BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Meeting Minutes
August 10, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Laven called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. at RNDC in Mankato, MN.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Marie Dranttel, Mike Laven, Christian Lilienthal, Kevin Paap, Steve Rohlfing, Phil Schafer, Gary Sturm

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tom Loveall, Blair Nelson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Juliann Wiersma, Ky Battern, Frances Long, Paola Ferrario, Nicole Griensewic, Heather Bartelt

There was a quorum.

III. APPROVAL OF NEW BLUE EARTH COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Commissioner Kevin Paap addressed the Board and informed them that Juliann Wiersma will be filling the Blue Earth County seat. Paap thanked the Board for allowing him to serve. On behalf of RNDC, Griensewic also thanked the commissioner for his time served.

Chair Laven requested each board member to introduce themselves to the new commissioner.

Rohlfing moved to approve the Juliann Wiersma for Blue Earth County Commissioner. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

IV. APPROVAL OF REVISED AGENDA

Griensewic revised the agenda to include *Action Item X. C. Out of State Travel Request*

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

V. APPROVAL OF JUNE 1, 2022 MINUTES

Schafer moved to approve the June 1, 2022 minutes as presented, Rohlfing seconded. Motion carried.

VI. TREASURER'S REPORT

Dranttel presented the Treasurer's Report.

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

VII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chair Laven shared with the Board the list of current nominations. Andrea Boettger for Vice President, Marie Dranttel for Treasurer, Gary Sturm for Secretary. Laven asked for other nominations from the floor. No further discussion.

Schafer moved to recommend Commissioner Boettger for Vice President, Commissioner Dranttel for Treasurer, and Commissioner Sturm for Secretary. Lilienthal seconded. Motion carried.

VIII. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Battern noted that the FY22 ended on June 30th and the Finance Department is currently preparing for the audit taking place on September 6-9th.

Battern shared that Frances Long joined RNDC on July 18th as the new Finance Specialist.

Battern has expressed interest in having Abdo have the RNDC Audit Report done by October.

Battern shared that the finance department is currently getting caught up on deferred low priority tasks during the month of May and June.

Battern shared that new guidance from the EDA stated that all loans would need to be fully closed by June 30th instead of the previously stated July 27th deadline.

Battern noted that RNDC was able to get four loans closed in the months of June and July.

Battern shared that most of the CARES Act funding was dispersed. Battern noted that approximately $20,000 was unable to be loaned out before the deadline.

Battern shared that RNAI has been working with the organization, The Reconciliation Learning Journey. The organization aims to pair up those of the Dakota decent with Caucasian individuals from the area and tour various historical sites regarding Native American and settler conflicts within the region.

Commissioner Rohlfing asked Battern for an update on future grants and projects. Discussion followed.

IX. CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Laven shared that he is still in process of learning the process of Board Chair.

Chair Laven noted that he met with the finance department last week to ensure that his signature is on file for documents that can be signed electronically.

X. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Griensewic shared that Frances Long started as the Finance Specialist on July 18th.

Griensewic shared that Paola Ferrario started as a Community Development Planner on June 20th.

Griensewic noted that discussions are being held on creating a position for a planner focusing on sustainability.

Griensewic shared that the MarksNelson Training began today with RNDC staff. The MarksNelson training will follow into a second day with RNDC Directors and Commissioners. Griensewic shared the purpose of this training is to have a clear direction of the future of the organization, strengths, etc.

Griensewic shared that RNDC is still working with Extended HR. Extended HR will be reviewing all RNDC job descriptions, performance evaluations, and a few other items listed as top priority.

Griensewic noted that she currently has not found any other entities doing salary surveys but will continue to pursue that avenue.

Griensewic shared that RNDC has received a non-compliance letter from MnDOT. Griensewic noted that RNDC has been behind on the MnDOT planning grant spending from the past two years. MnDOT noted that the remaining amount of $5971.00 was not fully spent in FY22. MnDOT shared that they will continue to allow flexibility of carryover between the fiscal years however need to address the inability of spending the funds according to the grant agreement. Discussion followed.

Griensewic updated the board that no grant applications submitted in Region Nine were funded by the Federal EDA. Griensewic shared with the board that she has made an appointment to meet with the Federal EDA in Chicago next week to inquire why no applications were funded in the region. Discussion followed.

Griensewic invited Paola Ferrario to share the ACE Unit concept. Ferrario noted that a plan is being created for an open market design for our region. These materials can be taken to the next ACE in November and create a pitch deck on what Region Nine has to offer. Ferrario shared that RNDC is also studying the possibility of creating Foreign Trade Zones. Ferrario noted the goal of these ideas is to becoming known internationally and tap into foreign markets.

Griensewic shared that she was on a call with Jeffrey Phillips, a former employee of the MN Trade Office who leads trade initiative for the MN Department of Agriculture. Griensewic noted that on September 21st, Phillips will be bringing a delegation of Agriculture leaders from foreign countries. Griensewic asked the board for input on what RNDC would like to show or highlight to this delegation. Commissioner Schafer noted the increase of organic farming in the region. Griensewic noted that she will keep the board informed as more details emerge.

A. Resolution 2022 – 05 – Authorizing Application to Federal EDA

RNDC is looking to be an applicant for a federal grant application in partnership with New Ulm Business Resource Center and Innovation Center (NUBRIC) for the purpose of funding an EDA planning Grant. RNDC will provide their share of 20% (currently estimated $2,000) local match funds. The purpose of this grant is to develop a New Ulm Robotics and Automation Program that seeks to develop and implementation plan for a STEM robotics laboratory in New Ulm to serve the greater region.

Rohlfing moved to approve Resolution 2022 – 05 Authorizing Application to Federal EDA. Boettger seconded. Motion carried.

B. Resolution 2022 – 06 - Authorization Application to Federal EDA

RNDC is looking to be an applicant for a federal grant application in partnership with Project Cultivate for the purpose of funding an EDA planning Grant. RNDC will provide their share of 20% (currently estimated $5,356) local match funds. The goal is to provide a replicable framework to empower cross-sectoral partners to address inequalities through entrepreneurship and business development. RNDC will provide technical assistance. Discussion followed

Boettger moved to approve Resolution 2022 – 06 Authorizing Application to Federal EDA. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

A. Introduction of Frances Long and Paola Ferrario

Chair Laven introduced new RNDC employees, Frances Long, Finance Specialist and Paola Ferrario, Community Development Planner. Chair Laven asked Frances and Paola to introduce themselves.

B. Out of State Travel Request

Griensewic requested the approval of out-of-state travel costs to Chicago to meet with the Federal EDA the week of August 15-19th. Griensewic noted that she was originally traveling to Chicago on a personal vacation but changed her plans to align them with a scheduled meeting with the Federal EDA. Griensewic then shared that she needed to be back in MN at the CTS meeting on Thursday evening, and then needed to travel back to Chicago for the Federal EDA meeting on Friday. Discussion followed.

Boettger moved to approve the Out of State Travel Request. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

Griensewic shared with the board a recap slide presentation of her time in Cambridge at the Harvard Kennedy School Local and State Government Leadership Course.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Commissioner Updates

Commissioners shared updates from their municipalities.

B. Meeting Evaluation

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

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Boettger moved to adjourn. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

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Mike Laven, Chair Gary Sturm, Secretary