

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT POWERS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING

**MINUTES**

June 10, 2015

EDC Office, Willmar

Present: Denis Anderson, Marv Calvin, Ron Christianson, Roger Imdieke, Harlan Madsen and Doug Reese

Staff: Steven Renquist, Executive Director and Jean Spaulding, Assistant Director

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Harlan Madsen called the meeting to order at approximately 12:00 noon and reviewed expectations for the meeting.

**Executive Director retirement.** Steve Renquist noted he will be 66 years of age in September with July being the first month he is eligible for Rule 90; thus, he chose his retirement to be effective August 1, 2015. He informed the board he is available to continue his employment for a few months after July, if needed, however, the EDC has competent staff to continue the EDC's work.

[Roger Imdieke joined the meeting.]

Renquist noted the boards' planning sessions to determine the 2016 work plan and 2016 budget have been postponed until the hiring process has been determined. A preliminary budget must be submitted by September 15 to Kandiyohi County.

Mayor Marv Calvin thanked Renquist for his year's of service on behalf of the city of Willmar, providing 90 days notice of his retirement and being flexible with his retirement date.

[Renquist and Jean Spaulding were excused from the meeting.]

**Search process.** Chairperson Madsen indicated the Executive Director's Employment Agreement and job description should be reviewed by the board before the next meeting to determine if anything is missing from either document (see attached). This board needs to determine the process for hiring a new Executive Director and what qualities a new director should have. Chairperson Madsen informed the board of past processes in hiring an Executive Director.

Board members noted the importance of a time frame and keeping the process moving to hire an Executive Director as soon as possible, but not rushing the process just to get it done by a certain date. It was suggested the board could determine a preliminary budget for 2016 before a planning session is held as the amount can be lowered if necessary.

The board discussed whether or not to hire an interim director with some board members being in favor of an interim and some against. Chairperson Madsen indicated that sometimes the expectation is for the interim to move into the position and sometimes not; clear communication

would be necessary as to the expectations of an interim, the hiring process to be followed and qualifications necessary for an applicant.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Ron Christianson, not to hire a designated interim for the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission, but use present staff. All present voted in favor by roll call.

The board discussed whether or not to ask Renquist to continue working past his announced retirement date. Calvin believes when an employee has made a decision to retire and gives a retirement date, that decision should be honored. Any organization does not solely rely on one particular individual and the EDC has competent staff as indicated by Renquist. Some board members were in favor of extending Renquist's employment for continuity and to transfer knowledge to a new director and some were opposed and uncomfortable with the current director assisting with the transition of a new director noting the new director may have a new direction the EDC should go. Nancy Birkeland confirmed that Spaulding can endorse checks. Roger Imdieke suggested Renquist could continue working on specific projects, such as the BNSF railroad Wye project.

The board discussed whether or not to engage a search firm. Chairperson Madsen informed the board that since the retirement was announced in the newspaper, he has been contacted by two search firms. One firm specializes in searches for economic development directors and one specializes in executive directors. Chairperson Madsen stated this board can set parameters for a search firm. Imdieke stated this board needs to determine the EDC's goals and decide what is wanted in a new director. Board members voiced concerns about reaching qualified candidates if doing the search on their own. If a search firm is sought, Chairperson Madsen requested LAA assist with the content of a Request for Proposal (RFP).

Chairperson Madsen stated the Executive Director's job description needs to be reviewed to provide a benchmark as to the qualities and attributes the board is seeking in an applicant and to provide to whomever will conduct the search for a new director. Board members made the following comments as to the type of person and skillsets desired in a new director:

- Imdieke—the EDC is currently top heavy in administration and could get by with an administrator and possibly someone who has marketing skills.
- Denis Anderson—want an Executive Director who is a fireplug, going all the time, pounding the pavement and bringing in ideas.
- Ron Christianson—need someone who will make cold calls and knock on doors, little oversight, needs to be a fireplug and a sales person, someone who will meet with the large companies.
- Doug Reese—need someone to be the first face of the community and the ability to come off good; someone who recognizes community partnerships and the ability to bring those together, such as the Highway 23 project; and the ability to talk with legislators.
- Madsen—need an individual to be the face of the community; last year's work plan had significant emphasis on collaboration with other entities and it takes someone who is willing to do that.

