences. Commissioner Richter was unable to find words to express how well RNDC has been with making connections. Commissioner Boettger mentioned that "international partnerships are becoming a serious deal and [the German Delegation] will be traveling to New Ulm with a future delegation where there are lots of opportunities for New Ulm to be explored". Griensewic noted that RNDC relationship with MSU-M has never been stronger, as RNDC continues to work with the University and MinnPoly Technical University. MSUM and MinnPoly were represented and supported the event. Discussion followed.

Griensewic shared that she has been facilitating a relationship between Business Finland and the MinnPoly Technical University, as the Finnish are leaders in Polytechnical Institutes.

Griensewic mentioned that RNDC currently has several grant applications pending. Griensewic added that she should be able to provide an update on their status by the Full Commission meeting in June.

Griensewic shared that Kristian Braekkan, the Economic Development Director will be transitioning to part-time status as of May 1. Discussion followed.

Griensewic noted that Pam Rodewald, Nicollet County, Cities under 10K, Chera Sevcik, Health & Human Services, Public Interest and Brigid Tuck, Regional School Boards gave their resignations to the Commission. Griensewic noted that due to workload, RNDC will not be actively seeking to fill the vacancies. Griensewic asked the Commissioners to spread the word and have interested individuals fill out an application. The Commissioners then decide based on the applicants at a future Commission meeting.

Griensewic shared that RNDC has received three applications for the Health & Human Services vacancy. Griensewic noted that pending space on the Annual Bus Tour, she would like to invite them to spend the day with the Commissioners on June 21st. Applicants will be asked to present on their interest in serving. Commissioners will then vote to decide who will be the next Public Interest Commissioner.

Griensewic shared that CEDA is seeking state funding for technical assistance for rural communities with populations of 3,000 or under. Griensewic shared concern there this

may be duplication of RNDC's work. Griensewic will be reaching out to her MADO colleagues for more context. Discussion followed.

A. Broadband Discussion

Chair Laven introduced Bree Maki, Director of the Office of Broadband, to give a presentation on Broadband and Digital Inclusion in Minnesota.

Maki gave a brief overview of the Minnesota Office of Broadband Development and the definition of broadband. Maki presented the benefits of having reliable broadband and the importance of ensuring all individuals and communities have access. Maki noted that the state of Minnesota has Digital Connection Committees, and the purpose of these committees is to gather local information and provide feedback. Maki stressed the importance of the Digital Connection Committees as a way for individuals to have their concerns heard. Maki went on to share a variety of potential funding opportunities for communities. Discussion followed.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Commissioner Updates

Chair Laven asked for updates, if any. Commissioners shared updates from their local jurisdictions.

B. Meeting Evaluation

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Norton moved to adjourn, Nelson seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.



Mike Laven, Chair



Jim Branstad, Secretary