

Meeting of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority

Wednesday, April 13th, 2016
Koochiching County Boardroom

Board Members Present: Brian McBride, Bob Anderson, Mike Hanson, Allen Rasmussen
Members Absent: Wade Pavleck, Harley Droba
Staff Present: Paul Nevanen, Kyra Briggs
Others Attending: Emily Gedde (The Journal), Mike Wellcome, Ward Merrill and Crystal Clance

Meeting called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Chairman Rasmussen.

- 01 Approve agenda – **Motion by Anderson, a second by Hanson to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 02 Approve minutes from 3/16/16 –**Motion by McBride, a second by Anderson to approve the 3/16/16 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 03 Public Comment – Mike Wellcome gave a Voyage Forward update, referencing the Call to Action in February where there were 170 people in attendance of which 81 signed up for “Destiny Drivers”, noting some are on two or more drivers. Wellcome stated they are still waiting to find out what the balance of funding is yet, and added the City passed a resolution to support the Voyage Forward initiative, along with Ranier and the Chamber of Commerce. Nevanen questioned who created the resolution. Wellcome responded Councilor Cynthia Jakska developed and presented it to all. Wellcome reported some teams have already met and explained some of the main focuses of each group. Nevanen gave a brief update on his team and their approach of looking at what has been done in the past and using the Newmark report as a starting point. Rasmussen commented the need for the enthusiasm of all groups to continue. Wellcome referenced the Market Retail Analysis report. Short discussion on the report, as well as student surveys and workforce skills.
- 04 Treasurer’s Report – Treasurer McBride presented the financials for March and bills for April. McBride explained there is one bill that hasn’t been received yet for Midcontinent. **Motion by McBride, a second by Hanson to approve the March KEDA financial reports and bills for April in the amount of \$19,369.75 and to pay Midcontinent Communications once it is received. Motion carried unanimously.** McBride then presented the CWT financial reports for March and monthly bills for April, along with a transfer in the amount of \$7,000 from JLR to CWT to cover the monthly bills. McBride mentioned there are two bills that haven’t been received yet for Midcontinent Communications and Minnesota Power. **Motion by McBride, a second by Anderson to approve the March CWT financial reports and bills for April in the amount of \$7,596.82 for CWT and a transfer of \$7,000 from JLR to CWT, as well as pay Midcontinent Communications and Minnesota Power once received. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 05 Old Business – By-Laws Review – Rasmussen stated he has appointed a committee consisting of Droba, Hanson and himself noting the group just needs to come up with a date to meet. McBride questioned the reasoning of reviewing the by-laws. Rasmussen responded Hanson had requested a review for potential changes, adding he is a by-laws guru. Hanson added he has some suggestions. Short discussion on some possible changes. By-law Review meeting set for Wednesday, April 27th at 10am.

- 06 Director's Report –Nevanen reported as a follow-up to the Healthcare Forum, he submitted the USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) and recently received notification that the grant was initially reviewed and meets the eligibility requirements so it will continue the application process, adding the application was for \$90,000 and will help address the needs in the community for Healthcare worker shortage and the college program to hire an instructor. Nevanen stated earlier this week the core healthcare team met with Paul Moe who is the Executive Director of DEED's Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Program (MJSP), who outlined the various programs they administer. Nevanen added, after discussion on the Healthcare Initiative with Rainy River Community College, Moe encouraged the team to pursue the grant. Nevanen noted they have asked the City to contribute some funding to the initiative and have agreed to a 3-year agreement, and will also be asking the County and healthcare providers for the same agreement. Short discussion on the healthcare initiative and Moe. Nevanen stated John Bennett and Ryan Pesch of the University of Minnesota Extension Service will be presenting their Market Area Profile Report tonight at Backus at 6:00pm, noting the report is part of the Voyage Forward initiative, adding it is very comprehensive and has lots of good data. Short discussion on the report. Nevanen stated the last engineering groups for Cold Weather Testing have completed their testing for the 2015-2016 season, however, JLR will continue to run a local fleet of four vehicles into May. Nevanen added it was another strong season and estimated that the testing activity directly brought in over \$1.4 million dollars into the economy which included hotels, meals, facility rental, fuel, parts, rental cars and miscellaneous items, as well as 5 local jobs. Nevanen stated he will be meeting with JLR to evaluate the past season and identify future needs, adding the first 5-year contract will be ending at the end of the next season and will have to re-structure the contract for the next 5 years. Anderson questioned if they see it as a full-service community here. Nevanen responded they would like to see more variety in restaurants, but the airport is a very important key component. Nevanen explained Brad Brzezinski has replaced Heather Rand as the Northeast Business Development Representative for DEED, adding he has reached out to Brad and invited him to a future KEDA meeting to learn more about our area and activity. Nevanen referenced the 24th Annual Joel Labovitz Entrepreneurial Success Awards coming up on Wednesday, April 20th in Duluth, noting three businesses from Koochiching County have been nominated – Hasbargen Logging, Friends Garbage Service, and J&D Foods. Nevanen stated Commissioner Pavleck, Mayor Anderson and himself recently visited Bergstrom Wood Products to follow up on their business, and also referenced a tour of Friends Garbage and Recycle, he, Jenny Herman and Kyra recently visited their operation. Nevanen stated a logistics mailing was sent out last week to 30 logistic providers highlighting sites in Koochiching County. Short discussion on broadband.
- 07 Other (City/County Updates) – Anderson gave a brief update on the Airport Bonding monies being requested, noting it will go before the Bonding Committee on April 18th at 12:45pm in the State Office Building, adding someone from the Commission will need to testify to the committee with a 4-5 minute presentation. Anderson also referenced the Minnesota Council of Airport meeting coming up in Brainerd and explained the details of the conference. McBride mentioned the County Board was notified yesterday by Nate Heibel of the audit and that they passed their certification of to keep wood sellable, touching a little on the Island View Sewer Project moving forward. McBride talked about the airline fares flying out of INL and congratulated Merrill on Ruby's Pantry being the best distributor in less than one year. Merrill noted they have 115 volunteers consistently and provided a little detail on it.
- 08 Public Comment Period – None
- 09 The next board meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 25th at 11:00 a.m. at the City Council Chambers. Nevanen recommended starting the out county meeting schedule in June. **Meeting adjourned at 11:58 a.m.**