

BUFFALO COUNTY MINUTES

Committee of the Board: Economic Development Committee

Date of the Meeting: Wednesday May 5, 2021

Chair Mr. Max Weiss called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Buffalo County Courthouse, County Board Room in Alma, Wisconsin.

Board Members Present: Mr. Max Weiss, Mr. David Danzinger, Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht, Mr. Thomas Taylor and Ms. LeeAnne Bulman.

Others Present for All or Parts of the Meeting: Mr. Steve Schiffli, Mary Jo LaBair, Sam Odegard, Sarah Odegard, Barry Drazkowski, Gina Tomlinson and Christy Berger

Public Comments regarding Agenda Items: There were no public comments.

Review/Discussion/Action – Minutes of the Previous Meeting: A motion was made by Mr. Schmidtknecht to approve the minutes of March 11, 2021, seconded by Mr. Danzinger. Motion carried.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Financial and Budget Update– Bills from 3.1 to 4.30 were presented to the committee. There were no questions on the bills.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ A Resolution to Establish the Economic Development Committee (Retroactively) – A Subcommittee of Finance – Mr. Schiffli presented a resolution providing for the clarification and continuity of events in the establishment of the Economic Development Committee. The resolution also formalized the duties and responsibilities of the committee. Mr. Schiffli indicated this will provide continuity for future EDC Board Members and Economic Development Managers. An addition was requested by Mr. Taylor to broaden the responsibilities, adding to B (1) agriculture and manufacturing. A motion to approve the resolutions with amendments to B (1) was made by Mr. Danzinger and seconded by Mr. Schmidtknecht. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Economic Development Committee Bylaws- Mr. Schiffli developed committee bylaws for review and discussion by the committee. Ms. Bulman questioned ambiguity/conflict between the bylaws and the resolution in regard to civic member appointment. Mr. Schmidtknecht questioned what happens when at County Board restructuring, and those civic members are appointed by the Chair, need to clarify how that affects the committee.

Mr. Schiffli will continue to refine the document and bring it back to the committee for their review in a future meeting.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Buffalo County Brochure -2021- It was decided not to order a the 2020 brochure for distribution. Mr. Schiffli will notify the contractor.

Mr. Danzinger indicated that the brochure needs to be updated. There are changes to the county that continue to add to its appeal to the tourist market. Mentioned were the Snowmobile trails, Fishing, Hiking trails, future ATV routes etc.

Mr. Danzinger indicated this is an approved use of American Rescue Plan (ARP) dollars.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Town of Cross Broadband- Mr. Schiffli reported having two meetings in conjunction with the Town of Cross Broadband Project. Ms. Tomlinson advised the committee that Cochrane Telephone Cooperative will be the provider for the Town of Cross. A discussion was held.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidtkecht to indicate Economic Development Committee Support to the Town of Cross's Request for Financial Support under the Buffalo County Broadband Award Policy in the amount of 100K. Seconded by Mr. Danzinger. Motion carried with Mr. Taylor voting no.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Town of Mondovi Broadband- Mr. Schmidtkecht opened the discussion on the Town of Mondovi Project. A discussion was held, and a provision for public comment was made on the project. Mary Jo LaBain, Sam Odegard, and Sarah Odegard spoke to the need for broadband services in the Town of Mondovi. The lack of quality service requires them to purchase sub-standard service from multiple vendors to receive marginal services. The lack of service prevents the residents from attending online school for children and adults, prevents effective use of online medical services, and restricts business.

A discussion was held on the merits of the project, its cost per customer, levied tax dollars and materials. Further discussion was held on technological advancements and broadband.

A motion was made by Mr. Schmidtkecht to indicate Economic Development Committee Support to the Town of Mondovi's Request for Financial Support under the Buffalo County Broadband Award Policy in the amount of 100K. Seconded by Mr. Danzinger. Motion carried.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ (UPATE) Great River State Trail- Mr. Schiffli briefed the committee he has written and submitted three specific grants to the DNR in support of the Great River State Trail – Winona Connector Project.

He indicated the Flyway Board has met twice since the last meeting, and the Friends of the Flyway Trail have done maintenance on the trail. Mr. Schiffli indicated that the maintenance agreement should be finalized, and he would look into it with the Flyway Board.

Review/Discussion ~ Department Managers Report – Mr. Schiffli presented a written report of his activities. The subject of the Farm Technology Days and what message the EDC wanted at the table was discussed. The EDC will follow up at a future meeting what that message is to look like.

Review/Discussion ~ Chairperson Report – Mr. Weiss expressed his possession on Broadband and future technology.

Review/Discussion/Action ~ Next Meeting Date and Time. May 20, 2021, immediately following the Finance Committee. Agenda item(s) to include RFP for the Great River State Trail-Winona Connector Phase II and Farm Tech Days.

Motion by Mr. Taylor to adjourn. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen S. Schiffli, Economic Development Manager