REGION NINE
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, September 9, 2026 4:30 pm

3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, Minnesota

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
September 9, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.
Minnesota River Room, Intergovernmental Center

AGENDA

		Time	Page	Action
1.	**Call To Order**	4:30		
2.	**Roll Call** – *Secretary Branstad*			
3.	**Approval of Agenda**		2	Action
	Closed Session Closed meeting pursuant to Minnesota Statutes §13D.03, Subd. 1(b) – Labor Negotiations Strategy			
4.	**Approval of August 12, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes**	4:50	3	Action
5.	**Approval of August 25, 2026, Special Meeting Minutes**		7	Action
6.	**Approval of Financials**		10	Action
7.	**Grant/Project Item Review**	5:00		
	a. Funding Summary		14	
	b. Grants in Progress		15	
8.	**Action Items**			
	a. IT Service Proposals Follow-up and Approval		16	Action
	b. Recommendation of Revisions to Bylaws		17	Action
	c. Recommendation of Code of Conduct Policy		33	Action
	d. Recommendation of Conflict-of-Interest Policy		36	Action
	e. Recommendation of Legal Updates to the RNDC Handbook		39	Action
9.	**Reports**	5:30		
	a. Chair's Report – *Chair Boettger*			
	b. Interim Executive Director's Report – *Jessica Beyer*		40	
	c. Finance Director's Report – *Stephanie Hilpipre*		42	
10.	**Topics for Next Meeting**			
11.	**Other Business**	5:45		
	a. Commissioner Updates			
	b. Meeting Evaluation			Handout
12.	**Adjournment**	6:00		Action

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
UNAPPROVED Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boettger called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Jim Branstad, Marie Dranttel, Mike Laven, Christian Lilienthal, Patty O'Connor, Steve Rohlfing, Phil Schafer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rob Wilkening

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Tom Loveall

OTHERS PRESENT: Kim Snyder, Shanon Nowell, Jessica Beyer, Stephanie Hilpipre, Sarah Janovsky

There was a quorum.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Schafer moved to approve the agenda. Rohlfing seconded. Motion carried.

4. APPROVAL OF MAY 13, 2026 MEETING MINUTES

Laven moved to approve the May 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

5. APPROVAL OF FINANCIALS

Rohlfing moved to approve the financials as presented. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.

6. GRANT/PROGRAM REVIEW

Jessica Beyer and Stephanie Hilpipre presented the Funding Summary and Grants in Progress document. Discussion focused on recent funding activity, pending grant opportunities, and efforts to diversify organizational revenue sources. Staff provided updates on grant-funded projects and highlighted the importance of pursuing funding opportunities that support organizational sustainability and regional priorities.

7. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT UPDATE

Kim Snyder of Excelsior Bay Group provided an update on the organizational development and financial sustainability assessment. As an external consultant engaged by RNDC, Snyder met with board and staff members to gather background information, assess organizational strengths and challenges, and develop recommendations to support the organization's future success. Snyder summarized key themes identified through stakeholder engagement and discussed opportunities to strengthen organizational structure, governance, communication, and long-term financial planning.

Board members discussed the importance of providing organizational clarity, supporting staff capacity, and addressing succession planning needs. Discussion also focused on the executive director role, organizational structure, and strategies to support long-term organizational sustainability. The Board acknowledged the value of the assessment findings and recommendations in helping guide future organizational planning and decision-making.

8. REPORTS

Chair’s Report – *Chair Boettger*

The Board conducted its election of officers. Marie Dranttel agreed to continue serving as Treasurer, Jim Branstad agreed to continue serving as Secretary, and Patty O'Connor was nominated to serve as Vice Chair.

Rohlfing moved to elect Marie Dranttel as Treasurer. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

O’Connor moved to elect Jim Branstad as Secretary. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

Branstad moved to elect Patty O'Connor as Vice Chair. Dranttel seconded. Motion carried.

The Board reviewed the November meeting schedule and discussed conflicts with the regularly scheduled meeting date due to Veterans Day observances.

Rohlfing moved to change the November Board of Directors meeting date from November 11, 2026, to November 4, 2026. O’Connor seconded. Motion carried.

The Board discussed representation for upcoming labor negotiations and agreed that board participation would provide governance representation during the process.

Laven moved to appoint Patty O'Connor as the Board representative for labor negotiations. Rohlfing seconded. Motion carried.

The Board also discussed next steps regarding the Executive Director position. Members noted the need to provide organizational direction and determine a path forward for the position. Staff were directed to schedule a special meeting for further discussion.

Interim Executive Director's Report – *Jessica Beyer*

Beyer provided updates on organizational operations, staffing, audit activities, grant administration, and ongoing administrative improvements. She reported that staff continue to work closely with auditors to complete the FY25 audit and prepare for the FY26 audit process. Updates were also provided regarding staffing transitions, including the departure of Jazmine Flores as Lending Specialist and efforts to maintain continuity of services with Lisa Callahan filling the RLF role in the interim.

The Board reviewed three out-of-state travel requests. Staff noted that travel related to Resource Rural and Radically Rural would be funded through project resources and scholarship opportunities, while attendance at the NADO conference would allow RNDC to accept a national innovation award for food recovery work.

Laven moved to acknowledge the previously approved out-of-state travel request for Sabri Fair to attend Resource Rural. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.

Rohlfing moved to approve the out-of-state travel request for Sabri Fair to attend Radically Rural. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.

Laven moved to approve the out-of-state travel request for Jessica Beyer or a designated staff representative, to attend the NADO Conference. Rohlfing seconded. Motion carried.

Commissioner Lilienthal noted that while RNDC does not have a policy requiring Board approval of non-staff travel, he would appreciate Board awareness of registration and travel-related expenses. Chair Boettger and the Board acknowledged this request and incorporation of a process moving forward.

The Board reviewed recommendations outlined in a memorandum and reviewed by Jessica Beyer related to the MissionSquare retirement plan. She noted that recommended updates reflected current industry best practices and would expand available plan options for employees without creating additional costs for the organization.

Laven moved to approve the recommended MissionSquare retirement plan updates. Schafer seconded. Motion carried.

The Board also reviewed proposals for IT services. Members discussed service levels, cybersecurity considerations, pricing, and the need for additional information before making a final decision.

O'Connor moved to table consideration of the IT services proposal pending additional review and information. Rohlfing seconded. Motion carried.

Finance Director's Report – *Stephanie Hilpipre*

Hilpipre provided updates regarding audit activities, financial reporting, staffing capacity, and operational workload within the finance department. Board members acknowledged the concerns raised and recommended that further discussion would be appropriate through future committee and board discussions.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

Board members shared updates from their communities and organizations. Discussion included transportation infrastructure improvements, labor relations, regional collaboration efforts, and other local government activities.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Rohlfing moved to adjourn the meeting. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boettger called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Boettger, Jim Branstad, Marie Dranttel, Mike Laven, Christian Lilienthal, Patty O'Connor, Steve Rohlfing, Phil Schafer (virtual), Rob Wilkening (virtual)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tom Loveall

OTHERS PRESENT: Jessica Beyer, Stephanie Hilpipre (virtual), Sarah Janovsky, Joel Hanif, Sabri Fair

There was a quorum.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

O'Connor moved to approve the agenda. Laven seconded. Motion carried.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSION FOLLOW-UP & NEXT STEPS

Jessica Beyer provided a recap on the organizational development process and plans for a facilitated follow-up session with consultant Kim Snyder. The Board discussed scheduling options and next steps for continued staff and Board engagement. Staff were directed to identify a future meeting date for staff and board members to hold a session and continue the process. It is also planned to update the full Commission on this work at the October meeting.

5. FINANCE DIRECTOR REPORT & ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS FOLLOW-UP

Chair Boettger introduced the topic as follow-up to the August Board meeting related to the non-standard format and type of information provided in the Finance Director's report.

Jessica Beyer provided an update on staffing capacity, organizational structure, and support needs within the finance and administrative functions. Discussion focused on the challenges of this past year in operating with reduced staffing levels, ongoing financial clean-up and audit work that's been needed, with a key focus being organizational solvency with increasing contract activity, and the need to ensure long-term organizational sustainability.

Extensive efforts were made by to maintain organizational solvency, manage staffing transitions, and support day-to-day operations. The Interim Executive Director discussed potential future organizational structures, including possibilities for further administrative, accounting, finance, and grant-management alignment. Leadership and the Board agreed that any future staffing decisions should be aligned with long-term organizational needs and sustainable funding sources.

The Board also discussed the continued use of external accounting/finance assistance and compared RNDC's staffing structure to other regional development organizations throughout Minnesota. Members expressed support for continuing to evaluate staffing and organizational needs as part of ongoing organizational development discussions.

6. CODE OF CONDUCT BOARD DISCUSSION

Chair Boettger brought forward this topic due to a Board member's recent comments as part of an Arlington newspaper article in June. Boettger explained that as part of the Bylaws process, Code of Conduct policies were also being reviewed and wanted to bring forward the topic to the Board for how matters are addressed.

Jessica Beyer shared that as part of the Bylaws process, it was recommended to look at the Code of Conduct Policy. Currently both the Code of Conduct and Conflict of interest policies are combined and a recent legal recommendation as part of the Bylaws work, suggested that the two policies should be separated. She noted that the policies are being separated into individual documents and the Code of Conduct policy will be an appendix to the Bylaws as recommended by the committee.

The Board discussed expectations for commissioners and directors representing RNDC and the importance of maintaining accurate communication regarding the organization and its work. Discussion also included conversations regarding Sibley County's expressed interest in withdrawing from the Region Nine Development Commission.

Christian Lilienthal provided additional context regarding Sibley County's position and ongoing discussions at the county level. Board members discussed the statutory process for modifying commission boundaries and the importance of engaging county leadership in future conversations. Chair Boettger offered to meet with Sibley County officials to discuss the county's concerns, regional services, and potential next steps. No formal action was taken.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR POSITION PLAN & TIMELINE

The Board reviewed the Commission's succession plan and discussed the process for initiating a search for a permanent Executive Director. Members agreed that the succession plan should guide the process and discussed the formation of a search committee as outlined in the adopted plan.

Discussion focused on committee composition, recruitment options, timelines, and the need to engage the full Commission in establishing the search committee. The Board agreed that staff would prepare communication to commissioners outlining the succession plan, committee expectations, and an opportunity for interested commissioners to serve on the search committee.

The Board agreed that previously obtained executive search proposals and related materials should be updated to ensure the search committee has access to current information for future consideration.

The Board reviewed the status of the Interim Executive Director appointment and discussed extending the appointment until a permanent Executive Director is selected.

