

# Meeting of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority

Monday, April, 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015  
County Boardroom

**Board Members Present:** Allen Rasmussen, Bob Anderson, Soren Olesen, Brian McBride (Alternate), Pete Kalar, Wade Pavleck

**Members Absent:** Rob Ecklund

**Staff Present:** Paul Nevanen, Kyra Briggs

**Others Attending:** Spencer Bickett (The Journal), Crystal Clance

Meeting called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Chairman Rasmussen.

- 01 Approve agenda – **motion by Anderson, a second by Olesen to accept the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 02 Approve minutes from 3/18/15 –**Motion by Olesen, a second by Pavleck to approve the 3/18/15 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 03 Public Comment – Brian McBride informed the board, he and Commissioner Ecklund have changed committees and he will now be representing the County Board at the KEDA meetings. Bickett informed the board this will be his last KEDA meeting as he has accepted a position with the Brainerd Dispatch, adding he has learned a lot and has been a pleasure reporting on the KEDA. The board thanked Bickett and wished him the best of luck.
- 04 Treasurer’s Report – McBride presented the financials in Treasurer Ecklund’s absence for March and bills for April totaling \$18,855.78 and a transfer of \$10,000 from KEDA to KEDA to cover bills for the month. **Motion by McBride, a second by Kalar to approve the April KEDA bills and financial reports. Motion carried unanimously.** McBride then presented the CWT financial reports for March and April bills totaling \$10,801.46. **Motion by McBride, a second by Anderson to approve the April CWT bills, financial reports and transfer of funds. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 05 Rail Siding Project – Nevanen updated the board on the status of the Rail Siding Project into Bergstrom Wood Products and Rainy Lake Oil from MD&W and across Wagner’s property. Nevanen mentioned a purchase agreement has been made up by Attorney Steve Shermoen for the piece of property the spur will cross through Wagner’s, adding there are some contingencies in place mostly for funding. Nevanen reviewed the process of each step, adding it will be a significant benefit for each company involved. Short discussion on the cost and the MN Power, power line. Olesen questioned the timeline of the project. Nevanen explained the first step is securing the funding and acquiring the land, adding at first it was going to be an easement across the property but that changed due to the public’s best interest and he is still hopeful the project will be constructed this year. Nevanen mentioned they have been working on this project for a while and there have been several obstacles to overcome, but both companies are still eager to get the project completed. Short discussion on the cost and if wetlands are a concern. **Motion by Anderson, a second by McBride to approve KEDA to purchase the property where the rail spur will cross Wagner’s property with contingences in place. Motion carried unanimously.**

- 06 Director's Report – Nevanen acknowledged Jenny Herman and the award for Women's Business she recently won, adding this is her second award she has won. **Motion by McBride, a second by Olesen to send a formal recognition letter to Jenny Herman for her accomplishments. Motion carried unanimously.** *RECAP* – Nevanen reported he, along with Coronal recently had an opportunity to tour the Flint Hills Resources Pine Bend Refinery (PBR) in Rosemount, adding Falls native Rob Strain is the Director of Base Business Innovation for PBR and he researched using plasma gasification as part of their operation and had contacted Nevanen regarding RECAP. *Broadband Update* – Nevanen reported he received an update from Kirk Lehman of Frontier Communications, and referred to the report in the packets. Short discussion on Frontier Communications and Paul Bunyan Communications. Nevanen also mentioned he had a chance to meet with Steve Howard of Paul Bunyan Communications and tour their Bemidji Office, adding they have a small data center there. *Newmark Grubb Knight Frank visit* – Nevanen explained Newmark was here a couple of weeks ago to conduct interviews with a variety of businesses and organizations from throughout the county as well as Ft. Frances as part of their economic adjustment strategy, adding they will be back here in the end of June or early July to present their report. *Labo Awards* – Nevanen mentioned Evolve U Fitness has been nominated for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Labovitz Awards and the KEDA staff will be attending the event to support them. Nevanen also mentioned Representative Nolan was here earlier this month to host two forums, one on the Essential Air Service (EAS) funding for airports and the other on the rail crossing in Ranier. Pavleck recommended sending a thank you letter to Nolan. **Motion by Pavleck, a second by Olesen to send a Thank You letter to Representative Nolan from the KEDA expressing appreciation for coming to our community to talk about transportation. Motion carried unanimously.** *Cold Weather Testing* – Nevanen stated he will total up the final numbers of Cold Weather Testing for the next meeting, adding JLR has requested to have additional facility improvements made. Nevanen also mentioned there was more facility request this year than in years past.
- 07 Other (City/County Updates) – The board discussed Commissioner McBride and the Treasurer position, questioning if he would be interested in fulfilling the position for the replacement of Commissioner Ecklund. McBride expressed his willingness. **Motion by Anderson, a second by Olesen to approve the new County Representative, Commissioner McBride, as Treasurer for KEDA and CWT. Motion carried unanimously.** McBride informed the board the County recently approved two cell phone towers to go up in the area, one by Menard's and one by Crystal Beach, adding Dale Olson is looking into the timeline of the tower that was put up by Rainy Lake Houseboats. Short Discussion on the towers and cell phone service. Kalar mentioned the City Work Program and street improvements will be done to 13<sup>th</sup> Street by the High School. Anderson touched on Rainy Lake Medical Center and its additional improvements that are planned to take place.
- 08 Public Comment Period –
- 09 The next board meeting was scheduled for May 18th at 10:00 a.m. at the City Council Chambers. **Meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.**