

Minutes of Meeting
Trail County Economic Development Commission
September 19, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.
Hatton Eielson School – Hatton, N.D.

The meeting was preceded by a 6:30 p.m. tour of Hatton Eielson School.

Present: Board members: Ben Hershey, Scott Hovde, Jami Hovet, Greg Krieger, Rick Halvorson, Gary Nysveen, Tom Eblen and Roxanne Phipps. Also present: Jim Murphy – Executive Director, Alyssa Short – Project Coordinator and Bryce Haugen – Traill County Tribune.

The meeting was called to order at 7:20 p.m. by Chairman Hershey.

Additions to Agenda

None

Secretary’s Report

Halvorson moved to accept the August 15, 2019 meeting minutes as amended, seconded by Eblen. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

Phipps moved to accept the August 2019 treasurer’s report, seconded by Hovet. Motion carried.

The September checks included the annual hosting and licensing payment to Absolute Marketing for the TCEDC website. Hovet moved to approve payment of checks as submitted, Eblen seconded. Motion carried.

Executive Director’s Report

Murphy said he had meetings with the Department of Commerce and Stefan Hofer regarding the funding for Traill’s ambulance services. He also met with a Blanchard manufacturer that is looking to purchase a tooling and laser-cutting device to grow the company. The company could potentially grow from its existing 18 employees to 24 with the tool, which also could help the company expand its market. TCEDC held its second Lunch & Learn, with approximately 45 attendees, and also hosted a summit with the mayors and EDC directors from Traill County’s largest communities. Feedback was good and TCEDC hopes to hold this again in six months. Murphy noted a home day care in Hillsboro recently closed and the current centers were at or near capacity. He and Short attended the Mayville State part-time jobs fair and organized several meetings regarding financing packages for a Hillsboro processing facility. There likely will be a Flex PACE loan request in the near future.



Murphy met with a Hillsboro entrepreneur regarding the development of space in Hillsboro's industrial park. He and Short also have been working on another APUC grant request for a Hillsboro entity.

Regarding business recruitment, Murphy has been researching shrimp farming as an alternative agriculture product. He also will be helping with Marketplace for Kids Oct. 16 at Mayville State and is looking for volunteers to help talk to the kids about their business ideas. Murphy met with a Hillsboro entrepreneur regarding a recreation/entertainment business in Hillsboro He also met with a Buxton businessperson about a possible production plant in Traill County. This could be a big deal but is a long way off.

A *Grand Forks Herald* reporter contacted the office to talk about housing and other community incentives rural communities are using to help attract residents, so there should be a story about that published in an upcoming issue. Murphy attended the latest Hillsboro pool forum and met with a fundraising group from Grand Forks that has experience with raising funds for similar projects. He also received word that MPCG School received a \$25,000 greenhouse grant that Murphy helped coordinate.

Interest has been revived in the Mayville Nature Trail, so the TCEDC office has been providing information about that for a grant extension. Murphy attended Dr. Van Horn's inauguration as Mayville State's 17th president. Chairman Hershey also attended and spoke on behalf of Traill County.

Natural gas update – DNG and MDU

Apparently Xcel Energy is no longer a player but Dakota Natural Gas and Montana-Dakota Utilities still are exploring options. DNG is collecting burn agreements and franchise agreements and have mentioned they'll look at providing natural gas only if they're the lone provider in Traill County. The Traill County Commission currently is evaluating its contracts. Murphy said that if the county doesn't convert it's likely not a deal breaker because the county isn't a huge consumer; DNG is more concerned with whether the commission is a proponent of the idea economically. DNG reps also mentioned that two new jobs would be created in the county and DNG would be paying hundreds of thousands in property tax easements per year.

Murphy said MDU hasn't been in contact with TCEDC and that, in his opinion, DNG is in a better place to move forward with the project. Murphy also has been in touch with USDA regarding the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), which can provide assistance to ag producers and businesses to convert to natural gas systems. There are similar programs in place for government entities to do the same.

Housing update – Riverwalk – Annexation schedule

Hillsboro is looking to annex the Riverwalk property soon and hopes to have trucks rolling by March. Phase 1 is expected to include some form of multi-family housing.