Laven moved to extend Jessica Beyer's Interim Executive Director appointment for up to six months or until a permanent Executive Director is hired. O'Connor seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Financial Report

September 9, 2026 - Board of Directors Meeting

CASH BALANCE - July 31, 2026			**$**	**691,503.17**
Cash Receipts	$	94,750.00		
Bank Interest	$	1,955.52		
Total Receipts	**$**	**96,705.52**		
Payroll and Benefits Disbursements	$	(102,854.34)		
Accounts Payable	$	(101,426.97)		
Credit Card Charges	$	(1,330.24)		
Total Disbursements	**$**	**(205,611.55)**		
CASH BALANCE - August 31, 2026			**$**	**582,597.14**

Region Nine Development Commission Accounts		
R9 MAGIC	$	566,638.70
Wells Fargo - Payroll Account	$	15,958.44
TOTAL:	**$**	**582,597.14**

Region Nine Development Commission
August 2026 - Summary of Cash Receipts
FY 2027

Date	Description		Amount
DATE: 8/18/2026			
	Center Point Energy	$	1,100.00
	Center Point Energy	$	400.00
	Initiative Foundation	$	37,500.00
	University of Minnesota	$	40,000.00
DATE: 8/31/2026			
	State of MN - Mankato State University	$	15,750.00
	August 2026 Total Cash Receipts:	**$**	**94,750.00**

Region Nine Development Commission
August 2026 - Summary of Disbursements
FY 2027

Date	Description		Amount
Payroll and Benefits Disbursements			
08/03/2026	Health Insurance	$	(9,197.64)
08/03/2026	PERA	$	(4,973.96)
08/04/2026	Wex Health	$	(495.00)
08/04/2026	Wex Health	$	(484.61)
08/06/2026	Delta Dental	$	(264.88)
08/10/2026	Missionsquare	$	(488.95)
08/11/2026	Wex Health	$	(213.61)
08/11/2026	iSolved Fee	$	(136.44)
08/13/2026	Payroll	$	(34,142.26)
08/17/2026	PERA	$	(4,902.93)
08/18/2026	Wex Health	$	(495.00)
08/18/2026	Wex Health	$	(484.61)
08/24/2026	Missionsquare	$	(488.95)
08/25/2026	Wex Health	$	(82.50)
08/26/2026	Wex Health	$	(3,138.37)
08/27/2026	Payroll	$	(37,880.73)
08/28/2026	PERA	$	(4,983.90)
	Total:	**$**	**(102,854.34)**
Accounts Payable			
8/3/2026	Anthony McGowan	$	(170.00)
8/3/2026	Mary Milbrath	$	(177.55)
8/4/2026	Robert Goblirsch	$	(115.25)
8/6/2026	Tom Polich	$	(261.39)
8/11/2026	Maria Alejandra Bejarano Cubillos	$	(50.16)
8/12/2026	Jazmine Flores	$	(28.12)
8/12/2026	Sarah Janovsky	$	(33.35)
8/12/2026	Jazmine Flores	$	(119.93)
8/14/2026	Christian Lilienthal	$	(103.65)
8/14/2026	Nelvan Arnoldo Barrios Coronado	$	(250.00)
8/14/2026	Reichel Insulation, LLC	$	(8,467.50)
8/14/2026	Reichel Insulation, LLC	$	(10,404.10)
8/14/2026	Reichel Insulation, LLC	$	(10,718.30)
8/17/2026	St. James Electric	$	(14,100.00)
8/17/2026	Bank Fees	$	(174.63)
8/18/2026	Steve Rohlfing	$	(33.35)
8/24/2026	Everado Vargas	$	(1,062.50)
8/24/2026	Julieta Ochoa Orozco	$	(1,317.50)
8/25/2026	Lime alley Advertisting, Inc.	$	(35.00)
8/25/2026	South Central Service Coop	$	(75.00)
8/25/2026	Tom Polich	$	(224.20)
8/25/2026	Pemberton Law	$	(1,168.00)
8/26/2026	Scott Schlueter	$	(86.25)
8/26/2026	Security Storage Systems	$	(300.00)
8/26/2026	Minnesota Unemployment Insurance Fund	$	(9,480.00)
8/27/2026	Patty O'Connor	$	(50.00)
8/27/2026	Xcel Energy	$	(69.18)
8/27/2026	Christian Lilienthal	$	(95.60)
8/27/2026	Jim Branstad	$	(104.72)
8/27/2026	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	$	(360.00)
8/27/2026	Vanderberg Cleaning Services LLC	$	(360.00)
8/27/2026	SFM	$	(663.00)
8/27/2026	Reichel Insulation, LLC	$	(5,686.50)
8/27/2026	Reichel Insulation, LLC	$	(6,033.00)
8/27/2026	Reichel Insulation, LLC	$	(9,925.60)
8/28/2026	TeamKeeper	$	(90.60)
8/28/2026	TeamKeeper	$	(90.60)
8/28/2026	Metro Sales Inc.	$	(391.03)
8/28/2026	Metro Sales Inc.	$	(443.33)
8/28/2026	Metro Sales Inc.	$	(563.04)
8/28/2026	Thriveon	$	(5,737.95)
8/28/2026	Thriveon	$	(5,757.09)
8/31/2026	St. James Electric	$	(1,925.00)
8/31/2026	St. James Electric	$	(4,125.00)
	Total:	**$**	**(101,426.97)**
Credit Card Charges			
7/16/2026	Alejandra - Arby's	$	(13.04)
6/24/2026	Jessica - The UPS Store	$	(61.56)
7/17/2026	Jessica - Kwik Trip	$	(39.04)
6/25/2026	Sabri - Hy-Vee F&F	$	(34.05)
7/14/2026	Sabri - Comfrey C Store	$	(32.90)
6/29/2026	Jazmine - Secretary of State	$	(20.00)
6/29/2026	Jazmine - Secretary of State	$	(20.00)
6/30/2026	Jazmine - Coffee Hag	$	(7.94)
7/1/2026	Jazmine - Mavericks Sports	$	(16.66)
7/7/2026	Nate - Canva	$	(141.32)
7/7/2026	Nate - GOTPRINT.COM	$	(390.58)
7/21/2026	Nate - Canva	$	(87.38)
7/11/2026	Stephanie - Spectrum	$	(160.00)
7/9/2026	Sarah - Family Dollar	$	(14.05)
7/14/2026	Sarah - Amazon	$	(84.27)
7/15/2026	Sarah - Sams Club	$	(120.00)
7/17/2026	Sarah - USPS	$	(44.59)
6/30/2026	Tom - Kwik Trip	$	(42.86)
	Total:	**$**	**(1,330.24)**

Revolving Loan Fund - Cash Balance Report
September 9, 2026 - Board of Directors Meeting

CASH BALANCE - July 31, 2026			**$**	**1,843,958.53**
Legacy RLF Loan Payments	$	17,991.13		
Legacy RLF Bank Interest	$	4,892.22		
Legacy RLF Loan Closing Fees	$	-		
CARES RLF Loan Payments	$	11,486.50		
CARES RLF Bank Interest	$	916.32		
CARES RLF Loan Closing Fees	$	-		
Total Receipts	**$**	**35,286.17**		
New Loans	$	-		
Returned ACH Payment	$	-		
Service Charges	$	(36.12)		
Total Disbursements	**$**	**(36.12)**		
CASH BALANCE - August 31, 2026			**$**	**1,879,208.58**

Revolving Loan Fund Accounts		
Legacy RLF - MAGIC	$	1,581,282.24
CARES RLF - MAGIC	$	297,926.34
TOTAL:	**$**	**1,879,208.58**

RNDC Funding Summary

Department/Program	Contract Source	Money Source	R9 Lead	Full Award	Pass - through	$ for R9 Operation Expenses FY27	FY28	FY29	FY27 Match	Start	End
General Fund											
Levy	Nine Counties	Levy	Jessica			$740,942	$763,170	$786,065			
Bank Interest		Interest	Stephanie			$20,000	$20,000				
Revolving Loan Fund											
Legacy Revolving Loan Fund	De-Federalized	Interest	Jazmine			$121,000	$125,000	$128,750			
CARES Revolving Loan Fund	Economic Development Administration	Interest - Federal	Jazmine			$34,000	$35,000	$36,000			
Loan Closing Fees	RLF Clients		Jazmine			$6,000	$6,000	$6,000			
Economic Development											
EDA Planning Grant	Economic Development Administration	Federal Funds	Alejandra	$210,000		$52,500			$70,000	4/1/2024	3/31/2027
UofM - Center for Transportation Studies (TPEC)	University of Minnesota	State Funds	Kristian	$20,000		$20,000					
SBDC Contract Work	Small Business Development Center (SBDC)	Local Contract	Nate	$4,062		$4,062				7/21/2026	12/31/2026
Blandin - FY27/FY28	Blandin Foundation	Private Foundation	Jessica	$200,000		$100,000	$100,000			7/1/2026	6/30/2028
CEDS Community Engagement	University of Minnesota/Southwest RSDP	State Funds	Alejandra	$7,000		$7,000				7/1/2026	5/31/2027
Transportation											
Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)	Federal Highway Administration	Federal Funds	Mark	$340,000		$133,733	$133,733		$33,433		6/30/2028
MnDOT Planning Grant	MnDOT	State Funds	Joel	$150,000		$75,000			$13,235	7/1/2025	6/30/2027
Shooting Star Scenic Byway	MnDOT District 6	State Funds	Joel	$74,305		$37,113				12/23/2025	6/30/2027
Apple Blossom Scenic Byway	MnDOT District 6	State Funds	Joel	$74,445		$37,253				12/23/2025	6/30/2027
Historic Bluff Scenic Byway	ECRDC - subcontract of MnDOT funds	Out of Region Contract	Joel	$15,000		$15,000				3/19/2026	12/31/2026
Rural EMS - Empowering Small Communities	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Joel	$8,000		$8,000					Until Exhausted
Tri-County Solid Waste Management Plan	Le Sueur, Nicollet & Sibley Counties	Local Contract	Joel	$5,000		$5,000					12/31/2026
Environment & Sustainability											
McKnight FY27-FY28 Contract	McKnight Foundation	Private Foundation	Jessica	$800,000	$700,000	$50,000	$50,000			7/1/2026	6/30/2028
Resource Rural - Windward Fund, St. James	Resource Rural	Private Foundation	Sabri	$150,000	$100,000	$50,000				1/1/2025	12/31/2026
Resource Rural - Windward Fund, St. James	Resource Rural	Private Foundation	Sabri	$100,000	$50,000	$50,000				8/1/2026	7/31/2027
Thriving Communities, St. James	Minneapolis Foundation - Federal Subgrantee	Federal Funds	Sabri	$350,000	$302,375	$20,000				4/31/2025	12/31/2027
Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)	MN Department of Commerce	State Funds	Sabri	$100,000	$60,660	$26,841				7/1/2024	11/30/2026
Local Foods Month	Minnesota State University	State Funds	Sabri	$27,500		$15,750				4/1/2025	10/31/2026
MPCA - R9 Community Resilience Plan	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$85,000		$85,000			$8,500	4/15/2026	6/30/2027
MPCA - Waseca Climate Resilience Hub	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$50,000		$50,000			$2,500	6/26/2026	6/30/2027
Henderson Stormwater/Wastewater Plan	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$135,000		$12,000				3/31/2026	6/30/2027
BRIDGE the Gap - CERTs Seed Grant	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Sam	$5,000		$2,500				1/28/2026	1/12/2027
Bright Ideas for Comfrey - CERTs Seed Grant	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Sam	$10,000		$2,700					1/12/2027
Local Climate Action-Children's Museum Southern MN	Minnesota Pollution Control Agency	State Funds	Sam	$47,505		$3,150				7/24/2025	10/31/2026
Initiative Foundation - MCAP Matching Funds	Initiative Foundation / McKnight	Private Foundation	Jessica	$75,000		$37,500				10/1/2024	9/30/2026
Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP)	University of Minnesota Extension	State Funds	Jessica	$63,492		$59,097				9/23/2024	8/31/2026
Community Energy Collaborative	MN Department of Commerce	State Funds	Sabri	$5,000		$5,000				1/15/2026	12/31/2026
MDA Commercial Kitchen	MN Department of Agriculture	State Funds	Sabri	$24,750	$7,250	$17,500				8/24/2026	12/31/2026
Food Recovery											
Regional Food Rescue Coordination: FY27-FY29	Mankato Area Foundation	Private Foundation	Sabri	$300,000		$100,000	$100,000				Until Exhausted
Taylor Family Farms - Food Recovery	Taylor Family Farms	Private Foundation	Sabri	$20,000		$20,000					Until Exhausted
Mankato Clinic Foundation	Mankato Clinic Foundation	Private Foundation	Sabri	$10,000		$10,000					Until Exhausted
Region Nine Area, Inc.	**Region Nine Area, Inc.**			**Hosting**							
Waseca Community Investment Group	Waseca Community Investment Group	Fiscal Host	Sabri	$25,000							10/31/2026
Mahkato Okiwataya	Mahkato Okiwataya	Fiscal Host	Stephanie							2/28/2024	
South Central Minnesota Food Recovery	South Central Minnesota Food Recovery	Fiscal Host	Stephanie							6/1/2025	
Food Recovery by Wooden Spoon	Food Recovery by Wooden Spoon	Fiscal Host	Stephanie							11/13/2024	
Aging Transit	Aging Transit	Fiscal Host	Stephanie	$28,613							
Community Projects - Sherburn	Community Projects-Sherburn	Fiscal Host	Stephanie	$1,668							
SURGE Youth Leadership Program	SURGE Leadership Program	Fiscal Host	Stephanie	$7,482							
					Totals:	$2,033,641	$1,332,903	$956,815	$127,668		
						FY27	**FY28**	**FY29**	**FY27 Match**		
						$220,969	**Increase from FY27 Budget**				

