

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**Trail County Economic Development Commission**  
**February 18, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.**  
**Zoom Video Conference Call**

**Present:** Board members: Gary Nysveen, Scott Hovde, Sarah Lovas, Roxanne Phipps, Brian Van Horn, Cassie Braaten, Kurt Elliott, Jami Hovet and Ben Hershey. Also attending: Jim Murphy – TCEDC Executive Director, Alyssa Short – TCEDC Project Coordinator and Jim Johnson – Traill County Tribune.

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairman Nysveen.

**Introductions**

Jami Hovet, a new at-large board member, introduced herself. She currently works at MinnKota Power and was previously a board member representing Mayville State.

Murphy started recording the meeting at 7:04 p.m. at the request of the absentee press.

**Agenda additions**

None

**Secretary's report**

Hershey moved to accept the January 21, 2021 meeting minutes with corrections of two typos noted by Phipps and Lovas, seconded by Phipps. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's report/approve checks**

Short noted that Murphy pushed back on the per-copy rate being charged by Loffler; the rate apparently had a misplaced decimal point so TCEDC now has a credit of several hundred dollars. The invoice for the 2021 Flex PACE buydown installation for Hillsboro Body Shop also was received from BND. Lovas moved to receive and file the treasurer's report, seconded by Hershey. Motion carried.

Hovde joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Lovas moved to approve checks, seconded by Hershey. Short asked if the motion should be made with one check signer; Lovas suggested returning to two check signers. Motion carried.

**Executive Director's report**

Murphy said COVID put the kibosh on the annual job fair and career expo so he and Short are working on finding a workaround. The Traill United Group directors held a meeting Tuesday night and approved a virtual job fair and career expo. A company out of Maryland is adapting a college visit fair to use for Traill County's employers.



The office has been offering to assist with a few child care concerns in Buxton and Hatton. Staffers also worked with local manufacturers on working toward primary sector certification and automation tax credits. The office also continues to be a conduit with residents, businesses and Dakota Natural Gas in terms of handling questions and requests.

Murphy and Short completed multiple modules of IEDC training: Big Messaging for Small Towns, Business Retention and Expansion, and Credit Analysis training. As PIOs for Traill-Steele Unified Command, they also continued work with social media and Murphy helped with a vaccination clinic at Hillsboro Armory.

Murphy noted that the state still has HERG funds available for hospitality businesses.

**Committee assignments – Jami Hovet**

Nysveen added Hovet to the Organization Development committee and said he'd contact her about the second committee.

**New board members**

Murphy noted that the board still has openings for a director from the Clifford-Galesburg area and one from the Traill County portion of Reynolds.

**TUG meeting recap/online job fair**

Murphy discussed the upcoming virtual career expo & job fair and how it will be set up. Exhibitor fees are \$200 apiece and Murphy is hoping for 20-25 vendors. TUG will subsidize the fee by \$50 per vendor.

Murphy said TUG is going to try to recruit more paying members and also examine its mission and purpose. Murphy's understanding of what TUG was set up to do was to help support TCEDC's mission, and a big chunk of it was set up to get the Jordahl townhomes built. TUG is figuring out its current mission which, at the moment, is primarily the job fair and lunch & learns.

Murphy also noted that Brianna Abell of Degelman Industries is a new TUG board member.

**Marketing Committee update**

Van Horn said the Marketing Committee met earlier in the evening and recapped that 2020 beautification and child care grant program, noting that approximately \$17,000 in grant awards in late summer/early fall brought in roughly \$125,000 worth of investment. Murphy added that a lot of the work was performed by local contractors, multiplying that impact.

The Marketing Committee recommended that TCEDC offer the grant program again this year, changing the timeline to April and May, with an application due date of May 14. Projects will need to be future projects or have started just this spring.

Van Horn moved to approve a budget of \$20,000 for beautification and child care grants for 2021, seconded by Phipps. Nysveen and Hershey asked questions about timeline and budget, and Van Horn clarified that \$20,000 would be the maximum outlay. Nysveen and Hershey both recommended adjusting the application wording to require a business investment match, rather than matching with other matching funds, but left the motion as it stood. Motion carried.

