BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
UNAPPROVED Meeting Minutes
August 25, 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 (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.