

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Trails County Economic Development Commission**  
**December 17, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom Video Conference Call**

**Present:** Board members: Gary Nysveen, Tom Eblen, Roxanne Phipps, Sarah Lovas, Kurt Elliott, Brian Van Horn, Ben Hershey, Cassie Braaten. Also attending: Jim Murphy – Executive Director, Alyssa Short – Project Coordinator.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairwoman Phipps, who reminded participants that the meeting was being recorded for later viewing by the press.

**Secretary’s report**

Van Horn moved to accept the November 19, 2020 meeting minutes, seconded by Nysveen. Motion carried.

Hershey moved to accept the November 23-24, 2020 email meeting minutes, seconded by Eblen. Motion carried.

Elliott moved to accept the Dec. 2-3, 2020 email meeting minutes, seconded by Nysveen. Motion carried.

**Treasurer’s report**

Short said that most of the beautification grant reimbursements have been paid. Some updates are being made to the office. Short also said the insurance payout dates will differ as the office transitions to the NDPHIT group for health and life, and the initial insurance trust deposit was set to be paid near the end of December. Lovas moved to receive and file the treasurer’s report, seconded by Van Horn. Motion Carried.

Lovas moved to approve checks with one signer, seconded by Eblen. Motion carried.

Short noted the current tax collection report, which shows that the office has received more than expected for 2020.

**Executive Director’s report**

Murphy said that despite COVID, it’s been a really good month for the office and there are really interesting things happening. He said he met with a local grocer about additional grant opportunities with ERG to help with COVID transmission mitigation and the office has done a lot of work with the hospitality ERG.n

TCEDC has been working on site selection for some Mayville and Hillsboro businesses. They spoke with a Mayville property owner about the sale of a large building between Mayville and Portland; the owners are more interested in selling now than they were before and might actually be listing it with commercial brokers. Murphy said he’ll contact previously interested businesses if that’s the case.



Murphy said the addition of natural gas coming to Traill County in the next year brought one of the previous RFPs we'd done back from the dead. Hillsboro currently was one of five sites still in the running. Murphy said he was optimistically pessimistic.

TCEDC continues to work with emergency assistance on COVID and is working with Traill-Steele Unified Command on the planning for the distribution of vaccines. They helped with the group's ugly Christmas mask contest and will tally votes tomorrow night.

Murphy said the office staff has attended a lot of networking projects this month and also has done a lot of work on getting the accounts set up with NDPHIT and NDPERS. A new board member from Galesburg was set to join the board but ended up declining due to scheduling concerns. He's requesting any suggestions of a member from the Clifford-Galesburg area.

### **Evaluation plan/review recap**

The Executive Committee met the previous Thursday night for Murphy's review. Hershey said the group had a very good review and changed up the evaluation form a bit to try and streamline a few things. He said that overall, Murphy is doing an excellent job and his strong suit is communication skills and coordination. TCEDC's goals going into the year changed due to COVID, and when you look at what happened within the county, TCEDC really stepped to the plate to help out the county for being information coordinators when there was so much confusion and uncertainty. While this wasn't necessarily part of the strategic plan, everything Murphy was doing was assisting our businesses by keeping people healthy, reaching out to businesses to make sure they had what they needed and were aware of the grant programs. Hershey said Murphy and Short work excellent together; they play off each other well and make sure things get done. Murphy received very high remarks in every category.

Nysveen said Murphy kept the train on the track despite COVID, and Phipps expressed her appreciation for Murphy's and Short's dedication and their work as PIOs. Eblen said Murphy got a very high review in all categories and said he's glad Murphy is here doing what he's doing.

### **Strategic plan feedback & plan**

Murphy hasn't heard any feedback from the board; he said he and Short will be working on the strategic plan going forward in 2021 but it will take a while. He plans to remove the agenda item from next month's meeting but it will be a priority. Hershey added that it's important to look at how we position Traill County with the addition of natural gas because it's a huge opportunity for building business, adding jobs, etc.

### **New board member**

A new board member was lined up to replace Rick Halvorson but he couldn't make the commitment, especially in the summer months. Please pass along to Murphy any board member suggestions.

