

Minutes of Meeting
Trail County Economic Development Commission
May 21, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.
Zoom Video Conference Call

Present: Board members: Roxanne Phipps, Gary Nysveen, Tom Eblen, Kurt Elliott, Scott Hovde, Ben Hershey, Dr. Brian Van Horn and Sarah Lovas. Also present: Jim Murphy – Executive Director, Alyssa Short – Project Coordinator, Cole Short – Hillsboro Banner and Jim Johnson – Traill County Tribune.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Phipps.

Additions to Agenda

None

Secretary’s Report

Eblen moved to accept the April 16, 2020 meeting minutes, seconded by Hershey. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

A one-cent reconciliation was noted by A. Short due to an error in the amount of a check clearing the bank. Nysveen moved to accept the April 2020 treasurer’s report, seconded by Van Horn. Motion carried.

Short said the checks included payment of the second disbursement of APUC grant funding for Total Ag Industries. Lovas moved to approve payment of checks as submitted, with only one check signer due to social distancing measures, seconded by Hovde. Motion carried.

Executive Director’s Report

Murphy has been working with Commerce to add local businesses to the statewide resource database for PPE and is working with Degelman and Job Service on a program incentive that Degelman should be receiving. He spoke with Mayville State about a virtual job fair and has been sending weekly COVID-related updates to 300-plus businesses in Traill County. The office has continued its work assisting a possible value-added ag manufacturer who has a site selected in Mayville but is looking for investors for a facility that would transform wheat straw into biodegradable materials. They also helped a business locate PPE as it looks to reopen.

Murphy organized a letter-writing campaign to support Dakota Natural Gas’ federal permitting and has been working with a local business on a possible Flex PACE loan request for a planned expansion. He has been providing materials as he fields inquiries from interested developers for Hillsboro’s Riverwalk Addition and explored a possible RFP request for two cities in Traill County (only to be thwarted by immediate availability of natural gas).



A new business, Great Plains Fireworks, is set to start construction and plans to open in June on the west side of I-29 in Hillsboro. Murphy talked to a local business owner about assistance available for a restaurant in Mayville and spoke with a local business and the City of Hillsboro about possible tax incentives. He also has been in talks with Child Care Aware about the possible need for more child care facilities in Hillsboro as a licensed provider plans to close this summer.

TCEDC continues to build an Instagram and Twitter audience and continued maintenance on the “Come Home to Trail” campaign. Murphy also spoke with legislative candidates about wireless infrastructure needs in the county because the current service doesn’t blanket the entire county. Murphy and Short have been spending several hours per week in their rolls as public information officers for Traill-Steele Unified Command, producing videos and other PSAs, print and social media materials, press releases, etc. as the Command team deals with the COVID-19 pandemic. Murphy also will be helping at upcoming testing events.

Jordahl update

Murphy hopes to see dirt moving within a month. He heard of a hang-up with communications between the city’s and Jordahl’s engineers but it sounds like all systems are a go.

Riverwalk update

The project is proceeding slowly; the latest issue resolved was access from the county road. Nysveen added that it was decided that rural water will be supplying the addition with water.

NDPERS limits & online billpay authorization

Short asked for confirmation on the retirement contribution paid by TCEDC as the office looks to move to its own NDPERS account. Currently Traill County pays a larger contribution than the state’s default rate. Lovas moved to keep the contribution percentages the same, seconded by Nysveen. Motion carried.

Short also noted that she needs to sign up for billpay with The Goose River Bank and would prefer that guidance from the board be reflected in the official minutes before she proceeds. Lovas moved to approve Short signing up for billpay, as long as Murphy also has the password, seconded by Nysveen. Motion carried.

P-card

Short is completing the paperwork for the p-card signup and has requested one card for the office, with Murphy as the cardholder and herself as the card administrator (the two cannot be the same). She requested the second-highest level of access for the card, meaning Murphy can use it for both travel and non-travel-related expenses. Short also requested that the board indicate a spending limit per cycle, as well as an optional single transaction limit if they wished. Hershey

suggested \$5,000, with the ability to increase that if needed. Hovde moved to approve a \$5,000 spending limit per cycle, seconded by Lovas. Motion carried.

