

Meeting of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority

Wednesday, February 23rd, 2016
Koochiching County Boardroom

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

Meeting called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chairman Rasmussen.

- 01 Approve agenda – **Motion by Pavleck, a second by Skoe to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 02 Approve minutes from 1/20/16 –**Motion by Droba, a second by Pavleck to approve the 1/20/16 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 03 Public Comment – None
- 04 Treasurer’s Report – Chairman Rasmussen presented the financials for January and bills for February in Treasurer McBride’s absence. **Motion by Rasmussen, a second by Droba to approve the January KEDA financial reports and bills for February in the amount of \$38,887.40. Motion carried unanimously.** Rasmussen then presented the CWT financial reports for January and monthly bills for February, along with a transfer in the amount of \$20,000 from JLR to CWT to cover the monthly bills. **Motion by Rasmussen, a second by Droba to approve the January CWT financial reports and bills for February in the amount of \$23,488.39 for CWT and \$3,375.00 for JLR and a transfer of \$20,000 from JLR to CWT. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 05 Election of 2016 Officers – Rasmussen explained the election of officers, noting election will be for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer. Skoe questioned due to not having all original board members present if elections should be postponed until next month. Rasmussen responded due to elections taking place at each meeting in February and the fact there is a quorum, he felt the board can move forward today with elections. Pavleck nominated Rasmussen to continue as Chairman. **Motion by Skoe, a second by Droba to approve Rasmussen as the KEDA Board Chairman. Motion carried unanimously.** Skoe nominated Hanson to continue as Vice Chairman. **Motion by Pavleck, a second by Anderson to approve Hanson as KEDA Board Vice Chairman. Motion carried unanimously.** Nevanen noted he spoke to McBride who stated he would continue at Treasurer if nominated. Pavleck nominated McBride to continue as Treasurer. **Motion by Skoe, a second by Droba to approve Commissioner McBride as KEDA Board Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 06 By-laws Review – Rasmussen stated the by-laws were last talked about a year ago adding, Hanson suggested taking another look at them. Rasmussen stated he will create a By-laws Committee of which he will serve on and appoint two additional members, noting Hanson requested to be a part of the committee. Droba expressed his interested to serve on the committee also. Rasmussen stated he will appoint himself, Mike Hanson and Harley Droba to a By-laws Committee, adding he will take a look at a few dates and get a meeting schedule with the Committee members.

07 Advisory Committee Discussion – Droba stated he is currently the President of the International Falls Economic Development Authority, which recently terminated its Director position. Droba referenced the Newmark recommendations of having one EDA and the possibility and interest of adding their advisory committee to the KEDA. Droba explained more detail of the advisory committee and also referenced the Voyage Forward “Destiny Drivers”. Anderson stated the EDA had 12 members on the Advisory Board and referred to a draft document in the packets pertaining to the KEDA Advisory Committee and its possible makeup of being industry specific for each. Anderson mentioned the goal would be to see members of the advisory committees bring information from each industry sector; adding timber is a big industry and is very important to the area, with healthcare and education also being very important. Anderson stated he would move on behalf of the board of directors for advisory committees to meet quarterly. Anderson stated he would also move to establish three advisory committees. Droba stated he would second the motion with a friendly amendment to add a fourth committee for small businesses. **Motion by Anderson, a second by Droba to approve the establishment of four advisory committees to include timber, healthcare, education and small businesses.** Discussion on the motion. Nevanen stated the timing is good and should tie in with the “Destiny Drivers”, noting that having expertise in each field is important and is a good directional move. Wellcome stated 5 out of 6 of the KEDA Board members at the table have seen the “Destiny Drivers” adding he feels there are conflicts with the drivers and asked the KEDA to wait until the “Destiny Drivers” are revealed on Thursday. Pavleck stated he cannot support leaving out tourism and having all the different committees as he felt there were industries being singled out, adding he would rather see one committee consisting of all the industries instead of several committees. Anderson responded he doesn’t disagree and explained the concept and those who would be potentially involved with the committees, in a little more detail. Wellcome stated he sees a lot of overlap with these potential committees and the “Destiny Drivers”. Discussion on the drivers, KEDA and different committees. Anderson stated he sees more citizens helping with the “Destiny Drivers” verses with the KEDA. Skoe recommended to wait and see what comes out of the Voyage Forward Destiny Drivers and then move forward so there is not another level created. Droba stated his appreciation of the KEDA having the conversation of the advisory committees, and the wait of two days is not an issue but whatever the outcome is, people with knowledge and professionalism are needed and agrees things need to be done. **Motion by Droba, a second by Skoe to table the motion of establishment of four advisory committees until the next meeting in March. Pavleck voted nay. Motion carried.** Rasmussen stated the idea of having an advisory committee came up in discussion at a Northome meeting a while back.