FY27 Grants in Progress

RNDC Grants Outstanding

Name of Grant /Organization	Value of Request	Submitted	Expected Response Date
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Grant (MPCA) for Food Rescue	$884,000	Yes	By early August
Rural Climate Partnership (RCP)	$100,000	No	Mid September
HFFI Food Fund (Mankato Farmers' Market)	$150,000	No	January 2027
MDA Specialty Crop	$125,000	Yes	Pending USDA Approval

Regional Assistance Grants Outstanding

Name of Grant /Organization	Value of Request	Submitted	Expected Response Date
Congressional Directed Spending (CDS)/Divine Providence Community Center	$1.9M	Yes	Divine Providence passed 1st wave
EPA Assessment Grant / Le Sueur	$350,000	Yes	unknown
Enpowering Small Communities/South Bend Township	$50,000	Yes	Awarded - 7/22/2026
MPCA Market Development Grant/GreenTech Recycling	$250,000	Yes	Awarded - August 2026

Memo

To: RNDC Board of Directors

From: Jessica Beyer, Interim Executive Director

Date: September 3, 2026

Re: IT Service Proposals Follow-up

An initial discussion and presentation of potential considerations for IT Service providers took place at the August 12, 2026 Board of Directors Meeting.

Monthly IT service fees with RNDC's current service provider increased significantly earlier this year and I have been working through the process of researching options and obtaining alternative service proposals to meet the organization's IT needs.

Following discussion and recommendations at the last Board Meeting, further information has been obtained and will be presented and discussed on September 9 related to additional service option information, security recommendations, references of potential vendors, and various considerations as the organization navigates this process and makes a determination on IT services moving forward.

3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, MN 56001
507.387.5643

Memo

To: RNDC Board of Directors

From: Jessica Beyer, Interim Executive Director

Date: September 3, 2026

Re: Bylaws Update

Draft Bylaws were presented at the June Commission Meeting after several months of work conducted by the Ad-hoc Bylaws Committee.

At the June Commission Meeting, a few suggestions were made for consideration and the Commission was invited to further review the draft document and provide feedback ahead of the October Commission Meeting where it is planned for the revised bylaws document to be considered for adoption.

Feedback from the Commission Meeting has been incorporated into the attached Bylaws document (areas highlighted in yellow).

The next step is for the Board to review the Bylaws document, discuss, and make a recommendation for the document to go on for final approval at the Commission Meeting in October.

REGION NINE
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Your regional partner for progress.
3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, MN 56001
507.387.5643

REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (RNDC) BYLAWS

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PREAMBLE

The Bylaws herein have been adopted by the Commission, effective in 1972, for the purpose of self-regulation and of the regulation of those committees, offices and officers established by and responsible to the Commission. The term "Commission" used heretofore and hereinafter is construed to mean the Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC), a nonmetropolitan, multi-county planning agency. It is the express intent of the Commission and the purpose of these Bylaws to advance the work of the Commission as provided for by statute and to carry on the business of urban and rural planning and development in all its ramifications and branches and to render professional and technical services in conjunction therewith.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Region Nine Development Commission to "To promote the development of the region through intergovernmental cooperation, community and human development, long-range planning, and technical assistance."

Region Nine Development Commission works to bridge relationships, empower communities, and drive progress with assisting the private, public, and non-profit sectors within the regional jurisdictional boundaries of Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, Watonwan counties. Region Nine is comprised of 9 counties, 72 cities, 147 townships, and 33 school districts.

ARTICLE I - LEGAL BASIS, NAME, LOCATION, AND JURISDICTION

Section 1 - Legal Basis

Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) is a Regional Development Commission established under and pursuant to the Regional Development Act of 1969 as amended (Minnesota Statutes Section 462.381 and following).

~~The full Regional Development Act statutes section is provided in Appendix B of this Bylaws document.~~

Section 2 - Name

The Commission shall be known as the Region Nine Development Commission.

Section 3 - Location

The Commission shall maintain its principal office in the city of Mankato, Blue Earth County, Minnesota, and may establish such other locations, as it may deem appropriate.

Section 4 - Jurisdiction

The development region within which this Commission shall function shall include an area within the boundaries of the following counties in the state of Minnesota: Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan. The City of New Prague (part of Scott County) is included within the Region Nine service area.

ARTICLE II - POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

Section 1 - Powers and Duties

The Commission shall possess, exercise and discharge the powers and duties established by the Regional Development Act as amended, Minnesota Statutes Section 462.381 and following.

The Regional Development Act provides for a variety of powers and duties for which the Commission may undertake. The Act provides for the following types of activities, but is not limited to the examples given:

A: Regional programs and staff services. The Commission is authorized to receive public and private funds for purposes including, but not limited to program administration, multicounty planning, coordination, and development. The Commission may provide basic administrative, research, and planning services for all regional planning and development bodies. The Commission may contract to obtain or perform services with federal and state agencies, for-profit or nonprofit entities, subdistricts organized as the result of federal or state programs, councils of governments organized under Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.59, or any other law, and with local governments.

B: Planning and research. The Commission may prepare and submit for adoption, after appropriate study and such public hearings as may be necessary, comprehensive plans for local units of government, individually or collectively, within the region. Where studies have not been otherwise authorized by law, the Commission may study the feasibility of programs including, but not limited to, water, land use, economic development, housing, demographics, cultural issues, governmental issues, human services, natural resources, communication, technology, transportation, and other subjects of concern to the citizens of the region. The Commission may institute demonstration projects in connection therewith and may enter into contracts or accept gifts or grants for such purposes as otherwise authorized in Minnesota Statutes, Sections 462.381 to 462.398.

C: Review of local plans. The Commission may review and provide comments and recommendations on local plans or development proposals which in the judgment of the Commission have a substantial effect on regional development. Local units of government may request that the Commission review, comment, and provide advisory recommendations on local plans or development proposals.

D: Data and information. The Commission may be designated as a regional data center providing data collection, storage, analysis, and dissemination to be used by governmental and private users as well as the Commission itself. The Commission may accept gifts or grants to provide this service.

E: Service to local government. The Commission may contract with local units of government to provide them with services and technical assistance in the conduct of local planning and development activities.

Section 2 - Property Ownership

The Regional Development Act allows the Commission to buy, lease, acquire, own, hold, improve, and use real or personal property or an interest in property, wherever located in the state for purposes of housing the administrative office of the regional commission.

Section 3 - Property Disposition

The Commission, through the Regional Development Act, may sell, convey, mortgage, create a security interest in, lease, exchange, transfer, or dispose of all or part of its real personal property or an interest in property, wherever located in the state.

Section 4 - Exercise of Powers

The powers and duties of the Commission shall be performed and carried out by the Commission and/or by its directors, officers or employees as authorized by the Regional Development Act and by these bylaws.

ARTICLE III - COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION

Section 1 - Membership

The Region Nine Development Commission shall consist of members, elected and appointed, as specified in the Regional Development Act, Minnesota Statutes Section 462.388, subdivision 1.

A commission shall consist of the following members:

(1) One member from each county board of every county in the development region

(2) One additional county board member from each county of over 100,000 populations

(3) The town clerk, town treasurer, or one member of a town board of supervisors from each county containing organized towns

(4) One additional member selected by the county board of any county containing no townships

(5) One mayor or council member from a municipality of under 10,000 populations from each county, selected by the mayors of all such municipalities in the county

(6) One mayor or council member from each municipality of over 10,000 in each county

(7) Two school board members elected by a majority of the chairs of school boards in the development region

(8) One member from each council of governments

(9) One member appointed by each native American tribal council located in each region

(10) Citizens representing public interests within the region including members of minority groups to be selected after adoption of the bylaws of the commission.

Section 2 - Commissioners

The word commissioner as used in these bylaws means an elected or appointed member to the Regional Development Commission.

Section 3 - Selection of Membership

Members shall be selected as specified in the Regional Development Act, Minnesota Statutes Section 462.388.

