

# Meeting of the Koochiching Economic Development Authority

Wednesday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018  
Big Falls Community Building Legion Room

**Board Members Present:** Allen Rasmussen, Mike Hanson, Harley Droba, Brian McBride, Wade Pavleck, Bob Anderson

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Paul Nevanen

**Others Attending:** JoAnn Smith, Darci Sullivan (KCC-TV), Carol Pavleck, Marta Lindemanis (Mayor of Big Falls), Wayne Skoe, Kevin Adee

Meeting called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Chairman Rasmussen.

- 01 Approve agenda – **Motion by Droba, a second by Pavleck to accept the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 02 Approve minutes from 4/18/18 – **Motion by Hanson, a second by Pavleck to approve the 4/18/2018 meeting minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 03 Public Comment – None
- 04 Treasurer’s Report – McBride presented the CWT financial reports for April and monthly bills for May in the amount of \$10,272.27, JLR bills in the amount of \$1,193.40, paid bills in the amount of \$927.32, and a transfer from JLR to KEDA in the amount of \$18,000, while explaining the details. **Motion by McBride, a second by Hanson to approve the April CWT financial reports and bills for May with a total of \$10,272.27, JLR bills in the amount of \$1,193.40, paid bills in the amount of \$927.32 and a transfer of \$18,000 from JLR to KEDA. Motion carried unanimously.** McBride presented the KEDA financials for April and bills for May in the amount of \$17,506.03. The housing study showed an amount of \$13,000.94. **Motion by McBride, a second by Droba to approve the April KEDA financial reports and bills for May in the amount of \$17,506.03. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 05 Koochiching Housing Study RFP Recommendation – Nevanen stated that the group received two proposals from two different firms, both of which are highly regarded firms for conducting this type of study. The firms quotes were only about \$1000 different when comparing price. The group decided to recommend the Community Partners Research firm to complete the study at a cost of \$32,900.00 including travel. McBride added that all of the small cities would be included in the study. Nevanen stated that the firm will have the full document along with a report for each city 120 days from kickoff. Anderson explained that part of the reason for selecting this firm was they were going to have a report for each community. They are also going to conduct meetings with the results of the study at the end. Nevanen said they will be doing three presentations to the public presenting the document and taking questions. They will pull some data from Fort Frances, but not as a significant piece in the study. **Motion by Anderson for KEDA to enter into an agreement with Community Partners Research to conduct the County wide Housing Study, Second by Pavleck. Motion carried unanimously.**
- 06 Blandin Broadband Community Program Application – Nevanen stated that Jim Yount and Ted Saxton from Small Town Tech are going to be the lead on the project for the Blandin Broadband

Community application. This would give access to grant funds and knowledge as it relates to Broadband County wide. This would help our area find better ways to utilize what we currently have and find projects to help advance our county in technology. KEDA has been asked to be the fiscal agent for the project. The grant application deadline is May 31<sup>st</sup>. **Motion by Anderson to have KEDA be the fiscal agent for the Blandin Broadband Community Project and to give a letter of support on behalf of KEDA to be included in the grant application, Second by Hanson.** Discussion of this project being a 2 year commitment with 2 parts. The first part assessing the community as it is now and then second part conducting projects that help move the County forward using this technology and knowledge. There were a lot of positive comments from Board Members about doing this project and including the entire County. **Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Anderson handed out a motion to have the Koochiching Economic Development Authority (KEDA) board establish a Broadband/Technology Advisory Committee effective May 23, 2018, second by Droba. Motion was passed unanimously. Motion by Hanson to have Droba and Nevanen begin implementation and discussion of the Broadband/Technology Advisory Committee, second by McBride.** Discussion on how this would be carried out and who would be on this committee. Droba and Nevanen would create recommendations for establishing this group that would be County wide. **Motion carried unanimously.**

- 07 International Falls Business Park – Nevanen explained the expanded boundaries of the business park and some concerns that have already been raised by neighboring property owners. He stated that he would like to hold a public meeting to discuss the project and possible plans or options that would be fitting for this property. **Motion by Mayor Anderson to call a public meeting to get input from neighbors and begin the plotting process after all concerns and recommendations are made, second by McBride.** Nevanen added that this would be an opportunity for communication to the public and to get input from neighbors and concerned citizens. **Motion carried unanimously.**
- 08 Director’s Report – *Cantilever Bridge Distillery & Hotel* –The team has completed the Business Subsidy Application for the County and the City of Ranier and a draft of the Developer Agreement is in place to allow for scheduling of the public hearings. The public hearing for the County is scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup> and the City of Ranier is scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup>. Construction is scheduled to begin in June. The process has been clumsy, with a lot of people, approvals, timelines, and specifics involved. Communication has been key through this process along with having patience since this is the first time doing this. Now that the process has been established it should flow much better. *FTZ Site* – The County has asked for another 60-day extension on their application for a Conditional Use Permit for the FTZ site from the City of Ranier. County Engineer Joe Sutherland continues to gather information on quarry operations. *Cold Weather Testing* –JLR continues to run their durability fleet so final numbers are not available yet. *Miscellaneous - Opportunity Zones* – Last Friday, The U.S. Treasury Department approved Minnesota’s 128 census tracts as designated Opportunity Zones, including one census tract in Koochiching County. These would be a designated zone for redevelopment projects in rural distressed areas. *Summer Network Social* – Nevanen has been talking with the International Falls Chamber about partnering again this summer to host a networking event to connect with many of our summer residents.
- 09 Other (City/County Updates) – *Hanson – Littlefork* – The water and sewer project is almost complete, with paving planned for mid June and work on the water tower to be done in July. They are currently looking at zoning maps to update them. They are also looking to improve the community building area and are looking for funds to do so. *Northome* – The building for the Senior Apartments will break ground soon. *Birchdale* – Their 4<sup>th</sup> of July theme is “Hero’s of American History” *Mayor Lindemanis – Big Falls* – The Big Falls campground has been designated as a regional park and they have received funding from the parks and recreation in the amount of \$1.287 million to do projects. They can apply for legacy funding next year. They have put in a

purchase agreement on the Olson property. Next year construction on the new shower house will begin. They will have to put in a lift station since they are not putting in a mound system. Big Fork River is the cleanest river in Minnesota and they plan to keep it that way. They have 18 existing campsites, but will expand to a total of 33 sites. They have been seeing more traffic in the park. They take reservations and also charge for overnight stays. They are ADA compliant. Mayor Anderson asked about improvements to the horse park. Lindemanis stated that the plan for the park is a 10 year plan, but they would like to look at making improvements to it in the future. The park will have 7 camper cabins added, a possible yurt option, extended hiking, a centralized natural playground, and a small access to the river for canoes and kayaks. *Mayor Anderson – International Falls* – Summer projects are starting. Street improvements have started in the city. The City Beach will be open June 4<sup>th</sup>. Phase 2 of the terminal project will be starting June 18<sup>th</sup>. *Droba – Voyagers National Park* and the City will be conducting the unveiling of the Quarter at the park June 14<sup>th</sup>. People are allowed to purchase quarters up to \$100 worth. *Pavleck* – Sewer project up the lake is coming along. There is a lot of investment in Koochiching County happening.

10 Public Comment Period – None.

11 The next board meeting was scheduled for Friday, June 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10am in the City Council Chambers.  
**Meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.**