

Minutes of Meeting
Trail County Economic Development Commission
August 19, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Trail County EDC Conference Room, Hillsboro, N.D. and Zoom conference call

Present: Gary Nysveen, Kurt Elliott, Sarah Lovas, Judd Wilson, Jami Hovet, Roxanne Phipps, Scott Hovde, David Knudsvig, Brian Van Horn. Also attending: Jim Murphy – TCEDC Executive Director, Alyssa Short – TCEDC Project Coordinator, Cole Short – Hillsboro Banner and Jim Johnson – Traill County Tribune.

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

Agenda additions

None.

Secretary's report

Wilson moved to accept the July 15, 2021 meeting minutes, seconded by Elliott. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report/approve checks

Short said the office paid out a few more mini-grants and that most of the tax allotment for the year had been received. Elliott moved to approve the treasurer's report, seconded by Lovas. Motion carried.

Short noted several expenses related to the recent ribbon-cutting event but said American Crystal and Dakota Natural Gas would be sending reimbursement checks for most of the costs. Hovet moved to approve checks, seconded by Lovas. Motion carried.

Executive Director's report

Murphy said there has been a lot of discussion about the "workforce drought" and that there are 1 million more job openings right now than people looking for work. Some bigger employers are doing well, while others are struggling to get enough workers (possibly complicated by COVID). He and Short talked with Buxton Mayor Travis Soderberg about making contact with Dakota Natural Gas to talk about the feasibility of adding Buxton to the line. Staffers met with a building owner who potentially has office space available for rent or for a WeWork situation but nothing final. They also have been working with land developers on solutions for affordable housing, as well as several meetings about the Wells Fargo building in Hillsboro. The natural gas ribbon-cutting was a success and got a lot of attention.

A Lunch & Learn is planned for Sept. 29 in the Luckasen Room at Mayville State, with Patrick Bertagnolli to speak either Oct. 20 or 27.



Murphy and Short completed FEMA’s advanced PIO training and have been working a bit more on COVID-related tasks again. They’ve also been pulling together information requested for the 2020 audit.

Murphy included a note about the new Central Valley principal in the packet; the new principal can’t find housing and the need for housing in the county is acute.

Lunch & Learn – Sept. 29

More information will be provided when the Lunch & Learn is advertised.

Dakota Natural Gas Ribbon

Murphy included a note from DNG CEO Greg Palmer, as well as a congratulatory letter from Rep. Kevin Cramer.

Health insurance

The county is working through potential changes to health care coverage, which all is part of employee retention; Murphy listed a variety of incentives employers are using to help keep their workers. Adding paid family health coverage this year isn’t really an option; Murphy said it would be difficult for the board to make that major a break compared to what the rest of the county is offering.

He did mention that the board can make changes to payroll of its own volition and included a salary/benefit comparison sheet. Murphy said he feels both he and Short have high-performing skillsets, as well as an expanded set of duties. Elliott said the county also has been having discussions about the cost/benefit analysis of providing paid family coverage and how that benefits some employees but not others.

Strategic plan

Murphy and Short have been working on updating the strategic plan, with the addition of natural gas being a focal point.

Document-ready site certification

This is another area Murphy and Short are researching. It’s very expensive to do environmental reviews of saleable property but many companies look for that type of certification before they’ll even consider a piece of land. Murphy said Fargo has a good template TCEDC could start with to be document ready even if a piece of property isn’t necessarily shovel ready.

Property availability inventory

This also is part of the long-term strategic plan. Murphy said he and Short would love to compile a database of possible parcels of land and their details/status. The biggest challenges are finding ways to conduct the inventory or even get landowners to participate.

Transfer to revolving loan fund:

Short asked for the first \$10,000 transfer from the general fund to the reserve fund. Hovde said he would do that the following day.

Community updates

Wilson – Galesburg is hosting a pork feed in September. There are two plots with corn available.

Elliott – The county commission has been discussing the Wells Fargo building, which is used for Social Services offices. Work continues on road projects and the courthouse dome, and budget discussions.

Braaten – Has a meeting next week regarding housing in Mayville. There’s still a lack of homes for sale and the city needs rentals. A lot of younger families are staying in town; there are no homes to purchase, or to rent in the meantime. More child care spots are needed, as well.

Lovas – The Learning Circle in Hillsboro finished its addition and held an open house for kids going into pre-K. Natural gas is hooked up in her neighborhood and is ready to go. Propane tanks in backyards are starting to disappear. Housing continues to be an issue.

Hovde – Nothing to report.

Knudsvig – Expressed thanks for mentioning the issue with the Central Valley principal finding housing; she and her large family currently are living in a camper at Stump Lake. The townships are looking at turning over township tax assessments to the county.

Van Horn – Mayville State is prepping for the start of the school year on Tuesday. Census Day is in mid-September. Housing is an issue; enrollment is fairly maxed out due to housing limitations, so housing will be one of the next projects at the university.

Phipps – The Grand Forks Herald story did a story about Bernie’s Addition in Hatton. Hatton Eielson School just finished its second day of the school year. Hatton Learning Center is advertising openings for preschool students.

Hovet – Her company is one that added an identity theft benefit for employees. A young Northwood man passed away; both Portland and Mayville were hosting events to help the family.

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Nysveen – Jordahl Custom Homes is building more duplexes in Hillsboro. In the Riverwood Development west of I-29, most of the storm sewer is in and a site is being prepped for the construction of townhomes by Anchor Ingredients. The city of Hillsboro’s budget includes an allocation of \$20,000 each for façade and beautification projects. The city also looking at using a county-employed assessor. Work on Sundae Brew is moving forward, with the walls up and equipment in. Goose River Brewing also moves forward with equipment in, walls up and electricians working. The city is having electrical problems to the west side of interstate as a result of Anchor’s expansion. They’re looking at what they may need to do to accommodate more industry. The Reno’s Sport Bar building in Hillsboro was sold to Scott Walden, the city’s veterinarian, who is going to move his practice there. He plans to bring on another vet and some vet techs.

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

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