Van Horn said another topic discussed by the Marketing Committee was to budget \$3,000 for the continuation of the “Come Home to Trail” marketing campaign because of the benefit of marketing the county.

Van Horn moved to budget \$3,000 for the “Come Home to Trail” marketing, seconded by Lovas. Nysveen asked if the same materials would be used, and Murphy said TCEDC could do some edits but the raw material is there. Motion carried.

#### **March meeting – need to move/preapprove**

Murphy and Short will be in training in Bismarck the week of the usual March meeting and asked the board if they’d prefer to move the March meeting or have Murphy call in from the car and likely hit some cows in the process.

Lovas moved to have the March meeting on Thursday, March 25, seconded by Hershey. Motion carried.

Short asked about preapproval of the BCBS dental and vision insurance premium check for the county, because that will need to be submitted prior to March 25.

Hershey moved to approve the check due to late meeting, seconded by Lovas. Motion carried.

#### **Community updates**

Hovde – Two or three houses are going up in Riverwood in Mayville. Crop prices have come up, so it’s a much more comfortable year for the ag economy. Interest rates remain suppressed. Clifford Elevator purchased MayPort Aviation and is taking over that spraying operation.

Phipps – Hatton Eielson School is in the process of a superintendent search; they interviewed four candidates today and work on continuing to find a person for the job. A new bakery/café is planned in Hatton; she’s not sure if there’s a formal opening yet but people are working in the

building, which is the old Double D's restaurant on Railroad Avenue. Hatton needs more homes for new residents.

Elliott – Still looking for new TCEDC board member from the Clifford-Galesburg area. The Trail County Commission voted to extend the mask mandate a little longer.

Lovas – A little more building has done at the brewery in Hillsboro and improvements are being made at the Learning Circle. A recent big change is the number of people who said they've been vaccinated for COVID. Hillsboro Drug is distributing the Pfizer vaccine and Trail County's vaccination levels are higher than the state levels. The active case positivity percentage is quite low.

Van Horn – Mayville State is having a good spring. He offered a "huge thank you" to Murphy, Short and TCEDC as a whole for their level of support of MSU's capital project request, which continues to be part of the budgeting process. The university is looking at an April/May timeline for vaccinating education professionals. The Comets men's basketball team won their conference championship last Saturday night. An interim athletic director will start in March after the recent AD left to move closer to home. A discussion about the capital project request ensued; Short said if anyone is interested in sending letters of support to legislators, she and Murphy could help provide talking points. Hershey and Van Horn also noted upcoming legislative forums in Hillsboro and Mayville and said those are good times to ask the District 20 legislators about the issue

Braaten – Construction on two houses in Riverwood hopefully will start next month. Mayville has more child care needs, too.

Hershey – Received his first COVID vaccine shot and will be getting the second dose next week. A business recently reached out to the city of Buxton regarding natural gas, so there definitely are opportunities for other locations in the county. He thinks there is enough interest to cast a wider net bring interested businesses to the table to discuss this with Dakota Natural Gas. The Buxton City Council appointed a new mayor instead of holding a special election: Travis Soderberg was appointed to serve out rest of former mayor Gene Rosholt's term. Hershey also was appointed to fill the vacancy on the council. Hershey noted the Banner's recent report on Buxton's child care issues following a state audit; essentially the main issue is that Buxton Daycare has a large percentage of its operational costs funded by gaming. If those gaming funds go away the day care won't be solvent. Hershey will be keeping tabs on the day care issues in the community and will bring them to the TCEDC board as needed; the day care also will be expanding its bathroom facilities, which will allow more children to be enrolled, and they need to raise employee rates to be competitive.

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Hovet – No updates today other than that it’s good to be back. She inquired about the census numbers for the county; Murphy said there are no numbers available yet that are set in stone.

Nysveen – Jordahl Custom Homes has units to rent now in Hillsboro and Nysveen is hoping for a grand opening in the next few months because “it’s been a long three years.” A developer’s agreement for Hillsboro’s Riverwalk Addition likely is going in front of the city council soon and is on the HEDC agenda for next week. Degelman Industries is going to be an OEM manufacturer for John Deere; Nysveen is hoping this work will be done in Hillsboro.

Hershey moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lovas. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 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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