Braaten joined the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

### **Officers**

Hershey presented the proposed slate of officers from the Nominating Committee (Hershey and David Knudsvig):

- Chair – Nysveen
- Vice Chair – Scott Hovde
- Treasurer – Lovas

Phipps opened the floor for further nominations.

Lovas moved that nominations for chair cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Nysveen. Van Horn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Lovas moved that nominations for vice chair cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Hovde. Nysveen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Lovas nominated Hershey for treasurer. Hershey respectfully declined the nomination. Nysveen moved that nominations for treasurer cease and to cast a unanimous ballot for Lovas. Hershey seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Bylaws & policy manual updates**

The group began reviewing the tracked changes in the bylaws and policy manual but Lovas said she would prefer to read through the documents – especially the bylaws, since those define how the group functions – and vote on the changes at the next meeting. Murphy confirmed the vote could wait until January. Lovas asked Short to re-send the documents to the board after the meeting and request that they review the changes so they can make a well-informed decision at the next meeting.

Lovas moved to table both the bylaws and the policy manual changes until the next meeting and said she also will make the motion to bring it back from the table at the next meeting. Van Horn seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Short said anyone should contact her if they're having problems reading the marked-up version; she can scan a printed copy of the marked-up changes in that case.

### **Check signers for 2021**

Eblen, a current check signer, rotates off the board so a fourth signer is needed – preferably one in the Hillsboro area. Nysveen moved to name himself, Hovde, Phipps and Lovas as check signers for 2021. Elliott seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **2021 mileage rates**

Short said the 2021 IRS mileage rates had not yet been released, but she requested a motion on whether TCEDC would follow the county's rates so that the mileage calculations for January could be entered correctly prior to checks being entered for approval in January. Hershey moved that TCEDC follow the 2021 mileage rates set by the county commission. Lovas seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Community updates**

Braaten – Rexine Family Eyecare open at its new office in downtown Mayville. Corner Nutrition, an Herbalife shake shop, also is open now.

Elliott – Will work on finding someone to take over Halvorson's position on the board. The fertilizer plant between Portland and Hatton is coming along nicely.

Van Horn – Had the first of many reports for the biennium budget process, which begins in earnest in January. MSU is including the \$1.6 million capital ask for natural gas boilers. The fall semester ended today. The new rapid COVID test is being used a lot and MSU is getting certification to test MSU students to help locate positive tests more quickly. Positive results probably will require a second PCR test, but the early detection helps with the spread.

Lovas – Hillsboro tried to have some traditional Christmas festivities, such as Christmas lights and tree-decorating contests, along with a snowman-building competition. It was nice to see that things were tried and nice to see some Christmas things going on. There is lots of activity at the site of the upcoming brewery; it looks like the foundation has been poured and that they're boxing in the floor. The Learning Circle's expansion is growing as well.

Hershey – School wraps up for Central Valley after this week and the students get two weeks off for Christmas. A few houses have been moving on the market in the last 6-8 weeks and there are new families in town. Buxton's mayor passed away yesterday morning and no one's sure how that will play out. You can see a bunch of festive Christmas lights if you drive through town on 21. Last week's Banner featured a story on Hershey's recent elk-hunting trip.

Eblen – The Traill County Commission has one more meeting before year-end. They're trying to decide on CARES funds allocations. Eblen later noted that he's enjoyed working with the board. He said people are active and it's nice to do something when people are engaged.

Nysveen – The Jordahl project continues, with one section fully enclosed, one partially enclosed and one being erected. Hopefully soon after the first of the year Hillsboro will have some rental housing to bring people in.

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Phipps – Hatton Prairie Village residents and workers have a date when they’ll get their COVID vaccines. Hatton held its Christmas celebration the first weekend in December with drive-bys of Santa and a tree in the center of town that’s lit up at night. The beautification committee put up lots of decorations throughout the town. Every year a local artists makes “Christmas in Hatton” numbered ornaments; this year’s artists are from Portland. Hatton Eielson School gets out Tuesday for Christmas vacation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

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