

KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
JOINT OPERATIONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OB) MEETING  
**MINUTES**  
June 14, 2012  
EDC Office, Willmar

Present: Jon Anderson, Beverly Dougherty Ronald Erpelding, Duane Hultgren and Rick Nordin

Excused: Robert Carlson, Bruce Peterson and Milan Schmiesing

Ex Officio: Jim Butterfield

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

Guest: Keith Bangasser and Lacey Solheid

Media: Anne Polta, West Central Tribune

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

President Ronald Erpelding called the meeting to order at approximately 11:05 a.m.

**AGENDA**—The agenda was amended to add under New Business, Accounting services.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rick Nordin, SECONDED BY Bev Dougherty, to approve the agenda as amended and the following Consent Agenda:

**CONSENT AGENDA**—

Approved: 1. Minutes of May 10, 2012 board meeting  
2. Financial reports as of May 31, 2012, subject to audit  
3. RedStar invoice of \$2,395.83

Accepted: Committee Minutes  
1. Finance 5/8/2012

MOTION CARRIED.

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

**Willmar Design Center.** Bev Dougherty reported the Willmar Design Center is working on a second plan for the Lakeland Hotel building in light of Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership deeming the project was no longer feasible for it to develop.

**EDC/MWTC.** Steve Renquist reported work is continuing on the anhydrous ammonia project; the Ag Committee is moving forward with fuel cell; the Dairy Research and Training Center was not included in the bonding bill; the Ag Specialist attended a renewable resources summit in Fargo, North Dakota, and made good contacts with significant businesses; he attended a Fahlun Township board meeting concerning heavy use of a township road by a private

business; he will be meeting with a feedlot owner to locate in Kandiyohi County; work on the Lakeland Hotel will continue; the Community-Owned Grocery is continuing and he continues to work on obtaining a grocer for New London.

[Lacey Solheid joined the meeting.]

Jean Spaulding invited the board to attend the Animal Science Venture Forum to be hosted at MinnWest Technology September 4-5, 2012 with speaker Glen Leech and keynote speaker Dr. Temple Grandin; four to five startup companies will make presentations to investors at the Forum; and she is starting to finalize the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) grant.

Spaulding introduced Lacey Solheid, a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota Duluth who is working as an intern for the EDC this summer, to work on a Kandiyohi County business database. Solheid stated there are approximately 3,700 contacts to date. Spaulding stated once the database is created it will be sent to Synchronist to be uploaded into the customer relationship management software the EDC recently purchased. A business survey will be done in conjunction with the University of Minnesota Extension Service once the database is completed. Spaulding reported on her attendance at the Economic Development Association of Minnesota Conference, the focus of which was redevelopment.

[Solheid was excused from the meeting.]

**Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center.** Spaulding reported the Willmar Area Multicultural Business Center is looking for a tenant to lease the kitchen.

[Keith Bangasser joined the meeting.]

#### **NEW BUSINESS—**

**Funding request by NL-S Education Foundation.** Spaulding introduced Keith Bangasser, manager of E-Markets, Inc. and Finance Director for Minnesota BEST (Boosting Engineering, Science and Technology) Robotics. Spaulding serves on a committee for the New London-Spicer Robotics Team. Spaulding informed the board that an informal presentation on BEST was first made to the EDC's Business Retention Expansion/Recruitment (BRE/R) Committee. Bangasser provided information on his company's continual search for employees in the technology field, which led to his involvement in the BEST program. Bangasser gave a presentation on Minnesota BEST Robotics, a K-12 workforce development program with a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) focus. BEST's Robotic competition is based on enhancing teaming skills, problem solving abilities, leadership skills, communication skills, technical, organizational, career awareness and attainment.

[Duane Hultgren joined the meeting.]

The intent is to set up a contest/hub in Kandiyohi County that will be hosted at New London-Spicer Schools. Winners go on to a regional competition in Fargo, North Dakota, and contests are held nationwide. Minnesota BEST Robotics has 11 schools committed for teams, two of which are from the metro area and they are hoping to have a total of 12-16 teams. Minnesota BEST Robotics is looking to raise a total of \$30,000 and is asking the EDC for a one-time funding of \$5,000 to purchase the products for the reusable kits.

Erpelding stated the focus is to advance workforce development in the STEM fields, which was also a focus of the Discover Manufacturing program sponsored by the EDC last year. The goal

is to attract and keep a qualified workforce and provide career options for local students. Jim Butterfield recommended coordinating exposure of local technical companies at the competition. Renquist suggested that if funding is approved, it come from the community contributions line of the EDC's budget. Minnesota BEST Robotics is also applying for funds through the Willmar Area Foundation and Otto Bremer Foundation, which have fall funding cycles.

[Duane Hultgren was excused from the meeting.]

Spaulding stated Minnesota BEST Robotics is not a New London-Spicer Schools program.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rick Nordin, SECONDED BY Ron Erpelding, to fund \$5,000 for the Minnesota BEST Robotics program from the community contributions line of the Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission's budget. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Dougherty announced that Thursday of next week is the Block Party in downtown Willmar and the kickoff for Willmar Fest. Dougherty encouraged the board to have lunch at the Becker Market café today.

[Dougherty was excused from the meeting.]

**Accounting services.** Renquist stated Kandiyohi County has requested the EDC privatize its fiscal services by this fall. Renquist has requested an opinion from attorney Dean Anderson as to adding accounting services to the services already provided to the EDC by LAA with management by Jim Ruff or if an RFP must be done. Ruff informed Renquist that he believed his firm could continue doing audit services and provide oversight of accounting services, which board members felt could be a conflict and on which they requested a legal opinion.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS—

**Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development (Ag).** Renquist stated a meeting has been initiated with out of county participants for the Meadow Star Dairy operation. The Mid-Central Research and Outreach Center (MCROC) hosted a meeting on the University of Minnesota's (U of M) intent and new program to commercialize the U of M's intellectual property. Spaulding stated the teleconferencing equipment installed in the MCROC training room was provided by the MIRC grant.

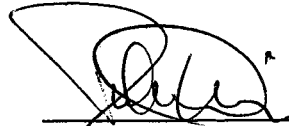
#### UNFINISHED BUSINESS—

**Planning sessions.** Erpelding informed the board of the upcoming planning sessions, the first on Monday, June 25, from 9 a.m. to noon at MinnWest Commons, MinnWest Technology Campus, with the BRE/R Committee to analyze Cameron Macht's data with a facilitator and the joint boards annual session with a facilitator regarding goals and 2013 levy/budget on Wednesday, July 11, from 9 a.m. to noon with lunch at The Oaks.

**Other.** Butterfield thanked the board for approving the funding for the BEST program.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next regular board meeting is changed to approximately **12:00 p.m., Wednesday, July 11, 2012**, at the Oaks, Willmar, following the planning session.

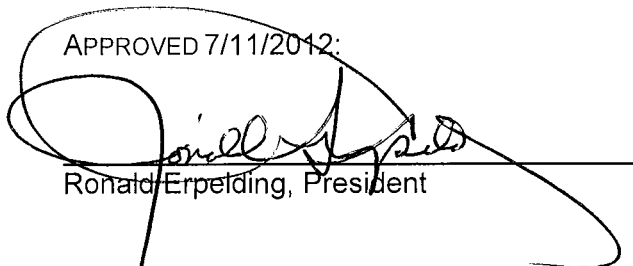
**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:26 p.m.



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Rick Nordin, Secretary

APPROVED 7/11/2012:



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Ronald Erpelding, President