

BUFFALO COUNTY MINUTES

Committee of the Board: Economic Development Committee

Date of the Meeting: Thursday, March 11, 2021

Chair Mr. Max Weiss called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. at the Buffalo County Courthouse County Board Room in Alma, Wisconsin and TEAMS.

Board Members Present: Mr. Max Weiss, Mr. David Danzinger (TEAMS), Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht, Mr. Thomas Taylor and Ms. LeeAnne Bulman.

Others Present for All or Parts of the Meeting: Ms. Sonya Hansen (TEAMS), Mr. Dennis Bork, Mr. Steve Schiffli, Chris Hardie (TEAMS) 6:15-6:40 p.m.

Public Comments regarding Agenda Items: There were no public comments.

Review/Discussion/Action – Minutes of the Previous Meeting: A motion was made by Brad Schmidtknecht to approve the minutes of January 21, 2021 seconded by Lee Anne Bulman. Motion carried by roll call vote.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Chris Hardie from Seven Rivers Alliance – (Agenda Modification) Mr. Hardie presented an executive summary via TEAMS on the Seven Rivers Alliance, which is an economic development organization for the Upper Mississippi Region that is dedicated to economic development across geographic and state boundaries. A discussion was held.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ 2021 Economic Financial and Budget Update– As discussed at the January meeting, Mr. Schiffli presented the changes to the budget to reflect an operation department. Finance approved those changes in February, but Mr. Schiffli wanted to ensure the committee was informed. Also presented was an expenditure report for the month of February, there were no operational expenses.

Review/Discussion ~ *Resolution to support funding for the Great River State Trail – Winona Connector [Phase II]*– Mr. Bork, Chairmen of the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors led the discussion with concerns about the figures presented on the resolution. Specifically, the projected construction and acquisition costs in 2021 dollars vs. the cost projections in the resolution. A discussion was held. Mr. Schiffli indicated the resolution language reflected an anticipated project cost. In further discussion Mr. Schiffli requested that a pen entry change be made to 2.2 Million as a solution to the issue as it was presented. This was course of action was rejected. Further discussion on FLAP, LAWCON, and TAP grants and their use as funding sources.

LAWCON grant and its purpose in repaying the county for PH-I costs and the issues associated with the receipt of the funding from the Fed was discussed numerous times.

Further discussion was held. Mr. Schiffli reminded the committee of the purpose of the resolution pursuant to the “NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED” paragraph was to garner permission from the Buffalo County Board of Supervisors to allow for the use of grant funding to initiate a PH-II engineering study. The purpose of the study is to obtain the cost figures for the completion of this phase of the bike trail.

A motion was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded Ms. Bulman to table this resolution until the May meeting. A Roll Call vote was held. Motion carried 3 votes yes, Mr. Schmidtknecht and Mr. Danzinger voting no.

Review/Discussion ~ Mr. Schiffli indicated that Starlink representatives would not be available for this meeting; however, would be available to address the committee in the future in close session. Mr. Schiffli also indicated that he has initiated contact with Eau Claire County on the pilot program accruing in their county.

Board requested that a closed session presentation to the county board be arranged for the May meeting.

Review/Discussion ~ Department Managers Report – Mr. Schiffli presented a written report of his activities. The main points included the administrative establishment of the office and office processes, developing an economic development network and outreach, and operational projects.

A discussion was held on Farm Technology Days and the availability of free/paid both spaces. Mr. Schiffli will follow up.

Flyway Trail Public Meeting minutes from 3.3.21 in the Town of Buffalo were attached.

Review/Discussion ~ Chairperson Report – Mr. Weiss expressed his concern over Economic Development and the lack of seed money, specifically citing the CDBG-Close and Mondovi project not going through as anticipated. Mr. Schiffli indicated that it his intention that grant programs in the future will support that function of the program.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Next Meeting Date and Time. May 5, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. on the Agenda Resolution to Support the Great River State Trail-Winona Connector Phase II the Town of Cross Request for Fiscal Support, Broadband Expansion.

Motion by Ms. Bulman to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen S. Schiffli, Economic Development Manager