Members representing public interests outlined in section five below shall be appointed by the Commission and may serve for a term of two years. The Budget and Personnel Committee (serving as the nominating committee) shall review applications for membership, which shall be made available to the public, and make recommendations to the Commission.

Commissioners representing a public interest may be appointed to succeed themselves.

Compliance shall be reviewed every two years.

Section 4 - Term of Office

The terms of office for commissioners who are elected officials shall be concurrent with the term of their elected office. Upon expiration of the term of the commissioner in elected office, a successor shall be selected in the manner prescribed by the Regional Development Act or these bylaws. A commissioner, if reelected to their elected office, may be selected to succeed themselves on the Commission. The secretary of the Commission shall be responsible for notifying the various membership classifications when the term of their representative has expired.

All commissioners shall serve until their successors are selected and qualified.

Section 5 - Public Interest Representatives

Citizens representing public interests (non-elected positions) within the region including members of minority groups may serve as members of the Commission. Each such member must be a person residing in the development region. It is recognized that public interests within the region will change from time to time. To permit proper representation of such interests, the Commission shall periodically review representations for addition or deletion (as the case may be). In no event, however, shall the representation of minority groups be eliminated, as required by Minnesota Statutes 462.388. The following regional public interests shall be eligible for representation:

- Minority Populations
- Health & Human Welfare
- High School Age Youth
- College Age Youth

Members representing the public interests above mentioned shall be appointed by the Commission and may serve for a term of two years. The Nominating Committee shall review applications for membership, which shall be made available to the public, and make recommendations to the Commission.

Commissioners representing a public interest may be appointed to succeed themselves.

Section 6 - Ex-officio Member Representatives

The immediate past chair of the Commission, even if no longer a commission member, shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Commission without voting rights for one year. Senators and representatives who are members of the State Legislature and whose districts include any part of the region served by the Region Nine Development Commission shall also serve as ex officio members of the Commission without voting rights.

Section 7 - Vacancy

A vacancy in the office of commissioner shall occur upon the death or resignation of a member, if a member ceases to have required qualifications for membership as provided herein, or upon receipt of a formal resolution from any governmental unit indicating that a commissioner no longer is authorized to represent such governmental unit. Vacancies in public interest positions shall be filled in the manner prescribed in the Regional Development Act and Paragraph 4, Article III of these by-laws. Vacancies in elected positions shall be filled in the manner prescribed in the Regional Development Act and by the government unit represented by said position.

Section 8 - Commissioner Absences

When a Commission Member or Board of Directors Member has missed two consecutive meetings, the Executive Director shall notify the member, reminding them of their obligation to participate in Commission Meetings.

After three (3) consecutive unexcused meeting absences, the Secretary shall notify the member, and any represented governmental unit regarding the absences. Governmental units with selection authority by statute will have discretion to select a representative of their choice to replace the representative due to repeated unexcused absences. Other entities and special interest members with three (3) or more unexcused absences at Commission meetings will be removed from their seats and recruitment will begin for replacement members.

Section 9 - Removal

A commissioner may be removed at any time as a result of such commissioner's inability or refusal to perform the duties of the office or for other good cause by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the remaining commissioners provided that the individual to be removed is given (i) not less than 15 days' prior written notice of the proposed removal, and the reasons for it and (ii) an opportunity to be heard by the ~~Commissioner~~ Commission,- orally or in writing, at the meeting of the Commission at which such removal is to be considered. This allows the Commission to address possible misconduct, criminal activity, or violations of commissioner responsibilities.

ARTICLE IV - COMMISSION MEETINGS

Section 1 - Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Commission shall be held in June of each year at the principal office of the Commission or at such other location as the Commission shall determine and shall be specified in the notice of meeting hereinafter mentioned.

The secretary of the Commission shall send electronically written notice of the time and place of the annual meeting of the Commission to each member no later than ten (10) days prior to the date thereof.

Concurrently, the secretary shall send electronically to each member a tentative agenda of business, which is anticipated will be covered at the annual meeting. In no way, however, shall the business transacted at the annual meeting be limited by the tentative agenda. Members may transact at the annual meeting any business which may properly be brought before the Commission; provided, however, that no business with respect to which special notice is required shall be transacted unless such notice shall have been given.

Section 2 - Regular Meetings

The Commission shall meet on the second Wednesday of October, January and April at such location as may be established by the Commission and identified in the notice of meeting. Notice of the time and place of a regular meeting shall be given by the secretary of the Commission at least ten (10) days prior to the date thereof. The secretary of the Commission shall mail and/or send electronically to the members a tentative agenda of business to be transacted at the meeting. Transaction of business at the meeting, however, need not be limited to those items listed on the agenda.

Section 3 - Special Meetings

A special meeting of the Commission may be called for any purpose or purposes at any time by the chair, the board of directors, or any ten (10) members of the Commission. Persons entitled to call a special meeting shall make a written or electronic request to the chair of the Commission or to the secretary. It shall be the duty of the secretary forthwith to cause notice to be given to all members of a meeting to be held at such time and place as the officer may fix. Such notice shall state the purpose or purposes of the meeting and shall fix the date of such meeting not less than five (5) working days after the receipt of such request by the chairman or secretary. No business may be transacted at a special meeting except as has been described in the notice.

Section 4 - Notice of Meeting

Notices of meeting (annual, regular and special) as provided herein shall be sent electronically to each member at their last known mailing address as listed in the last available Commission records.

Section 5 - Recessed or Adjourned Meetings

Any meeting of the members may be adjourned from time to time upon a vote of a majority of the members present at the meeting. No other notice of adjourned meeting shall be required other than by announcement at the meeting at which such adjournment is taken.

Section 6 - Quorum

Presence at any meeting in person of fifty-one percent (51%) of the total voting membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. If a quorum is not present, those present shall have the power to adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum shall be present without giving further notice of the adjourned meeting. If a duly called meeting or adjourned meeting has begun with a quorum, the members may continue to transact business until adjournment notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to leave less than a quorum.

Section 7 - Voting Rights

Every member of record at the date of a meeting, according to the records of the secretary, shall be entitled at such meeting to one (1) vote. Voting may be by voice or by ballot. There shall be no voting by proxy nor shall any commissioner designate an alternative to vote in their place. When any Commission member is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings, the Secretary shall notify the governmental units represented of that commissioner's absence.

Section 8 - Conflict of Interest & Code of Conduct

Region Nine Development has both Conflict of Interest and Code of Conduct documents that should annually be signed by Commission and staff members. The RNDC Conflict of Interest and RNDC Code of Conduct documents are found in ~~Appendix C~~ Appendixes A and B. It is expected that all Commission and staff members act in RNDC's best interests and represent RNDC fairly, impartially, and without bias.

Section 9 - Minutes

The minutes of each meeting shall be prepared and distributed to the Commission members after each meeting. Minutes and any corrections thereof, duly adopted, shall be signed by the presiding officer. The minutes of the meeting shall not be deemed to be correct until adopted at an annual, regular or special meeting of the Commission.

Section 10 - Committees

The Commission may establish subcommittees as it may deem necessary, specifying by resolution their purpose, duties, size, and composition. The Commission may delegate such authority to the Chair. However, the Chair's action in this regard must be presented to the Commission for their review. The Commission has the ability to overturn an appointment by motion and majority vote. As far as it is practical, no Commissioner shall be asked to serve on more than three (3) committees at any one time, and that all Commissioners have the opportunity to serve on at least one (1) committee, at their discretion and once acclimated to their Commissioner role. Adhoc committees do not count toward the number of committees on which a Commissioner serves. Committee Chairs shall call meetings of their committees as needed, with staff assistance, as appropriate, and report recommendations and actions to the Commission.

Members of a committee shall hold such office for a term of one (1) year from their appointment or until their successors are appointed, whichever occurs first. Meetings of a committee may be called, from time to time, upon the request of the Chair, the President, the chair of the committee or any two (2) committee members. Notice

requirement shall be the same as for special meetings of the Commission, except that notice may be given orally or in writing. Committees shall have such authority as delegated by the Board; no committee shall have authority to amend the bylaws or adopt the budget.
RNDC Committees:

- Board of Directors (asked to be added to committees)
- Budget and Personnel Committee (Finance/Governance Discussed)
- Legislative and Communications Committee
- Community and Economic Development Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Revolving Loan Fund Committee

Section 11 - Ad-hoc Committees

The Commission may establish an Ad-hoc Committee through a motion that is designed to recommend action on a specific task or purpose that does not fit into the role of one (1) of the standing committees. Ad-hoc Committees are designed to end when the task or purpose has been completed. As far as practical, Ad-hoc Committees should finish their recommendations within one (1) year of their designation.

Section 12 – Remote Communications for Meetings

To the extent determined by the Commission, any meeting of the Commission or a committee may be held by one or more means of remote communication, if (i) all members are able to hear and see each other, as well as any discussion and testimony presented at any location where at least one member is present; (ii) all votes are conducted by roll call so each member's vote can be identified and recorded; and (iii) meeting minutes include the names of members attending via interactive television technology and state the reason for their remote participation; and, in the case of a public meeting, if also (iv) at least one member is physically present at the regular meeting location, and notice of that location is provided and (v) all members of the public at the regular meeting location are able to hear and see all discussion, testimony, and votes.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1 - Number of Officers

The officers of the Commission shall be a chair, a vice chair, a secretary and a treasurer. The Commission may establish additional offices from time to time. The first chair shall be selected by the Commission from Commission membership. Nominations for chair will be accepted from any member of the Commission.

Section 2 - Term of Officers

Succeeding chairs shall serve for a term of two years from the date of their appointment and until a successor is elected and qualified. The chair's term shall be restricted to two consecutive terms. No individual may serve more than (4) years as chair.

The officers shall be elected as hereinafter provided and shall serve for a term of one (1) year and until their successors are elected and qualified, except for the chair of the Commission, whose term shall be for two (2) years.

No two (2) offices may be held by the same person at the same time.

Section 3 - Election of Officers

Nominating Committee: The Budget and Personnel Committee will act as the nominating committee. The chair of the nominating committee will be a member from the Budget and Personnel Committee. A potential candidate shall abstain from the nominating process. The nominating committee must submit, twenty days prior to the election, the name or names of one or more commissioners who intend to stand for election for chair.

The vice chair, secretary and treasurer of the Commission shall each be a resident of the region and shall be elected by the board of directors from their membership at the first board of directors meeting after the annual meeting of the Commission and for a term of one (1) year.

Section 4 - Board of Directors

The RNDC bylaws use a Board of Directors structure in place of an Executive Committee.

The Board of Directors of the Commission shall consist of one chair, one commissioner from each county, and one commissioner, who must be an elected official, from each city with a population more than 25,000. Each county's representative on the board shall be nominated by a caucus of that county's representatives, subject to formal election by the Commission. For purposes of caucusing to select the other member of his/her county to serve on the Board of Directors, the representative from the city over 25,000 population, having a permanent seat on the board, shall not participate in the caucus. No more than two public interest or appointed commissioners shall serve on the Board of Directors at the same time.