Nature walk – Mayville

Murphy said Jeff Hovde from Mayville State contacted him and said the project will be scaled back – for example, it likely won't include the dock – but is back on the table if the grant deadline can be extended.

Survey results

Murphy distributed the results of the Community Pulse survey via email to city, county and economic development leaders. A few groups have contacted TCEDC regarding follow-up surveys.

Committee Meetings

The Marketing Committee should meet sometime in the next few months to talk about initiatives for 2020. Possible ideas include reopening signage and child care grants. Hovet suggested meeting before the October or November meeting to discuss next year's plan.

Murphy also mentioned that he had contacted the North Dakota DOT regarding amenities signs. According to North Dakota Century Code, amenities signs can't include specific businesses but that might change. However, the DOT is willing to put up signs at I-29 exits that list generic amenities available – food, lodging, fuel, etc.

Board member terms

Murphy said to let him know if you plan to step down at the end of the year. Les Amb will be rotating off the board with Kurt Elliott moving on to represent the county commission alongside Eblen.

Mobile networking options

Murphy wanted to decide on a teleconferencing or video conference option for meetings before the snow flies. Zoom sounds like the best option, based on various recommendations.

2020 budget

Eblen confirmed the TCEDC budget was approved as submitted.

Board attendance

Hershey requested the board meeting attendance record for the year. Two members have missed more meetings than is allowed by the TCEDC bylaws. Hershey will reach out to those members to see if they're still interested in serving. He noted that he wanted to make sure the county's communities are well represented at meetings.

Eblen noted that the current TCEDC Board of Directors seems to be a connected group and does a good job. He feels the board has gotten better over the years.

Community updates

Hovde – MayPort Farmers elevator expansion isn't yet complete. They were hoping to be done before harvest, which would be huge; the new dryer is four times the size of the previous dryer that burned. Richard Strand is laying the foundation for his new cement plant on the east side of

Trail County EDC – September 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes

town. Finley Motors is actively refurbishing the old Shopko building, which will include a service bay, 10 hoists, a showroom, office space and a detailing area. Hovde has heard the operation will run as Christian Motors instead of Finley Motors and won't be affiliated with a specific line of vehicles. Uglem-Ness in Northwood was purchased by Titan Machinery.

Hovet – The Mayville State presidential inauguration and Farmers Bowl both recently took place, along with the Sportsman's raffle, which was near or at a record-breaking level. Next Tuesday is census day and MSU's enrollments are expected to be up by a percentage or two.

Krieger – Townships are anxiously awaiting gravel. A FEMA rep was in the county recently to assess damage to roads from last winter/spring.

Halvorson – The concrete work is done at the fertilizer plant in Galesburg. Another home is for sale. Farmers need sun and dry weather.

Nysveen – It sounds like Hillsboro will be looking to get another year out of its current outdoor swimming pool. Hillsboro's 1881 Extraction Co. bought some crude oil and is fine-tuning its extraction machinery. Members of the group also are working on a harvester and receiving several calls about that. These projects could have a big economic impact on the county.

Eblen – The Trail County Commission finalized its budgets and county employees were approved for a 3 percent annual raise. Roads and bridges are always hot topics and the county convention is coming up, when commissioners can meet with the DOT. There is upcoming road work on CR11 and CR17. The Kaldorville bridge will be bid in 2020 with construction in 2021. Bid work is ready for the county's parking lot expansion project and work could start either this fall or next spring.

Phipps – Road work in Hatton is coming along and Phipps covered the school projects in her tour. Enrollment numbers at Hatton Eielson School are up.

Hershey – Buxton has a few homes for sale and has a new home replacing one that burned down. The H-CV Homecoming football game is Oct. 11. The Central Valley all-school reunion will be held next July and Buxton Improvement Group will celebrate its Fun Day in conjunction with those activities. Hershey spoke at Dr. Van Horn's inauguration and met him beforehand.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Officer (printed name & office)	Signature	Date
---------------------------------	-----------	------

Recording Secretary (printed name)	Signature	Date
------------------------------------	-----------	------