

## **Board Meeting Minutes of the Martin County EDA**

**November 6th, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Martin County Economic Development Authority was called to order by Wes Anderson at 5:15 pm. Those present were: Richard Koons, Wes Anderson, Tim Terfehr and Steve Fosness. Absent were Brent Schultze, Jaime Bleess and Elizabeth Miller. Also present were Scott Higgins, County Coordinator, Amber Patten (CEDA Consultant) and Joshua Schuetz (CEDA Consultant).

### **Agenda**

Schuetz requested the addition of one item to the agenda: Consideration of Letter of Support for Federated Rural Electric Association's Border to Border Grant Application.

Motion by Koons, seconded by Fosness, to approve the agenda with the addition. Carried unanimously.

### **Minutes**

The board reviewed the minutes of the October 2nd EDA Board Meeting. Anderson had one correction-that he was not marked as absent in the minutes, although he was absent. Motion by Koons, seconded by Fosness to approve the minutes of the October 2nd EDA Board Meeting. Carried unanimously.

### **Old Business**

There was no old business.

### **EDA Activity Report**

Schuetz and Patten reviewed the October 3rd, 2023-November 6th 2023 Client Report with the board. A total of fifteen projects were worked on in that period of time.

### **Martin County Housing Needs Survey**

Patten reviewed responses to the County's housing survey. Responses were provided from all communities in Martin County except for Northrop and Ormsby. Patten said similar needs were found in all counties, with needs for single and multifamily housing expressed. Discussion was had regarding the need for a housing trust fund and the possibility of the EDA either serving as a HRA or working with local and regional HRAs to build housing.

## **New Business**

### **Consider Approval of Broadband Challenge Contract**

Schuetz presented a contract from VantagePoint Solutions, a consulting firm that works with communities and providers on challenges to FCC broadband maps to the board. The contract was in the amount of \$2,500 and will entail assistance to the county in making a challenge of claims by fixed wireless providers regarding available internet speeds in rural parts of Martin County.

Motion by Koons, seconded by Terfehr to approve the contract with VantagePoint Solutions in the amount of \$2,500. Carried unanimously.

### **Discuss Facade Grant and Loan Program in Martin County**

Patten presented to the board regarding the establishment of a Facade Grant and Loan Program in Martin County. Examples were provided of similar programs in Fairmont. Patten said she discussed with FEDA Director Ned Koppen if he would oppose the development of such a program if it excluded Fairmont, as a program by FEDA already exists, and he stated that he was not.

Patten said the only community that has a similar program is Sherburn, with a maximum of \$500, and noted that many communities in Martin County have downtown areas that could benefit from such a program.

Terfehr asked where funding for such a program could be found. Patten said she reached out to Compeer Financial to see if they would fund such a program, and they said they would not. Patten said asking financial institutions in Martin County for funding for the program is an option. Schuetz said he is meeting with banks in Martin County and making the ask. Terfehr said he was unsure how they could make it a forgivable loan if money was borrowed from a bank. Schuetz said funding could be requested as a donation, and similar requests could be made of local employers.

Anderson asked if funding exists to fix homes owned by low-income families. Koons said a pool of money was brought in to Minnesota Valley Action Council a few years ago to work on such projects.

Patten said staff will continue to seek funding for the program.

### **Discuss Priority Plan for 2024**

Patten presented 2023's Priority Plan to the board and asked for input regarding 2024's Priority Plan. Discussion was had regarding Lakeview Methodist Health Services dedicated child care space project.

### **Consider Quote for Additional Translations**

Schuetz presented three quotes to the board for the translation of the county's Business Subsidy Policy and Tax Abatement Application, as well as guidelines and applications for the Fairmont EDA's Child Care Loan, Facade Loan, Revolving Loan Fund, Tax Incentive Application and Micro Loan Program. Funding from the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation's Inclusive and Equitable Communities Grant would be used to fund the translation. Schuetz said he is reaching out to community partners to see if they need documents translated, as the EDA's translation project came in under budget. Terfehr asked how much funding is left from the grant. Schuetz said around \$6,000-\$7,000. Three quotes were presented—one from Minnesota Interpreters and Translators in the amount of approximately \$1,200, one from US Language Services in the amount of \$1,794, and one from Dialogue One in the amount of \$2,002.85. Schuetz recommended moving forward with the bid from Minnesota Interpreters and Translators in the amount of \$1,200.

Motion by Fossness, seconded by Koons to approve the bid from Minnesota Interpreters and Translators in the amount of \$1,200. Carried unanimously,

### **Consider Letter of Support for City of Truman Grant Application**

Patten presented a letter of recommendation to the board for an application by the city of Truman for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Outdoor Recreation Grant.

Motion by Koons, seconded by Terfehr to approve the letter of recommendation for the City of Truman's Application for the Outdoor Recreation Grant. Carried Unanimously.

### **Consider Approval of CEDA Contract for 2024**

Higgins presented the 2024 Contract with Community and Economic Development Associates to the board. The contract is for 40 hours a week at a total not to exceed \$94,122, a 5 percent increase from last year. Terfehr asked if there was any additional billing to the EDA for grant writing work. Patten said for EDA staff, there is no further billing for grant writing, but there would be if the CEDA grants department needed to be brought in to write a grant, and that would be added to the requested funds.

Motion by Fosness, seconded by Koons to approve the 2024 CEDA contract in the amount of \$94,122. Carried unanimously.

**Consider Approval of a Letter for Federated REA's Application for the 2024 Border to Border Grant**

Schuetz presented a letter of support for Federated Rural Electric Association's application for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Border to Border Grant program, which would fund a portion of Federated's broadband project in Martin County. Motion by Koons, seconded by Fosness to approve the letter of support for Federated Rural Electric Association's application for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's Border to Border Grant. Carried Unanimously.

**Bills**

Higgins reviewed the bills from October 3, 2023-November 6, 2023 with the board. Motion by Fosness, seconded by Koons to approve the bills to be paid in the amount of \$25,149.69. Carried unanimously.

**Financial Reports**

Higgins reviewed the financial reports (CY2023 November) with the board. Motion by Fosness, seconded by Terfehr to receive and file. Carried unanimously.

**Next Meeting at December 11th**

The board elected to set the next board meeting for December 11th due to the Association of Minnesota Counties conference, taking place the week of December 4th in Minneapolis.

With no further business to wit,

Motion by Koons, Seconded by Fosness to adjourn the meeting. Carried unanimously The board meeting of the Martin County EDA was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.



Tim Terfehr, Secretary-Treasurer



Wes Anderson, Board President