Regular meetings of the Board of Directors shall meet at least six times during the eight months when the Commission does not meet (months of February, March, May, June, August, September, November, December). Notice of the board of directors' meeting shall be made to all members of the Commission at least ten (10) days prior to the date of the meeting.

Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called for any purpose or purposes at any time by the chair of the Commission or by three (3) directors. Notice of a special meeting shall be given to all Commissioners.

A quorum at all meetings of the Board of Directors shall consist of a majority of the whole board; but less than a quorum may adjourn any meeting, which may be held on a subsequent date without further notice, provided a quorum be present at such deferred meeting. If a quorum is present at the beginning of a meeting, such meeting may continue to transact business until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of sufficient members to leave less than a quorum. The chair may vote only in the case of a tie.

To the extent determined by the Commission, a meeting of the Board of Directors may be held in the same manner as provided in Article IV, Section 12 above.

Section 5 - Duties of the Executive Committee / Board of Directors

The business and affairs of the Commission shall be managed by a board of directors whose actions and policies are subject to the approval of the Commission. The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors may be modified from time to time by resolution of the Commission.
The duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors may be modified from time to time by resolution of the Commission.

Section 6 - Duties of the Chair

The chair shall be responsible for carrying out the policy decisions of the Commission and seeing that all resolutions of the Commission are carried into effect. The chair shall execute all contracts or instruments of the Commission and shall have the powers and duties vested in them under and pursuant to the Regional Development Act of 1969 and any amendments thereto.

The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Commission and at meetings of the Board of Directors.

Section 7 - Duties of the Vice Chair

The vice chair of the Commission shall assist the chair in carrying out their duties and responsibilities and shall perform such additional duties as may be established by the Commission from time to time. In the absence of the chair at any meeting of the Commission or of its Board of Directors, the vice chair shall preside. If both the chair and vice chair are not in attendance at a regular or special meeting, a temporary chair shall be chosen from among those commissioners present at the meeting.

Section 8 - Duties of the Secretary

The secretary shall issue notices of all meetings (except those special meetings which may be called at the request of other officers pursuant to these by-laws). The secretary shall keep minutes of all meetings and maintain a record for that purpose. The secretary shall have custody of and provide for the safekeeping of all documents of the Commission except that clerical and safekeeping obligations may be delegated to the executive director of the Commission or to their staff.

Section 9 - Duties of the Treasurer

The treasurer shall have responsibility for the funds of the Commission and shall keep a full and accurate record of accounts, receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the Commission and shall deposit all funds in the name and to the account of the Commission in such depositories as may be designated by the Commission. The treasurer shall disburse the funds of the Commission as ordered by the Commission and shall render to the Commission or the board of directors an account of transactions and of the financial condition of the Commission as required from time to time by the Commission or the Board of Directors.

The Commission may adopt a resolution authorizing the payment of routine reoccurring expenditures. So long as such an authorizing resolution shall be in effect the treasurer and chair shall have the authority to disburse the funds of the Commission for such purposes. Payments made pursuant to such resolution shall, however, be reported at the next meeting of the Commission or board of directors. In no event shall any officer of the Commission authorize or obligate the Commission to make any payment except from sufficient unencumbered appropriated funds existing at that time to the credit of the Commission. A facsimile signature of an appropriate officer shall be permitted on checks drawn against Commission funds so long as such checks are executed personally by an authorized Commission official.

Section 10 - Vacancies

In the event that any office shall become vacant, the Board of Directors shall appoint a successor from among their membership to serve out the existing term of such office. If a vacancy occurs in the office of chair, a new chair shall be selected at the next meeting of the full Commission according to procedures established in these bylaws. Such a chair shall serve until the succeeding meeting.

Section 11 - Removal

Any officer or the At-Large Executive Committee member may be removed at any time, with or without cause, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Commission provided that the individual to be removed is given (i) not less than 15 days' prior written notice of the proposed removal, and the reasons for it, which may include, but are not limited to, such individual's incapacity, inability to attend meetings, or inability to perform the duties of that office, and (ii) an opportunity to be heard by the ~~Commissioner~~ Commission,- orally or in writing, at the meeting of the Commission at which such removal is to be considered. This allows the Commission to address possible misconduct, criminal activity, or violations of commissioner responsibilities.

Section 12 - Bonding of Officers

All officers and employees of the Commission who handle funds of the Commission or who are custodians of property shall be bonded in an amount to be determined by the Commission. The cost of such bond or bonds shall be paid from the funds of the Commission.

ARTICLE VI - ADMINISTRATION

Section 1 - Executive Director

The Commission may employ an executive director. The administration of the work to be carried on by the Commission shall be the responsibility of an executive director who is to serve as the chief administrative officer of the Commission.

Section 2 - Qualifications and Responsibilities

The executive director is to be appointed by the Commission from among the citizens of the nation at large and shall be selected on the basis of their training and experience in the field of government affairs. The executive director shall be responsible for all planning, coordination, reporting and other work required of the Commission. In addition, they shall be responsible for the administrative and personnel functions of the Commission. They shall make recommendations as to staff requirements, prepare and submit budgets, prepare reports and publications of the Commission, direct the work of the staff and work with such consultants as may be engaged by the Commission from time to time. The executive director may testify before public bodies or committees (with the consent of the chair within policy areas approved by the board of directors or by the Commission) and may consult and confer with appropriate public officials on behalf of the Commission in connection with its program or the achievement of its goals and purposes.

Section 3 - Additional Duties

Any duty of the secretary or treasurer may be performed by the executive director or under their supervision pursuant to resolution of the Commission. Further, the Commission may grant general or specific authority to the executive director to execute instruments for and on behalf of the Commission.

Section 4 - Staff

The executive director shall, from time to time, make recommendations as to the size and composition of the staff employed by the Commission. Such recommendations shall be made to the Board of Directors, which shall, with the concurrence of the Commission, establish personnel policies as may be required.

Section 5 - Merit System

Employees of the Commission may be under a merit system adopted by the Commission in consultation with the state director of Civil Service as stated by Minnesota Law.

Section 6 - Technical Assistance

Basic administrative research and planning services for all regional planning and development bodies may be provided by the Commission. The Commission may contract to obtain or perform services with state agencies, nonprofit regional groups, subdistricts organized as the result of federal programs, councils of government organized under Minnesota Statutes, Section 471.59, or any other law, and with local governments.

Section 7 - Committees

The Board of Directors may establish such committees, as it deems necessary to carry out its duties and responsibilities and may from time to time recommend the establishment of additional committees to the Commission.

Members of a committee shall hold such office for a term of one (1) year from their appointment or until their successors are appointed, whichever occurs first. Meetings of a committee may be called, from time to time, upon the request of the Chair, the President, the chair of the committee or any two (2) committee members. Notice requirement shall be the same as for special meetings of the Board of Directors, except that notice may be given orally or in writing. Committees shall have such authority as delegated by the Board; no committee shall have authority to amend the bylaws or adopt the budget.

RNDC Committees:

- Board of Directors
- Budget and Personnel Committee
- Legislative and Communications Committee
- Community and Economic Development Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Revolving Loan Fund Committee

Section 8 - Service of Employees

The Executive Director shall serve at the pleasure of the Commission and may be terminated in accordance with RNDC Personnel Policy provisions and applicable laws. All other employees fall under the RNDC organizational structure with oversight and authority from the Executive Director following provisions of the RNDC Personnel Policy and applicable laws.

Section 9 - Per Diem and Expenses

No salary shall be paid to commissioners for their services. However, a commissioner may receive a per diem and may receive reasonable expenses for each regular and special meeting attended. The chair of the Commission shall receive a per diem and reasonable expenses when working on behalf of the Region Nine Development Commission and so reports on a request for disbursement from the Commission. The payment of expenses shall be made according to a schedule established by resolution of the Commission.

ARTICLE VII - FINANCE

Section 1 - Program Year

The fiscal year of the Commission shall be from July 1 to June 30.

Section 2 - Budget

There shall be a standing Committee of Budget and Personnel, which shall annually recommend to the Commission a proposed budget. Such proposed budget shall be submitted by mail to each member of the Commission no later than July 1 of each year. The proposed budget shall be considered by the Commission at the annual meeting in July of each year.

Section 3 - Hearings

The Commission shall conduct such hearings regarding the proposed budget as are specified in the Regional Development Act.

Section 4 - Disbursement of Funds

Disbursement of funds of the Commission shall be made in accordance with Finance policies and procedures. The Board Chair, Executive Director, and Treasurer have check signing authority.

Section 5 - Depository

The monies of the Commission shall be deposited in the name of the Commission in such national or state banks or trust companies authorized to do banking business, as the Commission shall designate in writing. Such designation shall set forth the terms and conditions upon which deposits and withdrawals may be made and shall be signed by the chair and secretary and made a part of the Commission minutes.

ARTICLE VIII - NOTICES

Section 1 - Personal Notice

Whenever the provisions of the Minnesota Statutes or these by-laws require notice to be given, it shall not be construed to mean personal notice; such notice may be given by depositing the same in a post office or letter box in a postage-paid envelope or sent electronically and addressed to such individual at his or her address as the same appears on the books of the Commission. The time when such notice shall be mailed shall be deemed to be the time of the giving thereof.

Section 2 - Special Meetings

A special meeting may be called under unusual circumstances without submitting prior notice as elsewhere provided in these by-laws. However, business conducted at such meeting shall be official only if waivers of notice are signed by all members of the Regional Development Commission.

Section 3 - Special Notice

No business with respect to amendment of these bylaws may be transacted unless the required notice of the proposed amendment and the fact that it is to be voted upon at the meeting has been given.

ARTICLE IX - TERMINATION OF COMMISSION

Section 1 – Termination of Commission

A termination of the Commission will follow the rules set forth in Minnesota Statutes 462.398, as part of the Minnesota Regional Development Act.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Section 1 - Amendment of Bylaws

The bylaws of the Commission may be amended by the majority vote of the members of the Commission at any regular meeting of the Commission or at any special meeting thereof, provided that notice of such regular or special meeting shall state the proposed amendment and the fact that it is to be voted upon at the meeting. The board of directors shall have no power or authority to amend or repeal these bylaws.

ARTICLE XI - GENERAL AND MISCELLANEOUS

Section 1 - Conduct of Meetings

All meetings shall be conducted pursuant to Roberts Rules of Order unless otherwise provided by these bylaws.

