

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Trail County Economic Development Commission**  
**November 19, 2020 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom Video Conference Call**

**Present:** Board members: Gary Nysveen, Tom Eblen, Roxanne Phipps, Sarah Lovas, Kurt Elliott, Scott Hovde, David Knudsvig. Also attending: Jim Murphy – Executive Director, Alyssa Short – Project Coordinator, Cole Short – Hillsboro Banner, Jim Johnson – Traill County Tribune.

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairwoman Phipps. Phipps recommended rearranging the agenda until quorum was present.

**Executive Director’s report**

Murphy said a big chunk of time this month was devoted to publicizing CARES Act grant dollars and encouraging bars, restaurants, movie theaters, golf courses, etc. for the Hospitality ERG and encouraging them to get that money.

TCEDC is attempting to create a recruiting system, especially for manufacturers in the county. Murphy said the office is looking at a whole “workforce workshed,” or an area approach. Northern Cass has a career counselor who helps place students with companies as part of their curriculum; she and Murphy have worked together to place students with two manufacturers in Traill in the last few weeks.

The staff also worked with a potential Hatton business on some site selection assistance. Murphy said there are quite a few people looking for space in the various communities. He received more education on the Service New Jobs Training Program, which will result in some money for TUG. He talked with a Hillsboro landowner on doing an environmental study on their land to ready it for sale, and also had consultations and meetings with Commerce regarding a potential manufacturer in the market.

Murphy presented the completed analytics on the last quarter of the “Come Home to Traill” campaign. The total reach was 306,373, with 2,816 conversions (clicks) into the TCEDC website. The average cost per click was 80 cents. One board member asked whether there were phone calls or significant inquiries from people wanting to move based on the campaign. Murphy said people are moving in and the office has received inquiring from people. He can’t necessarily draw a correlation but also can’t say there isn’t one. Can’t draw a correlation, but can’t say it wasn’t; there just isn’t date to prove a correlation.

The office received several inquiries from people looking for homes and also connected the Sanford Consumer Council with a Mayville nonprofit looking for assistance for a project. The office staff also continued its emergency assistance work, as well, especially with regard to the county and statewide mask mandates. Murphy said the press releases, ads, social media, etc. consume a lot of time but he applauded county commissioners and the push they made for the mask mandate. He and Short attended a lot of meetings this month and also completed their Upper Midwest Basic Economic Development course.

**Additions to agenda**



Phipps added the updated lease agreement to the new business section of the agenda.

### **Set up reviews**

Phipps would like to set up Murphy's review Dec. 10 at 7 p.m. Murphy will set up a Zoom call for the Executive Committee. Murphy and Short will have reviews and evaluations sent by Dec. 1.

Hovde joined the meeting at 7:22 p.m., giving the board quorum.

### **Secretary's report**

Eblen moved to accept the October 15, 2020 meeting minutes, seconded by Lovas. Motion carried.

### **Treasurer's report**

Short mentioned the transfer to the reserve fund, as well as the reimbursement check from the state for travel-related expenses for Murphy and Short to attend FEMA training. Nysveen moved to accept the October 2020 treasurer's report, seconded by Hovde. Motion carried.

Short submitted the list of monthly payments, which included paper checks, scheduled Billpay payments and p-card payments. Notable payments included IEDC dues, the bill for the 2019 audit, beautification mini-grant payments and increased printer costs. Lovas moved to approve checks, seconded by Elliott. Motion carried. Lovas then amended her original motion to indicate that checks would be approved with one signer, seconded by Elliott. Motion carried.

Short noted the current tax collection report, which shows that the office has received approximately \$4,000 more than expected for 2020.

### **Training scholarships**

Murphy gave presentation about primary sector businesses and what the designation means. There currently are 10 primary sector-certified businesses with addresses in the county and he and Short identified at least nine more that could benefit from this designation. They will contact those businesses and talk to them about the benefits of getting certified. Murphy also discussed the anecdotal information he's received from area businesses regarding the need for and benefits of providing employee training.

Murphy suggested allocating \$5,000 from the 2020 education budget to devote to this program and said he hasn't seen a similar program like this in other area EDCs. Murphy recommended five grants of up to \$1,000 to reimburse primary sector businesses for training-related costs. Elliott said he had a little trouble with the program not helping new businesses; Murphy agreed that it's better to get a new business but that's tough, and it's important for existing businesses to keep their employees, too. Knudsvig joined the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

Other board members asked how long the program would extend into the future why it would be targeted toward primary sector businesses. Murphy said the continuation would depend on budgets, and that primary sector was the current target because they often have greater training needs – more safety protocols, so many different roles, etc. Nysveen said that if the program is successful he'd like to see it expand to other types of businesses in the future.

Nysveen moved to spend up to \$5,000 with a maximum of \$1,000 per business for training scholarships for primary sector businesses. Knudsvig seconded the motion. Motion carried.

### **Nominating committees**

Ben Hershey, the chair of the Nominating Committee, wasn't at the meeting but Knudsvig said he and Hershey would meet and reach out to people to get a slate of officers prepared to vote on in the December meeting.

### **Other committee meeting schedule?**

Short noted that she'd like the Marketing Committee to meet to outline 2021 goals; the new committee will meet after the 2021 committees are set.

### **Strategic plan feedback**

Murphy requested input on the existing strategic plan but didn't receive any; he and Short will work on it and send something to the board. Board members are free to send feedback to Murphy in the interim.

### **Evaluation plan feedback**

Murphy and Phipps will meet about this; Phipps will contact Murphy about a discussion time.

### **Audit review**

TCEDC received its audit, which was rolled into the overall audit for the county. There was very little in the report regarding TCEDC and very few corrections for the whole county. Murphy will send the audit to the board. He said the notes were the same ones we usually receive: Workflows are difficult with a small office and a limited number of staffers.

### **New board members and board renewals**

Halvorson is leaving the board and Murphy reached out to someone Halvorson suggested as a replacement. If anyone else has other names from that area, let Murphy know. Phipps confirmed that she would like another three-year term on the board.

### **Lease**

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TCEDC hasn't had a rent increase in several years; LEP Management is asking \$25 more per month for a 2-year lease beginning in January. Eblen moved to approve lease agreement. Nysveen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**Community updates**

Nysveen – Jordahl work is progressing and the addition to the day care is being worked on. The old Banner building was torn down and footings are being poured for a new brewery. One new house is being built. The city of Hillsboro is looking to hire a contractor for inspections and maintaining building ordinances. The Stars & Stripes program was successful. The HEDC half-cent sales tax passed so some of those funds will start coming in in July.

Lovas – The natural gas pipeline is being welded and assembled several miles from the MN border.

Eblen – The General Election went smoothly and voters approved the 911 increase. The county passed a mask mandate which will stay in effect even with the statewide mandate being issued. The courthouse remains closed to the public. A trailer west of the courthouse will be used for COVID testing.

Knudsvig –Township roads were bladed again. Buxton is hosting drive-in turkey bingo tomorrow night. UpNorth Organics has its sign up.

Elliott – A Blanchard farmstead was demolished and farm work is done in the area. The county mask mandate made a difference in the smaller towns in the county.

Phipps – The Hatton City Council is wrapping up a \$4.5 million street project and entertaining bids for repair or replacement of the water tower, which dates back to 1940s. School is still in person and students wear masks all day.

Murphy noted that due to COVID, the board meetings will be virtual for the time being.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 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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