REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chair Boettger called the meeting to order due to Chair Laven's scheduling conflict at 4:30 p.m. at RNDC in Mankato, MN

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Jim Branstad, Marie Dranttel, Lyle Femrite, Tom Loveall, Steve Rohlfing, Phil Schafer

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Christian Lilienthal

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

MEMBERS LATE: Mike Laven, Blair Nelson

OTHERS PRESENT: Nicole Griensewic, Ky Battern, Kristian Braekkan, Joel Hanif, Nate George, Heather Bartelt, Dr. Tom Horan, Mattie Anders

There was a quorum.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Griensewic requested that the Finance Director's report be moved to before the Treasurer's Report

Rohlfing moved to approve the revised agenda. Femrite seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF APRIL 12, 2023 MINUTES

Schafer moved to approve the April 12, 2023 minutes as presented, Femrite seconded. Motion carried.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT

Dranttel presented the Treasurer's Report

Schafer asked for clarification on Wells Fargo late charges. Battern noted he could not comment at this time and will follow up with the board on this matter.

Branstad moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

A. Manufacturing Resilience

Kristian Braekkan started off Dr. Tom Horan's presentation by sharing with the board a Manufacturing Resilience study conducted with funding provided by the EDA and BUSH Foundation.

Vice Chair Boettger introduced the presenter, Dr. Tom Horan, Dean of the School of Business & Society at University of Redlands. Dr. Horan contacted RNDC because of RNDC's medical device supply chain plan.

Dr. Tom Horan presented preliminary findings from an ongoing study on Minnesota's medical device manufacturing clusters. The study is a collaboration between Redlands University, University of Minnesota, and ESRI to which RNDC serves as technical advisors. Dr. Horan explained the critical role of Greater Minnesota communities – including Region Nine – in supporting these industries and the complexity of their supply chains as they are embedded in nearly all of Minnesota's 87 counties. All of Region Nine's counties contribute to the more than $13 billion of annual exports and Dr. Horan explained how the research will continue to expand in partnership with RNDC over the next year.

Braekkan shared that a resolution will come before the board at the June 7th meeting to accept the plan, giving the commissioners time to review. Discussion followed.

VII. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Battern shared that he is in the process of having audit-ready monthly statements for the board to review at the monthly meetings.

Battern noted that the transition to MAGIC Fund and US Bank is near completion.

Battern shared that RNDC Staff has been working hard at integrating Monday.com into current projects. Battern directed the board to look at the Gantt Chart presented in the packet for all current RNDC projects.

Battern shared that the RLF has been very active in outreach. Battern noted that RNDC has approximately $2.1 million dollars available for loans. Rohlfing asked Battern how the interest rate for the MAGIC Fund is calculated. Discussion followed.

A. Budget FY24 Planning Update

Battern shared that RNDC directors will be looking at the FY24 budget soon and will be presenting the FY24 Budget to the Board of Directors in June.

VIII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Griensewic requested the board to give their feedback on the new Board of Directors meeting packet layout. Griensewic is interested in hearing if the information provided was helpful and/or what revisions could be made.

Griensewic noted that more information has been added to the Board Portal as requested by the Budget & Personnel Committee.

Griensewic highlighted the news article in the Star Tribune, that the City of Duluth received a $700,000 grant from the Department of Energy. This grant is the first in the nation and would be taking solid waste and converting it into heat for the entire city.

Griensewic shared that she gave an interview to the Star Tribune newspaper on a story they had about childcare.

Griensewic shared that Saint Peter Herald newspaper will be running a story on Commissioner Omar as an MYLAP participant and included an interview from Griensewic.

Griensewic noted the Finish Ambassador will be in town in the upcoming weeks, however, Griensewic will not be able to attend. In lieu of her absence, Griensewic has requested Commissioner Boettger to attend in her place.

Griensewic noted that Susan Brehm, Chicago Regional Director of EDA was able to travel to the region. Griensewic shared that Brehm was very complimentary of the RNDC team and RNDC partnerships. Griensewic did share with Brehm the news regarding the impeding Windom pork plant closure. Griensewic noted that even though the facility is not in the RNDC area, potential effects will be felt around the entire region.

Griensewic shared that RNDC was awarded a Local Foods Grant for $18,000 for the next 3 to 5 years. Griensewic noted that Sabri Fair would be leading the grant and she will have the exact details regarding the grant at the next board meeting.

Griensewic noted that the next Budget & Personnel meeting will be held on May 31. Griensewic shared she will continue to work with Battern to get the board the most updated budget possible by the June 7th Board of Directors meeting.

Griensewic shared that she has reached out to Steve Etcher, from MarksNelson to facilitate the upcoming May 31st Budget & Personnel meeting. Griensewic made this request in the best efforts of the committee to have an engaging conversation for all to participate.

Griensewic noted that Cheryal Hills, Executive Director of Region 5 Development Commission, will be joining the May 31st Budget & Personnel meeting to share her experiences as they transitioned from the DMB to performance-based pay.

Griensewic noted that she presented each board member with a drafted Code of Conduct at this meeting. Griensewic requested the board members to review the document by the next Board of Directors' meeting.

A. Resolution 2023 – 06 – Approval of the FY24 MnDOT Transportation Work Plan

Griensewic introduced Joel Hanif to share the spreadsheet of the MnDOT activities that RNDC is expected to execute for FY24. Hanif shared that a Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting was held recently. At the meeting, TAC and MnDOT District 7 both reviewed the outlined plan and recommended it to the board for approval.

Femrite moved to approve the FY24 MnDOT Transportation Work Plan. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

B. Social Media

Chair Laven introduced Nate George to share his presentation on social media within RNDC. George went over website metrics with the board. George noted that the website traffic is currently on track with the same metrics of 2022. George did note there has been an increase in traffic beyond the headlines to learn more about the various topics. George noted that the highest website traffic is the "Who We Are" tab and the "Resources" tab.

George noted that he prioritizes grant opportunities, considering them a top-tier commitment in RNDC work.

George mentioned that RNDC is proactive in website posting, staying ahead of industry standards. However, he expressed the need to assess whether the current frequency is optimal or if it should be reduced.

George shared that the newsletter is showing an increase in click rates from the past year, however, is trailing slightly by industry standards.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioners shared updates from the municipalities.

A. Meeting Evaluation

Chair Laven reminded the members of the Board to fill out the meeting evaluation handout.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Nelson moved to adjourn. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Mike Laven, Chair

Jim Branstad, Secretary