Section 2 - Indemnification

To the full extent permitted by law, each person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding, wherever and by whomsoever brought (including any such proceeding, by or in the right of the Commission), whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, by reason of the fact that they are or were a commissioner, director, or officer of the Commission, or they are or were serving at the specific request of the Commission as a director, officer, employee, or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise, shall be indemnified by the Commission by the affirmative vote of a majority of the commissioners present at a duly held meeting of the Commission for which notice stating such purpose has been given against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by such person in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding; provided, however, that the indemnification with respect to a person who is or was serving as a director, officer, employee, or agent of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise shall apply only to the extent such person is not indemnified by such other corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust, or other enterprise. The indemnification provided by this section shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of such person and shall apply whether or not the claim against such person arises out of matters occurring before the adoption of this provision of the Bylaws. No person shall have a right to indemnification or indemnification advances by the Commission with respect to any threatened, pending, or civil, administrative, arbitration, investigative, or other proceeding brought by or in the right of the Commission against such person

ARTICLE XII - INTERPRETATION

Section 1 - Errors and Omissions

Where errors, omission, misspellings, or substitutions appear in the text of any section, which confuse the intent of that section, corrections shall be made and completed, but shall not require official approval beyond the Executive Director.

Section 2 - Federal Civil Rights Guidelines

RNDC complies with these guidelines in that no person on the grounds of race, religion, color, disability, sex, age, or national origin, is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity of the Commission.

APPENDIX DOCUMENTS

A - Code of Conduct Policy

B. Conflict of Interest Policy

Code of Ethical Conduct Policy

Region Nine Development Commission (RNDC) employees and commissioners are held to the highest standard of honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior.

RNDC employees and commissioners have a duty to the people of the jurisdictions they represent and must act in the public interest.

Every employee and commissioner must comply with this Code of Ethical Conduct to:

- Ensure compliance with the Code of Ethics for Employees and Commissioners found in M.S. 43A.38, and other applicable law
- Avoid any appearance of impropriety
- Maintain the public trust
- Ensure the use of county, federal, and other local resources for purposes
- Strengthen governance processes and accountability

This policy applies to all employees and commissioners of RNDC.

Acceptance of Gifts

Employees or commissioners may not directly or indirectly solicit, accept, or receive anything of value for performing their RNDC duties, except for the compensation and benefits provided by RNDC. They may not directly or indirectly solicit, accept, or receive any payment of expense, compensation, gift, reward, gratuity, favor, service, promise of future employment, or promise of a future benefit for activities related to their duties, except those provided by RNDC. Employees offered impermissible gifts must decline or return them to the giver; an employee who is unable to return the gift must contact the RNDC's Executive Director to determine appropriate disposal.

The *limited exceptions* to the prohibition on the acceptance of gifts are as follows:

- Gifts of "nominal value" – defined as being of little or no marketable value. Gifts of cash and gift certificates or gift cards of any value are prohibited. Some examples of gifts of "nominal value" include, but are not limited to:
    - Pens, cups, totes, flash drives or other trinkets bearing a company's name/logo that do not have a marketable value.
    - Snacks or light refreshments provided at a meeting, conference or other event as a normal courtesy and offered to all attendees.

- Plaques or mementos recognizing individual service in a field of specialty or to a charitable cause.
- Payment or reimbursement of expenses for travel (including lodging and meals) that:

    - are not reimbursed by the employee or commissioner's agency and RNDC,
    - have been approved in advance by the employee's agency,
    - are associated with a work assignment, and
    - which do not otherwise present a conflict of interest.
- Honoraria or expenses paid for papers, talks, demonstrations, or appearances which are:
    - made by employees on their own time, including vacation,
    - not part of their regular job duties, and
    - which do not otherwise present a conflict of interest.
- Special discounts or offers made by private businesses along as offered as a marketing strategy to increase its business, not to influence the work responsibilities performed by the employee or commissioner.

Use of Confidential Information

Employees and commissioners may not use confidential information obtained during their involvement with RNDC to further their private interest, or the private interest of any person or organization except as authorized by law.

Additionally, employees and commissioners may not accept outside employment or involvement in a business or activity which requires them to disclose or use confidential information obtained in the course of their work under RNDC.

Use of RNDC Property

Employees may not use or allow the use of RNDC leased facilities, supplies, equipment, or other property for their private interest, for the private interest of any person or organization, or any other use not in the interest of the jurisdiction area RNDC represents, except for personal use of IT under the following parameters:

(1) Does not increase risk to RNDC data or system security
(2) Results in no more than an incremental cost to RNDC
(3) Complies with state and federal law

Reporting Responsibility

It is everyone's responsibility to raise a concern promptly about a violation of RNDC policy, law or regulation. This is intended to encourage and enable persons to raise serious concerns within the RNDC before seeking resolution outside RNDC. In most cases, a board member should present his or her concerns to the chair of the Board of Directors. All others should present their concerns to the executive director. However, if a board member is uncomfortable speaking with the chair of the Board of Directors or is uncomfortable with the chair of the Board of Directors response, or if a committee, taskforce member, or employee is uncomfortable speaking with the executive director or with the executive director's response, the person is encouraged to speak with anyone on the Board of Directors whom that person is comfortable approaching.

RNDC prohibits retaliation against anyone who in good faith reports a suspected violation of law, regulation, or RNDC policy or who cooperates in an RNDC investigation. RNDC will not permit any harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequence against a person for making a good-faith complaint, regardless of whether the underlying facts prove to be correct or result in any corrective action. An employee who retaliates against someone who has made a good-faith complaint under this policy is subject to discipline up to and including termination of employment or removal from the commission.

RNDC's executive director, working with the chair of the Board of Directors, will act as the RNDC's compliance officer. The compliance officer is responsible for ensuring that all complaints about unethical or illegal conduct are investigated. The chair of the Board of Directors, or his or her designee, will assume the compliance officer role if the report involves the executive director.

The Budget and Personnel Committee of the RNDC shall address all reports, concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. The compliance officer shall immediately notify the Budget and Personnel Committee of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the law, regulation or RNDC policy must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be treated as a serious disciplinary offense.

Violations or suspected violations of law, regulation or RNDC policy may be submitted on an anonymous basis, but in deciding whether to make a report anonymously, please understand that investigation and resolution of anonymous reports may be more difficult than investigation and resolution of a non-anonymous report. Reports of violations or suspected violations of law, regulation or RNDC policy will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

If warranted, RNDC will commence an appropriate investigation, using internal and/or external resources with expertise in conducting investigations. The compliance officer, or the person responsible for carrying out the compliance officer's role with respect to a reported or suspected violation, will acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation by promptly writing a letter (or e-mail) to the complainant, unless the report has been made anonymously. Investigations will be conducted promptly and discretely, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

Printed name of Commissioner: ____

Signature of Commissioner: __________________________ Date: ____________

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY
REGION NINE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

<u>Article I—Purpose</u>

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect this Organization's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Organization or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest that may be applicable to this Organization.

<u>Article II—Definitions</u>

1. *Interested Person*. Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
2. *Financial Interest*. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
    a. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement,
    b. A compensation arrangement with the Organization or with any entity or individual with which the Organization has a transaction or arrangement, or
    c. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Organization is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.
    d. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that aren't insubstantial. A financial interest isn't necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Article III, Section 2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the appropriate governing board or committee decides that a conflict of interest exists.

<u>Article III—Procedures</u>

1. *Duty to Disclose*. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
2. *Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists*. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
3. *Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest*
    a. An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
    b. The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
    c. After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the Organization can obtain, with reasonable efforts, a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
    d. If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement isn't reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall

determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Organization best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination, it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

4. *Violations of the Conflict of Interest Policy*

a. If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe a member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

b. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

<u>Article IV—Records of Proceedings</u>

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

a. The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

b. The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

<u>Article V—Compensation</u>

1. A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

2. A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

3. No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Organization, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

<u>Article VI—Annual Statements</u>

Each director, principal officer, and member of a committee with governing board delegated powers shall annually sign a statement which affirms such person:

a. Has received a copy of the conflict of interest policy,

b. Has read and understands the policy, and

c. Has agreed to comply with the policy.

<u>Article VII—Periodic Reviews</u>

To ensure the Organization operates in a manner consistent with its statutory purposes, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

a. Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.

b. Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the Organization's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, and don't result in inurement, impermissible private benefit, or in an excess benefit transaction.

Article VIII—Use of Outside Experts

When conducting the periodic reviews, as provided for in Article VII, the Organization may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring periodic reviews are conducted.

Adopted: ____________

____
Secretary

REGION NINE
DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
Your regional partner for progress.
3 Civic Center Plaza, Suite 310, Mankato, MN 56001
507.387.5643

Memo

To: RNDC Board of Directors

From: Jessica Beyer, Interim Executive Director

Date: September 3, 2026

Re: Planned Employee Handbook Revisions Update

Information will be shared at the Board of Directors Meeting ahead of formal approval that is planned for the October Commission Meeting regarding necessary updates for ongoing legal compliance and coordinated language in the employee handbook.

Work was done by the Board and Commission late last year to put forward policy memorandums including policy adoptions related to Minnesota Paid Family Leave, FMLA changes, ESST changes, and Break Law Changes.

These changes and any new/current legal guidance will be discussed at the Board of Directors meeting and brought forward for formal inclusion in the employee handbook at the October Commission Meeting.

Interim Executive Director's Report

Submitted by Jessica Beyer

September 2026 Board Report

The following areas continue to be of focus as I continue serving as Interim Executive Director:

- **Leadership Transition & Organizational Stability**
  I've continued to serve as Interim Executive Director since last November and will continue to serve in this capacity with an extension made by the RNDC Board of Directors under the current RNDC succession plan while a search process for the Executive Director position takes place. I continue to provide leadership and operational oversight to support programs, services, and projects while supporting staff, enhancing organizational processes, continuing to address long-term financial solvency, and pursuing new opportunities that align with the needs of our region.

- **Identifying and Pursuing Funding, Grants & Strategic Partnerships**
  This work is ongoing and it's exciting to develop new as well as further establish existing partnerships each week through meetings, calls, and following up on opportunities. A new development since my last report is starting work with the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation to potentially apply for joint funding to elevate the work we can do collectively to support agricultural businesses through grant and lending options. Sabri will be a main player in this potential partnership given his experience in local foods and the opportunity will likely include other members of our team such as RLF. We have also recently supported GreenSeam with data and research this past month through Kristian and Aaron's work following partnership conversations. Madelia Health was also very appreciative of our support in providing economic data as well as working with statewide partners to help find solutions.

- **Financial Oversight & Administrative Operations**
  There has been a great deal of my attention focused on continuing to provide support and resources to Finance. I've been actively coordinating audit progress meetings between our Finance Director, contracted CLA staff helping us with the audit preparations, and the audit firm (Abdo) conducting the audit. Sometimes these meetings are multiple times per week. Bringing on CLA to assist with audit preparations has been invaluable and we could not have navigated this process without the added capacity and knowledge they have provided. I also worked to follow through on audit elements while the Finance Director was on planned PTO. On August 26, I was informed that due to three unresolved issues with outstanding audit materials/reporting issues, Abdo would not have sufficient time to complete financial reports ahead of the August 31 deadline. They provided a letter related to the needed items, and I went ahead and worked with the Office of the State Auditor to grant additional time for the audit to be completed by September 30. I will circulate audit materials to the full commission for approval once I receive them in mid-September.

