

Buffalo County Minutes

Committee/Board: Economic Development Committee

Date of Meeting: Tuesday, February 21, 2017

Electronic and Hard Copy Filing Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2017

Vice Chair Mary Anne McMillan Urell called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Mr. David Danzinger via GoToMeeting, Ms. Mary Anne McMillan Urell, Ms. Nettie Rosenow, Mr. Douglas Kane and Mr. Don Black in person. Excused was Mr. Dennis Bork.

Others Present for All or Parts of the Meeting: Ms. Sonya Hansen, Ms. Kathy Goodman and Mr. Carl Duley in person. Present via telephone was Mr. Matt Kures.

Public Comments Regarding Posted Agenda Items: None

Minutes: Ms. Rosenow made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Black. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Economic Administration Grant: The Committee reviewed the draft of the Buffalo County Economic Recovery Strategy prepared in satisfaction of the EDA Power Grant. The Committee members recognized the need to include gender data and immigration data in the plan to incorporate current trends in the County. Mr. Kures clarified the definition of public space. Mr. Kures stated that he would be able to include gender data and some broad racial and ethnic statistics into the plan and provide an updated version prior to the final approval by the County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Duley indicated that the next grant to be written would be an implementation grant. Mr. Kures indicated that the status of future funding for EDA grants are on hold until the new budget is approved.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ A Resolution to Approve the Buffalo County Economic Recovery Strategy Plan:

Mr. Danzinger made a motion to adopt the resolution to approve the Buffalo County Economic Recovery Strategy with the addition of gender data and immigration (racial and ethnic) statistics as recommended by the Committee, seconded by Mr. Kane. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Establish Meeting Date With Trempealeau County and Pepin County to Satisfy EDA Grant Requirements:

Mr. Danzinger indicated that this meeting is required to satisfy the EDA grant requirements. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 28, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in the 4th Floor Conference Room in the Buffalo County Courthouse and is open for any member to attend. The focus of this meeting will be on sharing information from the recovery strategy plan.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Economic Development Staff Position Description:

Ms. Hansen reviewed the proposed position description and a copy of the information received from a conducted voluntary county survey. Ms. Hansen indicated that a portion of the position could be funded by the Revolving Loan Fund Administration fees as this position would be responsible for that program. A motion was made by Ms. Rosenow seconded by Mr. Black to add Administration as the Department and also add the word preferred in the minimum training heading and prior to the years of experience and to forward to the Human Resource Committee. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Subcommittee for Broadband and Internet Service in Buffalo County:

Mr. Danzinger indicated that broadband services are not equal across Buffalo County and lack of these services had been identified in the recent study. He has contacted several community members with various backgrounds interested in forming a task force to research and recommend some options to increase expansion of broadband services in Buffalo County. Mr. Danzinger stated that having a group of individuals explore opportunities for grants and develop a plan to report back to the Economic Development Committee would greatly assist the Committee. At this time, Mr. Larry Jost, Mr. Michael O'Connor, Mr. James Dierauer, Ms. Gina Tomlinson, Ms. Tina Anibas and Ms. Sue Deetz have volunteered to serve in such a capacity. They would not receive any per diem or mileage. Expenses resulting in a direct cost to the volunteer may be reimbursed. It was recommended to ask if Nelson Telephone would have a volunteer to serve on this task force. It is specifically noted that this is not a subcommittee and will be referred to as the Community Broadband Advisory Group.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Future Direction and Planning: Ms. Goodman reviewed the current status of the Buffalo County Community and Visitors Guide and advertising sales. She indicated that it is anticipated to be printed in April with distribution in May. The Committee members will be receiving the event and business listings to review. Additional ideas discussed were designating roads as "rustic" roads, the opportunities with the prairie restoration, birding and backwater tours.

Public Comments: Ms. Hansen indicated that she is receiving calls from businesses wanting to expand to Buffalo County requesting information as to grant opportunities, loan forgiveness and tax relief and abatement. It was the consensus of the committee members that appropriate county officials will meet with individuals who provide a detailed plan.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Next Meeting Date and Time: A meeting date and time will be established after the Economic Development Coordinator position is developed and approved or other action needs to be taken.

Adjournment: Ms. McMillan Urell adjourned the meeting at 11:20.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sonya J. Hansen, Recording Secretary