08 Director’s Report – Nevanen referenced a recent announcement of Mike Ward leaving Voyageurs National Park Service for Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, adding he will be a big loss to the community and was a great asset here. Nevanen referenced the Island View Sewer Project which was recently approved by the Army Corps for funding; noting the project will have a huge impact on the community and stated his appreciation for all the hard work that went into the project. Rasmussen thanked Pavleck for all his effort with the project. Pavleck explained who was involved with the project and how it got started. Nevanen reported there are continued meetings and work being done on the details of creating a teaching nurse position/Program at RRCC adding Provost Carol Helland has been working with staff and recently met with students who are showing interest in pursuing the program also. Nevanen referenced the “Call to Action” public meeting that will be held this Thursday, February 25th at 6pm at the Backus Community Center, noting the event will focus on unveiling the “Destiny Drivers” and engage the public to become involved with the Drivers. Nevanen added, he and Jenny Herman will be championing the Driver on job growth and diversification. Nevanen reported he was recently contact by DEED who sent out a Request for Information on behalf of a site selector firm (Newmark, Grubb, Knight, Frank) on a potential project in Minnesota called “Project Pine” and explained the process, adding the KEDA submitted a detailed request form for one site. Nevanen reported on a meeting tonight in Northome with

representatives from the City of Northome, Ridge Runners Snowmobile Club and Commissioner Skoe on the club's request to possibly site a groomer building/office in the Northome Industrial Park. Nevanen referenced the cell tower on Rainy Lake Houseboats (RLHB) property and that he, Tom Dougherty of RLHB and Dale Olson from the County's Environmental Services Department recently had a conference call with the new owners of the cell tower to understand what it will take to establish service on the tower and explained a little about the new company. Nevanen stated he recently met with Ida Rukavina who is Senator Klobuchar's Regional Outreach Director and briefed her on the KEDA's activities and work plan for the coming year, adding she is very interested in broadband. Nevanen referred to an article in the packets on the Governors view of broadband. Discussion on Voyage Forward and the KEDA.

- 09 Other (City/County Updates) – Droba stated the smaller things make big impacts, especially in rural areas as they have two options to succeed; #1 everyone buys local and #2 events are hosted that bring people into the community, and listed a few samples of events. Anderson referenced the Koochiching Community Development Association (KCDA), noting they meet tomorrow in Mizpah. Anderson spoke a little about the Hwy 53 project last summer and it being safer, adding they are looking at the possibility of additional passing lanes. Anderson referenced a new transportation bill that has funds for small projects such as the passing lanes, adding a good start might be to have a 4-lane highway start in International Falls and go to Ericsburg. Anderson mentioned the Airport Commission will have its bidding begin in March for the Terminal Project, noting there is a need for discretionary funds to complete the project which the Minneapolis FAA office is in support of, but the need to convince Washington on the funding, noting he has been working with Congressman Nolan and Senator Klobuchar's office to help get Washington on board. Anderson reported he had an opportunity to write a letter to a young lady who recently received a nomination to the Naval Academy, noting Abby Kostiuik was nominated by Senator Amy Klobuchar. Anderson stated the cold weather testing industry is outstanding and thanked Nevanen for his work, adding the possibility of having on a future agenda for a strategic plan, noting in the next couple years he would like to see a bid on bonding to build a cold weather test track. Pavleck touched on the history of cold weather testing and how close they were to having a track, but Governor Ventura line itemed it vetoed. Pavleck referenced a wetland meeting tomorrow and the work Teresa Briggs will be doing on the cell tower on Rainy Lake Houseboats property. Pavleck stated how important the airport and cold weather testing are to this area.
- 10 Public Comment Period – Wellcome thanked the KEDA for the support of Voyage Forward, noting the initial meeting was held in September 2014 with 165 attendees to which he hopes will be surpassed on Thursday. Short discussion on out county participation.
- 11 The next board meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, March 16th at 10:00 a.m. at the City Council Chambers. **Meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.**