  I've also put additional attention and facilitation work into digging in to coordinate resolution of some long-standing benefit issues that I shared in my last report. All HSA contributions have been addressed with WEX and a due diligence next step is working with WEX to conduct a full audit of HSA accounts to double check and make sure everything is in order ahead of year end. Sarah has assisted with some administrative pieces of this work to get things resolved as quickly as possible. At the August board of Directors meeting, Mission Square information was brought forward to the Board for consideration of updating current retirement benefits as part of the existing plan at RNDC. Since that approval by the Board, I'm continuing coordination of fulfilling plan paperwork and setting up an employee educational session in the future.

  Earlier this week at the RNDC weekly staff meeting, I had South Central Service Cooperative come to speak about usage to-date on the Kavira services pilot project we are utilizing through SCSC. This pilot project is at no cost for this plan year and allows our team to try out no-cost at home and on demand health care services. It has been successful in usage this past year and as we navigate benefits enrollment this fall, there will need to be consideration if it's cost effective or useful for RNDC to continue the service. Additionally, the representative gave an overview of Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offerings available to employees. I recently moved our EAP services plan from NuVantage to under our SCSC package to offer a same existing benefit at a much more competitive price. On August 25, I attended the SCSC Group Health Insurance meeting to learn more about health care plans for the upcoming year. There will be more to come with open enrollment and plan cost discussions.

Since the last Board Meeting, I have been working on follow-up related to IT service contract proposals.

- **Governance, Bylaws & Organizational Development**

  Looking ahead we will have contract negotiations beginning on September 8. We also have the organizational development joint session with the Board and Staff on September 9 ahead of the Board of Directors Meeting. The session is part of organizational development work that I obtained grant funding for to support RNDC as the organization navigates a leadership transition and necessary work to move toward a future vision.

  Bylaws revisions and legal handbook updates will be reviewed with the Board ahead of adoption by the Commission in mid-October. Additionally, Bylaws work was presented at the Annual Meeting with final revisions and review of conflict of interest and code of conduct policies on track for adoption in October. Work on an AI policy is being undertaken by Nate George with my oversight. I'm also working on updates for the Finance Director Succession plan given recent staff turnover with Jazamine Flores departing the Lending Specialist position.

- **Staff Engagement & Capacity Building**

  Weekly staff meetings and regular individual one-on-one meetings with staff members continue.
  Recent staff work anniversaries include: Sabri Fair on August 8 (4 years of service); Alejandra Bejarano on August 23 (5 years of service with prior internship experience); Joel Hanif on September 3 (7 years of experience). As noted, Jazmine Flores left the organization as lending specialist after two years of service and will be greatly missed for all she did for the RLF program and RNDC in supporting the Finance Department as Interim Finance Director. She left the organization with a solid transition plan and Lisa Callahan will be covering her duties in the interim as we fill the position.

- **External Engagement & Regional Representation**

  I have continued to represent Region Nine at key local, regional, and statewide meetings and events. If there are meetings, events, or activities that Board members believe should be on my radar to attend or represent RNDC at, please let me know.

Notable Activities/Meetings/Events at a Glance
August 12 to September 9, 2026:

8/12/26 – Kim Snyder Staff Presentation and Board Presentation on Organizational Development
8/13, 8/14, 8/17, 8/18, 8/19/26 – PTO
8/20/26 - Exit Interview Jazmine Flores
8/21/26 – Regional Human Service Directors Meeting Guest Discussion and Presentation
8/21/26 – Food Rescue Video Meeting
8/25/26 – South Central Service Cooperative Health Insurance Plan Meeting
8/25/26 – Key Audit Check-in Meeting
8/25/26 – Special Board of Directors Meeting
8/26, 8/27/26 – MADO Directors Meeting (Remote)
8/27/26 – Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) Grant Opportunity Meeting
8/28/26 – Audit Check-in and follow-up work
8/28/26 – B & P Agenda Planning Meeting
8/31/26 – RLF Meeting with Bankers at Pioneer Bank in St. James
9/7/26 – Labor Day Holiday
9/8/26 – Labor Negotiations
9/9/26 – Audit Progress Meeting
9/9/26 – Board & Staff Joint Session/ Board Meeting

*Throughout this time period, I have taken some minimal hours of intermittent sick leave for caretaking.

Submitted by Stephanie Hilpipre

Finance

- **Updates regarding Fiscal Year 2025 (2 years ago):**
  - An additional extension was requested for the FY25 audit so that the auditors can finalize their reporting. I will continue to respond to any inquiries from the auditors as they arise. The extension is until September 30, 2026.
  - I had an extended system cleanup meeting with GMS on 9/1/2025 to address issues with the accounting system. When the McKnight contractor entered the FY24 audit adjustments and rolled the system over into FY25, errors occurred that caused the balance sheet to have a beginning-of-year unreconciled balance of over -$400,000. Even GMS was unable to identify where the issues occurred. Ultimately, we had to override the system to match the auditors' starting balance. The consequence of this override is that we will no longer be able to roll the system back into FY24. I do not foresee this being an issue moving forward, since the FY24 audit is complete and we should not have any further need to roll the system back two fiscal years.
  - Now that the FY25 beginning balance has been corrected, our contractors and I can move forward with closing out the 12 months of FY25, completing the necessary general journal entries to close out FY25 projects, and roll the system over into FY26.

- **Updates regarding Fiscal Year 2026 (last year):**
  - Once the system is rolled into FY26, we will move forward with closing out the 12 months of FY26. Similar to what was needed for FY25, there will be some required cleanup work for FY26. The current accounts payable process was not instituted until midway through the fiscal year, and some prior errors will need to be corrected. Lu previously helped ensure that all payroll entries were entered. Cash receipts still need to be input for the year, as well as ACH, and credit card transactions.
  - When the above monthly closeouts and data entry/cleanup work are complete, we will need to complete year-end journal entries to close out projects. I also foresee us needing assistance from CLA to complete our audit schedules so that we can proceed with a more timely audit for FY26.

- **Updates regarding Fiscal Year 2027 (current):**
  - As I continue to work on audit items for FY25 and get the system up to date and closed out for FY26, we are significantly behind on project invoices. Invoicing for EDA, SS4A, and Thriving Communities is of the utmost importance, but there are also other smaller projects that need to be addressed. Furthermore, we will not be transferring funds to cover RLF expenses until the FY25 audit is completed.
  - Similar to FY26, we are currently behind on entering cash receipts, payroll transactions, ACH transactions, and credit card expenditures for FY27 into GMS.
  - Once everything is up to date and monthly closeouts can be completed on a regular basis, it will be imperative to begin monthly budget meetings with project managers to ensure we remain on budget moving forward.

Revolving Loan Fund

- Since my last Finance Director's report, our lending specialist, Jazmine Flores, provided two weeks' notice and terminated her employment with Region Nine. During her tenure, Jazmine did a great deal of work to build relationships with local bankers and significantly increased the RLF's average number of annual loan closings. I am incredibly thankful for her contributions to the organization, and her lending expertise will be missed.
- Over the last month, Lisa Callahan (our contractor), and I have worked to offboard Jazmine, cross-train on her responsibilities, and ensure a smooth transition for the project moving forward. Jazmine did a significant amount of work to document her processes and provided us with a roadmap to continue to build upon her successes with the Revolving Loan Fund.
- Over the next month, we will need to work on filling this role with a full-time staff member. Moving this process along quickly is imperative because staffing the position with a full-time consultant expends the RLF budget 64% faster than the cost of a full-time employee.

Region Nine Area, Inc.

- Mahkato Okiwataya has requested to terminate its fiscal hosting contract with RNAI. I will be working to complete this process over the next month.
- I am currently coordinating with CarlsonSV to complete work on the FY26 Form 990 and other required year end reporting so that it can be completed in a timely manner without the need for an extension.

STAFF UPDATES | SEPTEMBER 2026

PROGRAM UPDATES:

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – Alejandra
After kicking off the RSDP program, Alejandra has been working on designing engagement events to collect input from residents, economic developers, and businesses to inform the CEDS process. She has also been working with local EDAs, such as Fairmont's EDA to conduct an engagement session locally supported by UMN Extension staff.

She is currently conducting outreach with regional chambers of commerce to engage with local employers and present at local events.

In addition, she is working with COPAL and the Prairie Lakes Regional Arts Council to host several engagement events throughout the local community in the months of September and October.

Regional Food Rescue – Tom, Sabri
The amount of food rescue in our region is currently sitting at 110,757 lbs. so far this year, valued at approximately $220,000. Some of the highlights this past month include lettuce, chicken salad, mangos, and over 5 pallets of bananas that trucks rejected at distribution centers. We also had nearly 700 lbs worth of produce from local farmers.

Sabri, Tom, and Jessica have also started meeting with all County Solid Waste Administrators to share about RNDC's work and identify opportunities for collaboration.

Regional Food Access Groups – Tom
The SCMNFR Advisory Council is still meeting with no new updates at this time. They are awaiting the status of the MPCA grant before moving forward with any new initiatives.

Tom has joined Kristen from Nicollet County SHIP in facilitating the South Central Minnesota Food Access Network while Blue Earth County SHIP fills and transitions its coordinator position. The new SHIP coordinator is now in place but is still completing orientation and building capacity. Because food rescue remains an important focus of the group, Tom may continue to co-facilitate these meetings alongside Nicollet County SHIP, even after the Blue Earth County coordinator is fully onboarded.

Food Access Fridges & Freezers – Tom
Biannual check-ins have been taking place with all partners who host a SHIP funded or SCMNFR owned unit. These check-ins have covered any accomplishments, opportunities, feasibility, and overall status of each site. The site at Pride Counseling is moving but will continue to host the units at their new location. The site at Fernbrook Family Services has moved and is back up and running. The site at the Lake Crystal Rec Center may be exploring an option to move for access reasons, will update when/if this happens soon.

Mankato Clinic Fridges are working well with no new updates.
Mayo Clinic has also expressed wanting to have a more formal agreement in place for their fridge/freezer program at their Eastridge location. Currently Tom is filling the freezer and fridges at this location as time allows.

Through the recommendation of Tom, the Heart of New Ulm and the New Ulm Public Library have applied for and have been awarded funding from Brown Co. SHIP to host a freezer and refrigerator in New Ulm. Approximate start date of this will be September.

Tom has also been working with Montgomery's new 507 Food Share Program throughout the summer. Their weekly distribution has been paused because school is starting back up and they were using that space, however brainstorming and ideas of where to take the program next are already in the works.

