

Meeting of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority

Wednesday, January 16th, 2015
Koochiching County Museum

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

Meeting called to order at 9:59a.m. by Chairman Rasmussen.

- 01 Approve agenda – Nevanen thanked Randy Klemm, Curator of the Koochiching County Museum for hosting the KEDA meeting at the Museum and requested to move item #5 to after the Directors Report. – **Motion by McBride, a second by Droba to accept the agenda with the rearrangement of items. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 02 Approve minutes from 12/16/15 –**Motion by Hanson, a second by Droba to approve the 12/16/15 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 03 Public Comment – None
- 04 Treasurer’s Report – Treasurer McBride presented the financials for December and bills for January noting a transfer of \$17,000 to JLR as their payments are wire transferred to the KEDA bank account. Nevanen referred to the Budget vs. Actual report, noting the KEDA tracked very close to budget for 2015 and exceeded the revenue. McBride explained the bookkeeping process of how things are tracked with CWT and JLR. Nevanen added the auditors suggested keeping JLR separate from CWT due to the facility improvements and for a way to track JLR’s usage. McBride questioned if JLR is the only customer that is tracked separately. Nevanen responded, yes due to the 5-year lease. Anderson questioned the payroll clerical benefits of a budget of \$18,146.40 but only spent \$9,774.35. K. Briggs explained the benefits are budgeted for family coverage but is currently only taking single coverage. **Motion by McBride, a second by Anderson to approve the December KEDA financial reports and bills for January in the amount of \$22,197.31. Motion carried unanimously.** McBride then presented the CWT financial reports for December and monthly bills for January. McBride questioned the Jackson Electric bill being so high. Nevanen explained part of the bill is for JLR facility improvements for a CO2 system and fire alarm system which are reimbursable expenses, adding the remainder covers his labor, snowplowing and other duties as needed. Nevanen also noted the bill is for two months of work. **Motion by McBride, a second by Adee to approve the December CWT financial reports and bills for January in the amount of \$18,115.45 for CWT and \$19,485.91 for JLR. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 05 Personnel Committee Update – Rasmussen reported the Personnel Committee first met back in October and have met twice since then to develop a plan for the Director review. Rasmussen explained there has not been a cost of living change for Nevanen over the last four years and stated the Committee proposes a 2% wage increase effective January 1, 2015 and then an additional 2% wage increase effective January 1, 2016. Rasmussen noted the increase accounts for less than a 1% increase over the last four years, adding Nevanen’s evaluations have always been excellent and is in the lowest salary range for the region. Rasmussen stated the wage increase is overdue and the

budget allows for the increase. Mc Bride commented when letting the cost of living increases go for so long, it is difficult to get them back up to being current, adding he is comfortable with the 2% and 2% increase but need to stay abreast of it. Rasmussen thanked Nevanen for his work and the success he has accomplished as the process is often very slow but he is diligent and patient. **Motion by McBride, a second by Hanson to approve a 2% wage increase retroactive and effective January 1, 2015 and then an additional 2% wage increase effective January 1, 2016 for Director, Paul Nevanen. Motion carried unanimously.**

06 Director's Report – Nevanen reported as a follow up to the December Healthcare Forum, a core group met to review and discuss the next steps, adding the group identified that having a full-time champion of the nursing program is key to re-establishing a sustainable program. Nevanen stated there are currently 34 openings in the area that need to be filled and the group is developing a budget to begin the process and will identify resources and partners to support the effort, noting the recent investment of over \$300,000 in the new nursing lab. McBride explained who is involved in the core group and explained the next step of writing a job description and setting the budget, adding the hope is to have funding available by April as there are many people showing interest in the program, but RRCC and NHED need to step up to help with funding also. Anderson explained other programs that are available for citizens of distressed areas. Nevanen stated the goal is get the program to be self sustainable again. Nevanen further reported a group of Voyage Forward Stewards has been meeting to develop the "Destiny Drivers" as part of the future focus of the Voyage Forward Project, noting the results will be unveiled at a "Call to Action" public meeting to review the process and discuss public involvement around the "Destiny Drivers". Nevanen referred to a flyer in the packets and noted the meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 25th at 6:00pm at the Backus Community Center, while thanking Mike Wellcome for his involvement. Wellcome commented there are speakers lined up for the public meeting and a flyer has been put together. Nevanen reported the County Board had asked for a meeting with the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) to discuss their concerns with the Grand Mound site and MHS's recommendation of demolition of the existing building. He felt the meeting went well and there was support to have the facility reopened. Merrill mentioned the comments from the First Nation folks were the strongest as they were speaking from their culture and history. Nevanen commented the Grand Mound is a significant asset to this area and he looks forward to continued discussion. Short discussion on the MHS, alternatives for the site, legislation and importance of MHS realizing the importance of the site. McBride thanked Representative Rob Ecklund and Senator Tom Bakk for their support on Frontier's project. Rasmussen added the site sits on a Scenic Byway. Nevanen reported Phase I of the broadband project has been completed on Hwy 11 East, noting Hugh Haller, President and CEO of the Camping and Education Foundation that oversees Camp Kooch-i-ching and Ogichi Daa Kwe, has been monitoring the broadband infrastructure updates from Frontier and has shared communication that it is in the process of being implemented to support the Ogichi Daa Kwe location which is east of Bald Rock. Nevanen stated Frontier will continue to build-out and update their systems in 2016 to include the remaining segment to Sha Sha. Nevanen stated Jenny Herman has begun coordinating the Junior Achievement Program with local schools again, noting this is the fifth year of the program and he will be volunteering in the 8th grade class.

07 Koochiching County Historical Museum – Randy Klemm, Director – Rasmussen thanked Klemm for hosting the KEDA meeting. Klemm thanked the KEDA Board for coming to the meeting at the Historical Museum and stated he realizes not everyone has been there before. Klemm gave a brief biography and how he became a part of the museum along with his past experience. Klemm stated he has enjoyed his time so far and is excited for what is to come; adding the exhibits are great and he would like to see a website up and running along with more items taken to the other site to allow for addition room in the Museum. Klemm mentioned he is hoping to add a part-time employee and some volunteer staff. Short discussion on the museum and attracting visitors.

08 Other (City/County Updates) – Droba recommended having the Advisory Board on the next agenda. Rasmussen concurred having it on the agenda for next month to have the discussion again, noting industries from wood products, healthcare and broadband should all play a role to advise the board on efforts on industries in the county. Anderson stated RLMC has added 40 people over the last year and has been doing a great deal of improvements, adding it helps to have services local and not having to travel, and explained the new services they are looking to bring to the community. Nevanen commented he likes the concept of the advisory committee being industry specific, then have an additional group that comes out of the “Destiny Drivers” can be added also. Wellcome stated he would like to work with Nevanen on setting up a meeting to discuss “Knowledge Clusters”. Anderson reported Icebox Days was great and the addition of new activities, noting another activity taking place this weekend is the Arrowhead 135, which has 160 participants. Anderson noted the City is considering Annexation of a few properties into the City, including the Multi-modal, some Airport property, noting they are currently holding off on the Donahue Property.

09 Public Comment Period – None

10 The next board meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 23rd at 10:30 a.m. at the Koochiching County Boardroom. **Meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.**