- Calvin agreed with the comments made.

Reese suggested a search firm may have additional input as to qualifications for applicants that could be valuable to the EDC. Madsen suggested the board prepare an RFP and interview search firms allotting 30 minutes per firm. Anderson suggested if a search firm is hired, they could be interviewed electronically.

IT WAS MOVED BY Denis Anderson, SECONDED BY Doug Reese, to develop a request for proposal (RFP) to engage a search firm to assist in the hiring process for a new Executive Director for the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission with the RFPs to be returned by July 1. All present voted in favor by roll call.

Christianson informed the board they do not need to engage any of the search firms that respond or hire any of the candidates brought to the board.

Madsen asked Birkeland to prepare a draft RFP and submit it electronically to the board by Monday, June 15. The board will review it and offer any suggested changes and return it to Birkeland within one day of receiving it. Birkeland will email the draft RFP to the board via blind copy so recipients cannot reply all, which would be in violation of the open meeting law. Calvin suggested Birkeland contact Kevin Halliday to obtain the RFP he just did for the city of Willmar's search for a city administrator.

Chairperson Madsen informed the board he was contacted by the Joint Operations Board president and vice president as to what, if any, role this board would like the Joint Operations Board to have in the process of seeking a new director. The Joint Operations Board meets monthly and has more contact with the EDC's Executive Director. Board members liked the idea of involving both boards in the hiring process as there needs to be agreement by the boards as to the person who is hired. Board members also suggested having the Joint Operations Board provide feedback as to the most important skillsets a new director should have and to define the role of the new director in preparation of the RFP. Calvin suggested the Joint Operations Board review the Executive Director job description and ask if they agree to it as presented or if there is anything specific they feel is absent or lacking that should be included.

IT WAS MOVED BY Marv Calvin, SECONDED BY Denis Anderson, to establish a hiring committee for the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission consisting of two Joint Powers Board members representing Kandiyohi County, two Joint Powers Board members representing the city of Willmar and two members of the Joint Operations Board to screen applicants and to have the Joint Operations Board review the Executive Director job description and provide any recommended changes to the Joint Powers Board by June 20, 2015. All present voted in favor by roll call.

It was noted that although a hiring committee will be formed, this board will make the final decision as to whom to hire. Reese informed the board he has a conflict with this board's meetings starting in September and asked not to be on the hiring committee.

IT WAS MOVED BY Denis Anderson, SECONDED BY Harlan Madsen, to appoint Denis Anderson and Marv Calvin representing the city of Willmar and Roger Imdieke and Harlan Madsen representing Kandiyohi County to the hiring committee for the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development. All present voted in favor by roll call.

Chairperson Madsen will speak with Renquist and Spaulding about the decisions made at this meeting before they are made public. Reese will inform the Joint Operations Board of their role in the hiring process. Birkeland will email the Executive Director job description to both boards.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Doug Reese, to accept with gratitude the retirement resignation of Steven C. Renquist as Executive Director of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission effective August 1, 2015. All present voted in favor by roll call.

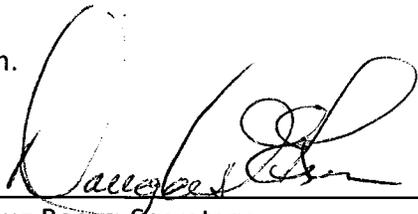
Chairperson Madsen noted the board has the option to request Renquist continue with his employment should it become necessary before a new director is hired. Calvin indicated Renquist can be called back within 30 days of his retirement before his PERA would begin. Chairperson Madsen stated the Executive Director's employment with the EDC is "at will" and any new director can be terminated if they are found not to be a good fit for the EDC.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular board meeting is **11:30 a.m., Thursday, July 23, 2015**, in the EDC Board Room.

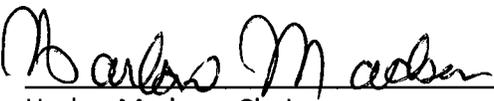
**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Marv Calvin, SECONDED BY Roger Imdieke, to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:30 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Doug Reese, Secretary

APPROVED 7/23/2015:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Harlan Madsen, Chairperson