Communications – Nate
Nate assisted with the creation of a video for the food rescue program. Greener Pastures came to the region to capture interviews and b-roll to explain the food rescue program to potential partners. The video was created through funding provided to the South Central MN Food Recovery.

Nate has begun creating a draft AI Policy for RNDC. He contacted the other MADO organizations, and it appears that this will be the first policy created for an RDO. The draft will be shared internally for notes before being presented to the Board/Commission.

Nate has finished meeting with Web Accessibility providers and has made a recommendation to leadership about suggested actions to bring the rndc.org website up to new accessibility standards.

Nate created a form on the website that allows site visitors to request more information about RNDC's offerings. There is currently a "Contact Us" section, but this form would be for more specific requests.

Nate designed and ordered an RNDC branded canopy to increase visibility while at outdoor events. Previously, no covering was available for staff.

Nate was off for the last week of August.

Annual Report - Nate
Nate is nearing completion of the Annual Report. The report is an annual document highlighting the work being done in the region. It will be made available to State and County governments as well as RNDC Commissioners. Nate is waiting for the audit to be completed before submitting the document.

Small Business Development Center Consultations – Nate
Nate continued his work with the SBDC as a marketing consultant as part of a partnership contract between SBDC and RNDC. He is working with seven clients as part of the contract. He has also attended two training sessions. This work will tentatively continue until December 2026 and is expected to continue with additional contract extensions.

Revolving Loan Fund – Lisa and Jazmine
Jazmine continued working with a collections agency to recover approximately $23,000 from the defaulted JJ Beauty Salon loan. Region Nine remains hopeful that a portion of the outstanding balance will be recovered. Jazmine's last day with RNDC was August 20 and Lisa Callahan is filling the role in the interim and received training from Jazmine prior to her departure.

To strengthen the Revolving Loan Fund Loan Committee, Lisa explored potential candidates to fill the vacant Waseca County representation. Additionally, the committee is in the final voting process to fill the vacant Faribault County seat. Follow-up efforts will continue.

Work on the Endless Adventure loan project continues. Over the past several months, Jazmine has met multiple times with Mark Mitzel of Profinium and Marcia Haley from SMIF to move the project forward. Progress continues to be delayed by challenges obtaining required information from the third-party turnkey provider, APX.

Discussions with the St. Peter Ambassadors regarding potential partnership opportunities also continued. Conversations have focused on ways to assist borrowers by helping offset certain project costs or fees when additional gap financing support may be beneficial.

A loan for a business in Gaylord is currently in the final stages of closing. Region Nine is working with the borrower, lender, title company, and legal counsel to complete the remaining closing requirements, with closing anticipated in September.

Routine portfolio management activities continued throughout the month, including processing ACH loan payments, monitoring borrower accounts, and servicing existing loans.

Jessica, Jazmine, and Lisa partnered with Hannah Bretz from the South Central Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to schedule and conduct outreach visits with financial institutions throughout the Region. The visits were well received, with many lenders noting that commercial loan activity has been relatively slow across the region. Productive meetings were held in several communities, including Gaylord and St. James, and additional visits are planned throughout the region.

In preparation for upcoming deadlines, Jazmine has been collecting borrower information for annual EDA reporting and assisting with the documentation required for the Revolving Loan Fund audit.

Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant – Mark
Mark completed a quarterly road safety report for the period 1/1/2026 to 6/30/2026 and shared the findings with members of Region Nine's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). Across the region, fatal and serious injury crashes (46) are down compared last year (55) but still remain above the average (43) for 2019-2026 YTD. Mark and Joel are assisting Green Isle with its application for infrastructure safety funds.

Transportation/MnDOT Regional Planning Grant – Joel, Mark
On Friday, August 21, Joel chaired the quarterly meeting of Region Nine's Transportation Advisory Committee. TAC meetings are a way to share new grant opportunities, contribute to the professional development of members, and provide updates about transportation projects across the region. Charles Androsky (MnDOT) presented on the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program.

On Thursday, August 20, Joel attended the quarterly meeting of the Mankato Area Planning Organization's Technical Advisory Committee. There, Anna Pierce of MnDOT presented on proposed rules for certain larger scale highway projects on the MnDOT right-of-way requiring carbon offsets. This could take the form of a land-based offset like prairie reclamation or increased housing density near a transit hub, or it can be a policy-based offset that reduces carbon emissions like a telework program with a local employer. While this could be seen as a burden for communities with large projects, the offsets do not necessarily have to occur in the community with the project, and smaller communities with more abundant, inexpensive land could potentially use this as an economic development engine to sell carbon offsets to larger metropolitan cities. This policy is still in development and can likely change as there is still a lot of work to do regarding the tracking of these offsets to avoid double counting. Also, state funds will be available to pursue offsets, but details on that are scarce at the moment.

MnDOT has announced that Region Nine and other RDOs will be tasked with completing regional Local Human Services Transit Coordination Plans in 2027, as they did in 2022 and 2017. Additional federal funding passed through MnDOT will be provided to RDOs to complete these. These plans will assess the state of transit services (both public and private) throughout the region, identify gaps in the network, and propose action items to address the needs and issues of transit users in the region (with particular attention to older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low income). If Region Nine forms an RTCC during the next funding cycle, this plan will inform the RTCC's work.

MnDOT has also announced that the planning grant contract will be amended to add additional funding for electric vehicle outreach. This work will take place between January 1, 2027 and June 30, 2027. This will be a good opportunity for Joel and Mark to work alongside Sam, Sabri, and Lisa as this outreach aligns with much of the work they are doing.

St. James Energy Navigators - Sabri
Sabri has 56 household installations scheduled between March and September. The team has also started gathering billing history to understand savings from upgrades that were installed in the fall.

Local Foods Month – Sabri, Nate
No new update at this time, as August local foods month is just wrapping up at the time of this report.

MDA Specialty Crop Block Grant – Sabri
No new update at this time.

MDA Regional Commercial Kitchen Report– Sabri
Sabri received funding from the MDA to develop a regional commercial kitchen plan. The goal of the document is to see where underutilized commercial kitchens currently exist in our region that could be leveraged by food entrepreneurs. The project will be capped off with statewide virtual training on how to manage a successful commercial kitchen.

Blandin Rural Capacity Grant – Sabri, Alejandra, Lisa, Kristian, Sam
Work is underway on this grant, with the first of two grant payments received in late August. The overarching goal of RNDC obtaining this grant is to provide direct support to 14-16 small and disadvantaged communities across our nine counties to build capacity through planning and grant writing services to garner implementation funding for projects in the areas of housing, community and economic development, and resilience/clean energy. Jurisdictions with identified projects in the initial application included Kasota, Henderson, New Auburn, Gaylord, Madelia, Springfield, Mapleton and Martin County with the plan to serve others as possible. Part of RNDC's goal is to support five or more communities to apply for the Small Cities Development Program Grant through DEED to build up the number of communities within Region Nine to obtain funding. In the past five years, only four communities in Region Nine have received this funding compared to much higher success rates across the State. Environmental initiatives under the grant are still being developed through further outreach with communities such as Minnesota Lake, which has expressed interest in improving their lakefront for recreation.

<u>REGIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:</u>

Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) - Sabri, Lisa, Sam

The team has been learning more about the SCDP program to see how we can improve access to the program in our region. They are meeting with MVAC to discuss a partnership where RNDC writes the applications for communities, and MVAC will continue their grant admin role.

Apple Blossom Road & Shooting Star Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plans – Mark, Joel, Sabri, Sam, Alejandra, Kristian, Sarah, Nate

On August 26, Region Nine convened the second meeting of the Apple Blossom Scenic Byway Steering Committee. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the public map which Committee members will use to identify the Byway's unique assets and intrinsic qualities. (Similar maps are being prepared for the Shooting Star and Scenic Bluff County steering committees.)
Developing expertise with online mapping will benefit Region Nine's other program areas.

Comfrey SolarAPP+ - Sabri
No new update at this time.

Empowering Small Minnesota Communities: South Bend Township – Sabri, Sam, Lisa
The application to this program has advanced to the second round, where a meeting was held with project stakeholders and university representatives to explore alignment and further round out the project's scope. At the second meeting a scope of work was reviewed and now UMN will outline a budget and final deliverables.

Empowering Small Minnesota Communities: Rural EMS – Joel
The research team created a proposal for a poster to present at the Clinical and Translational Science Poster Symposium and Poster Session at the University of Minnesota. The proposal was selected, and this will give the research team a good opportunity to reach a wider audience and get more feedback.

Tri-County Solid Waste Management Plan – Joel, Mark, Nate
Mark has produced some additional maps requested by Tri-County Solid Waste for the plan during this reporting period.

Waterville Economic Development Technical Assistance – Alejandra
Alejandra worked with the City of Waterville to submit a grant application to pursue an economic development grant that would provide funding to support the newly formed business alliance in the local community.

Alejandra shared a final draft of the EDA Disaster Grant Application with Waterville's City Administrator to submit the grant application for funding. Alejandra had been working with the City on the application and had met with EDA's regional representative for feedback on the grant. After addressing the comments, the City will submit the revised application.

Healthcare Data & Regional Healthcare Conversation - Alejandra
Alejandra has been reaching local funders to gauge their interest in supporting a regional discussion around healthcare needs and gaps in rural communities. Alejandra met with the City of Madelia and CEDA to discuss the possibility of hosting a regional discussion.

Childcare & Workforce Development – Alejandra

Alejandra and Kelly Fluharty at SMIF brought together a few workforce development and economic developers practioners to explore opportunities related to childcare and workforce development. There is an interest in RNDC hosting quarterly regional convenings that bring together county childcare licensors to discuss local needs and gaps.

Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP) - Sam, Jessica
Sam has been working with MCAP staff on promoting several programs throughout the region. These include both StormWise and FloodWise Communities, where the StormWise program will feature a workshop held in Waseca focusing on emergency response and disaster preparedness for the Waseca County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Additional community meetings are scheduled to explore flood planning and mitigation resources through the FloodWise Communities program.

GRANT COORDINATION AND ADMINISTRATION:

Region Nine Community Resilience Plan – Sam, Lisa
Interviews with subject matter experts have been held and scheduled to further inform the direction of this plan and its framework moving forward. Strategic outreach and community meetings will be held in September in addition to working with communities on identifying pilot projects and supporting resources.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) – Sam, Sabri, Lisa
Sam and Sabri are continuing to work with Lake Crystal to develop solar education resources for the community. Several interviews have been held with homeowners, local institutions, and installers to inform this process.

MPCA Waseca Local Climate Action Grant – Sam, Lisa
Sam and Lisa are working with Waseca city staff to identify potential buildings to undergo and energy analysis as well as seeking to recruit community members to serve on a project advisory committee.