

Meeting of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority

Monday, November 23rd, 2015

City Council Chambers

- Board Members Present:** Mike Hanson, Brian McBride, Allen Rasmussen, Wade Pavleck, Brian Briggs (Alternate), Pete Kalar (Alternate)
- Members Absent:** Bob Anderson, Harley Droba
- Staff Present:** Paul Nevanen, Kyra Briggs
- Others Attending:** Emily Gedde (The Journal), Dan McCarthy

Meeting called to order at 10:00a.m. by Chairman Rasmussen.

- 01 Approve agenda – **Motion by McBride, a second by Briggs to accept the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 02 Approve minutes from 10/18/15 –**Motion by Hanson, a second by McBride to approve the 10/18/15 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 03 Public Comment – None
- 04 Treasurer’s Report – Treasurer McBride presented the financials for October. Nevanen noted IRRRB funds have not been received yet, but anticipates receiving it by the end of the month. **Motion by McBride, a second by Briggs to approve the October KEDA financial reports and bills for November in the amount of \$27,046.33 and bills paid on 10/26/15 in the amount of \$498.62. Motion carried unanimously.** McBride then presented the CWT financial reports for October, explaining a \$10,000 transfer to KEDA to cover monthly bills and a \$15,000 transfer to CWT to cover monthly bills, both out of the JLR account. **Motion by McBride, a second by Kalar to approve the October CWT financial reports, bills for November in the amount of \$16,326.49 and bills paid on 10/26/15 in the amount of \$33,590.64. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 05 2016 Draft Work Plan – Nevanen referred to the 2016 KEDA Draft Work Plan in the packets and explained each category. Nevanen stated in the Newmark report, the recommendation was to create one entity for Economic Development, adding due to the way the KEDA was created with Iron Range Resources being a funding leg, it was advised in the past to not change in statute as there would be a risk of losing those funds. Nevanen mentioned he has been working with the Voyage Forward group on Destiny Drivers, noting the KEDA will need to play a role and look at creating an advisory committee. Nevanen stated the KEDA Board will need to sit down to figure out details and committee makeup. Rasmussen stated the City EDA already has a board creation and could look at them as being the advisory committee. McBride questioned if the Newmark study has been completed. Nevanen replied the study and report have been completed, adding there are still some funds available through ARDC that need to be used up by the end of the year and noted Jenny Herman is working on some courses to help spend those funds down. Nevanen mentioned advisory committees have been created in the past with a Biomass working group being one, noting he would like to see individuals from the timber and tourism areas also. Nevanen stated the work plan is a draft and will be very similar to the past, with the addition to focus more on an advisory committee and Voyage Forward, while he referred to the affiliate organizations associated with the KEDA. Pavleck stated he felt as though Newmark was adamant to disband the KEDA without doing their research, adding Mike Wellcome was quick to stand up in favor of the KEDA and there is too much to lose to try to disband. Briggs added the importance for all areas of the County to

have the ability to speak to the group. Nevanen stated there is a need for additional communication, as not everyone reads the newspaper and radio only goes so far, so the importance to get out into the County is there.

- 06 Director's Report – Nevanen reported the JLR Management group was here recently to tour the facility and check on the progress of the facility updates, adding things have come a long way in terms of meeting their overall facility needs and were very pleased with the results. Nevanen made note in addition to the tour, they had an opportunity to give back to the community with a cash donation of \$800 to the Partners in Education organization, showing their commitment to the community here. Briggs stated it is also important to note JLR donated two vehicles to the fire department for a practice drill of using the Jaws of Life. Nevanen stated the test season has now begun and will be another strong and busy season, adding JLR alone will have over roughly 900 room nights this season. Nevanen stated as a follow up to discussion at the last meeting, the KEDA has partnered with Rainy River Community College to present a regional Healthcare Forum on Wednesday, December 9th at 3:00pm in the RRCC Theater. Nevanen named off a few of the healthcare providers who have been invited throughout the region along with state and federal representatives to discuss the acute shortage of healthcare workers, adding his thanks to the County for their leadership on getting the word out also. Nevanen reported he continues to work with the Voyage Forward movement as they develop the Destiny Drivers to guide them forward, noting at this point they have identified 11, which are a result of the Steward Surveys and the NGKF Economic Adjustment Strategy Report. Nevanen state the KEDA will play a significant role in several of the drivers. Nevanen referred to an update email from Frontier on the Ranier-Island View broadband project areas, in the packets, adding the project will be completed all the way to the end of Hwy 11 East in 2016. Nevanen also mention a Frontier representative met with the City of Littlefork to outline some of the improvements they're making in that area, noting Midcontinent Communications was successful in their grant application to DEED for funds to expand broadband service into the City of Littlefork next year. Nevanen then referred to an article listing top ten items for site selectors, noting Highway Accessibility being rated #1 and explained some changes while he ran through each ranking. Discussion on the advantages of the new road construction and the time saving on driving. Pavleck explained the history of the 4-lane highway and credited both Irv Anderson and Bob Anderson, adding the need for getting it all the way to International Falls and will continue to work on it. Briggs noted the International Falls Airport is not only huge for the Cold Weather Testers here but also for Baudette.
- 07 Other (City/County Updates) – Pavleck updated the board on wetland mitigation, noting the State has made some adjustments, but it's unclear how the county will be affected as there is some new flexibility. Pavleck noted the biggest issue will be the Waters of the US, as there is no clear definition, and will effect here if it moves forward in the future. McBride reported he attended the timber auction last Wednesday, noting a new assistant land commissioner has been hired. McBride stated there is some concern for the loggers with the amount of rain that has been received in the last week. Nevanen added some good news, with fuel costs being down. Briggs noted he has been having conversations with a business that is experiencing growing pains with growing to quickly and needs to find a larger place, commending Nevanen and Jenny Herman on their help they have provided the business owner.
- 08 Public Comment Period – Dan McCarthy requested there be more notification of meetings. Rasmussen noting this meeting was rescheduled from last week due to the lack of a quorum. McCarthy also stated the agenda is too generic as there being no supporting documents of what is on the agenda, and suggested the KEDA follow the same line of provision and supporting documents be given to the public and requested the director give him a most recent copy of financial statements.
- 09 The next board meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, December 16th at 10:00 a.m. in the County Boardroom. **Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.**