

# Meeting of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority

Thursday, January 22, 2015  
The KEDA Office – 405 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

**Board Members Present:** Bob Anderson, Soren Olesen, Rob Ecklund, Pete Kalar, Wade Pavleck,

**Members Absent:** Allen Rasmussen

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

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

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Vice Chairman Olesen in Chairman Rasmussen's absence.

- 01 Approve agenda – **motion by Ecklund, a second by Pavleck to accept the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 02 Approve minutes from 12/17/14 –**Motion by Pavleck, a second by Anderson to approve the 12/17/14 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 03 Public Comment – None.
- 04 Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Ecklund presented the financials for December and bills for January totaling \$21,005.73. Ecklund explained there was an over payment to MidContinent last month and will have a credit for that bill for a few months. Nevanen referenced the financials being 2014 yearend and mentioned on the Budget vs. Actual the income was \$16,000 over which was mostly due to IRRRB and SBDC. Nevanen explained the expenses were a little over, due to the timing of when Kyra began Full-time status, adding overall was very close to budget. **Motion by Ecklund, a second by Kalar to approve the December KEDA bills and financial reports. Motion carried unanimously.** Ecklund then presented the CWT financial reports for December and January bills totaling \$18,823.25 and JLR bills totaling \$29,330.89. Ecklund mentioned the payment from JLR was received. Discussion on the Cold Box and its history. Nevanen mentioned the Jackson Electric bill which dates back to services in September to current, adding the bills were held until the JLR payment was received. **Motion by Ecklund, a second by Anderson to approve the December CWT bills and financial reports. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 05 2015 KEDA Work Plan – Nevanen explained he wanted to keep the Work Plan in the packets to easily view where the broad focus will be throughout the year, adding he will keep on the agenda throughout the year. Olesen questioned if there was a plan to add Workforce Development to the Work Plan. Nevanen responded yes, and plan to work with several organizations.
- 06 Voyage Forward – Newmark Visit – Nevanen reported on Newmark, Grubb, Knight, Frank, a National firm of four consultants that were here to gather strategic information about the area on January 7<sup>th</sup> thru January 9<sup>th</sup>. Nevanen stated there were two groups who met with business owners and community leaders, adding they made some good observations and know it will take time and prioritization. Nevanen stated their next planned visit will be in March. Anderson questioned the length of time for the process. Nevanen responded a target date of June is set for a final report which will also include Fort Frances. Kalar mentioned it was a good feeling that the consultants felt things were already on the right track and having community involvement. Discussion on the consultants and small details of the events that took place, as well as all who were involved. Anderson extended thanks to the County for partnering with the effort and community enhancement. Nevanen added they also did a tour of potential sites and some mapping.

- 07 Director's Report – *Rail Siding Project* – Nevanen reported the project is still trying to move forward, however due to higher estimated costs they are exploring the possibility of acquiring a portion of the private property rather than acquiring an easement. Nevanen mentioned their hope is to submit a grant application to DEED as soon as the property option is finalized. Anderson stated Bergstrom Wood Products, Rainy Lake Oil and MD&W will all find the spur helpful to their business and there is a need to look at ownership verses an easement, adding it my help with DEED but due to the City spending money on a project with nothing to show for it may create a road block. *Fisheries Property* – Nevanen stated a lengthy attempt to revive the fisheries project in the International Falls Business Park, the principals could not secure financing and long-term fish supply. Nevanen referred to a map in the packets showing the two projects/buildings and explained the 1<sup>st</sup> building is owned by Steve Heller and the other building went tax forfeit. Nevanen explained he has been in contact with Heller who has decided to list the building with a realtor. The other building will go to auction in May. Heller is proposing packaging both buildings together, adding there is a potential interest. Discussion on the lots, value and size of the buildings. Anderson mentioned the possibility of the KEDA purchasing the buildings and if there is a business that is looking to come to town, there would be a building for them. Discussion on the process of acquiring the property and the land KEDA owns around it. Anderson recommended it be on the February agenda with a plotted map to see if it would be an advantage to the KEDA. *Miscellaneous* – **The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Joel Labovitz Entrepreneurial Award Nominations** – Nevanen mentioned nomination are being sought for the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Labo Awards for businesses in the region, which is an opportunity to celebrate different businesses in the community adding, nominations can be submitted on-line at [www.umd.ced.com](http://www.umd.ced.com) through February 28<sup>th</sup>. **Junior Achievement** – Nevanen stated jenny Herman is once again coordinating the junior Achievement Program with the local schools, adding this will be the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the program and has added two additional classes in Littlefork.
- 08 Other (City/County Updates) – Ecklund updated the board on the Class I Air contaminant issue in Carlton County and issues surrounding the protection of the Long Eared Bat. Pavleck reported on the Island View Sewer Project and its need to look for additional funding. Discussion on other potential funding options and groups that could be of assistance. Discussion on how the project is funded. Kalar referenced the land for the Aquaponic Plant has been settled. Anderson added the City gave them 1.5 acres of land and they have 2 years to get started, however their first priority will be to complete the plant in Silver Bay then Int'l Falls is second. Anderson mentioned Int'l Falls recently received a distressed county status due to the loss of so many jobs and businesses, which will help with the Airport Terminal project and will gain an extra 5% for Federal projects. Pavleck commended the Airport Chairman for pushing the issue of distressed county. Anderson noted the Hospital investment of \$6 million to the current facility, adding the Good Sam gave the hospital their old building which is being remodeled into a clinic and will also be adding two more doctors, one surgeon ad one OBGYN. Discussion on the hospital and its benefits. Nevanen referred to a newspaper article in the packets regarding a goal to remove timber off one of the local peat sites. Short discussion on meeting locations.
- 09 Public Comment Period – None.
- 10 The next board meeting was scheduled for February 18th at 10:00 a.m. at the County Boardroom. **Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.**