**Board Minutes of the**

**Martin County EDA**

**March 4, 2024 at 5:15 pm**

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

**Approval of Agenda**

Motion by Koons, seconded by Terfehr, to approve the agenda as presented. Carried unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Terfehr, seconded by Bleess to approve the minutes of the January 8th EDA meeting. Carried unanimously.

There were no minutes for the February 5th EDA Meeting as there was no quorum and, therefore, no meeting held at that time.

**Old Business**

**Succession Planning Workshop**

Schuetz presented a funding request to the board for a succession planning workshop, to be hosted in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension. The Extension has federal funding that can be used to fund such a workshop. Extension

staff requested that the EDA contribute $200 for mileage.

A proposal from the Fairmont Events Center was provided for refreshments and the use

of a room for the event in the amount of $201.03

Terfehr asked if each beverage was an additional cost and Schuetz asked if the board would consider approving a total of $470 for the event, including beverages.

Motion by Bleess, seconded by Terfehr to approve $470 in funding for the succession planning event. Carried unanimously.

**Consider Approval of Manufacturing Month Event**

Patten requested board approval to partner with the Faribault County EDA to undertake a tour of local manufacturers for students and interested residents and to pursue grant funding for the event. No funding was requested from the board.

Motion by Terfehr, seconded by Bleess to allow EDA staff to move forward with the Manufacturing Month Event. Carried unanimously.

**Retail Coach Update**

Patten updated the board on work with the Retail Coach. Patten said a recurring meeting will be held on Thursday, March 7th, after which she would email the board information from the meeting.

Patten said six franchises are interested in Fairmont.

**Monthly EDA Activity Report**

Schuetz and Patten reviewed February’s client report with the board. A total of 17 projects were worked on in the month of February.

**Consider Approval of Area Career Exploration (ACE) Sponsorship**

Kandi Menne, Fairmont Chamber Director spoke before the board to request $2,000 in funding for the Area Career Exploration (ACE) Program. Menne said the program is aimed at encouraging students to stay in Martin County and explore local work and career opportunities. Menne said funding would be used primarily for printed materials that are distributed to students.

Motion by Terfehr, seconded by Bleess to approve $2,000 in funding to support the Area Career Exploration Program. Carried unanimously.

**Discuss Facade Grant and Loan Program**

Discussion was had regarding the establishment of a Facade Grant or Loan Program in Martin County. Patten presented several examples of similar programs in other communities to the board and said a Martin County counterpart would exclude Fairmont and target smaller towns throughout Martin County.

Terfehr said he was unsure how the EDA would have the funds to do a forgivable loan and noted that in the case of a non-forgivable loan, there is the risk of default.

Schultze said the major question is the funding side of it.

Patten said she would prefer the program to start smaller than $20,000-25,000 and noted that even helping one business countywide would be transformative. Patten added that the board has options to make it a normal loan and would have the authority to set interest rates.

Anderson said he thinks the program would have to be small and require a match by the applicant.

Miller asked who would administer the program and collect payments. Patten said Schuetz and herself would undertake that work.

Anderson said he felt more discussion would be necessary. Bleess said perhaps additional budgeting could be done for next year for the program. Terfehr said he would prefer the program follow Fairmont’s, minus the forgivable portion.

**Evaluation of Grant Qualification for Fox Lake Power Plant Decommissioning**

Patten discussed the possibility of applying for the Community Energy Transition Grant through the Minnesota \_ and the IWG Grant from \_ for the decommissioned Fox Lake Power Plant. These grants were put into place to help areas that lost revenue due to the decommissioning of power plants.

Motion by Terfehr, seconded by Bleess to have EDA staff look into applying for both grants. Carried unanimously.

**Consider Approval of Partnership with Fairmont School District**

Schuetz presented a request to the board for the EDA to use remaining grant funds from the SMIF Inclusive and Equitable Communities Grant to fund a translation of the school’s Career and Technical Education textbook. Schuetz said SMIF has approved the use of funds and said he is in contact with Andrew Traetow, Fairmont Schools Superintendent regarding the project. Sschuetz said the cost of translation was estimated at $12,000 and the cost would be split between the schools and the EDA. Since only EDA grant funds would be used, the project would be revenue neutral.

Motion by Terfehr, seconded by Miller to move forward with the partnership. Carried unanimously.

**Approval of Bills**

Motion by Terfehr, seconded by Bleess to approve and ratify the bills for January 9-March 4th, 2024 in the amount of $31,881.20 . Carried unanimously.

**Financial Reports**

Higgins presented the CY2024 year to date activity financial report for March 2024.

**Adjournment**

With no further business to wit,

Motion by Koons, seconded by Terfehr to adjourn the meeting. Carried unanimously.

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m..

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Wes Anderson, Board President

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Tim Terfehr, Board Secretary/Treasurer