ND Public Health Insurance Trust

The North Dakota Public Health Insurance Trust is a new entity with whom the N.D. Insurance Department is working to offer group health insurance (and other types of insurance) to public entities in the state. TCEDC stands to lose its NDPERS health insurance when the office moves to its own account and is no longer eligible because it doesn't meet the minimum number of employees – however, the office could qualify under NDPHIT's group plan. Short submitted the office's information to NDPHIT so TCEDC can receive a quote; Traill County is doing the same. Short noted this does not obligate TCEDC to accept any particular quote, but the rates could be better than the office having to switch to a private insurance policy.

Eblen left the meeting at approximately 7:30 p.m.

Beautification grants/Child care program grants

Murphy said that in the near future he would like to get the marketing committee together to discuss beautification grants – and possibly child care grants, as well. Businesses from multiple cities have requested this, and TCEDC has extra marketing budget available due to the Partners in Marketing grant reimbursement being issued in 2020 rather than 2019. MPEDC has a template TCEDC could use. Murphy would like the committee to meet as soon as it's feasible to get this program activated.

Bank of ND disaster programs

Murphy gave a brief description of BND loan programs that are available for COVID-19 disaster relief. The first round of funding was federal through SBA; these loans are specific to North Dakota.

Community updates

Nysveen – Paul Geray's Stars & Stripes group is selling flags to be put up for the holidays. More than 100 residents and businesses had signed up thus far. The Hillsboro Rec District held an online forum. An empty lot in Hillsboro is available for the city to purchase; there is a possibility of HEDC being involved but the lot needs quite a bit of work to be saleable.

Hershey – Central Valley graduation is scheduled for the upcoming weekend and is limited to grads, parents, siblings and grandparents. There is a lot of turnover in homes in Buxton. The City Council had to rebid their water and road projects due to both budget changes and the lack of detail in the maps that were provided. Hershey hasn't heard if the timelines have changed.

Hershey also noted he was laid off and rehired in the same day when his company was acquired. He will be working on a global transportation weather project and is hoping to avoid a move.

Trail County EDC – May 21, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Lovas – Hillsboro High School’s graduation is this weekend. Banners of the seniors are lining Hillsboro’s downtown corridor. For the Stars & Stripes project, volunteers are placing the flags for every holiday. Spring planting has been slow, high prevent planting percentages in the area. Farmers also are struggling to get beets in. She’s concerned about the indirect business consequences of the high prevent plant rates, especially for co-ops and ag suppliers in the area.

Hovde – Is proud to be planting one field. The water table is very high so a lot of ground isn’t yet planted. Seed companies could be hit hard. Dakota Boys Restaurant closed and was replaced by B&B Family Restaurant. The Highway 200 bridge is being repaired. Hovde also noted he was in the midst of a 14-day quarantine due to someone testing positive at his wife’s place of work.

Van Horn – The N.D. University System said universities will open in the fall. There is a huge economic impact in the area in terms of having the students actually on campus. Only one person affiliated with Mayville State had tested positive for COVID-19 thus far, and it was a remote worker. MSU set up procedures for coronavirus-related notifications and has its own contact tracer on campus. The university currently is making plans for onsite social distancing for fall classes. Graduation ceremonies also have been moved to Farmers Bowl weekend in September.

Elliott – The Galesburg area is enjoying the moisture, he said sarcastically. About half the fields won’t be planted. More ballots have been turned in for the June primary election than the auditor’s office has seen in a while. Social distancing continues in county office. Galesburg is quiet.

Phipps – Hatton will have graduation this Sunday. It will be closed to the public and each graduate is allowed six guests, sitting in pods. Workers and residents at Hatton Prairie Village were tested and there were no positive results. The LTC center hasn’t allowed visitors since March 6. HPV received PPP funds and additional money to help with expenses considering there are no new admissions during this time. Naastad Brothers currently has crews in Lisbon and Devils Lake. They’re hiring a business manager and are looking for full-time laborers.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Officer (printed name & office)	Signature	Date
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Recording Secretary (printed name)	Signature	Date
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