



**EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**100 Park Street South**  
**Mora, MN 55051**  
**February 23, 2015**  
**7:00 P.M.**

**Commission Members Present:**

Karen Amundson – Kanabec Co. Public Interest  
Greg Anderson – Isanti Co. Commissioner  
Kirsten Kennedy – City of North Branch  
Kathi Ellis – Kanabec Co. Commissioner  
Linda Evans – Mille Lacs Co. Public Interest  
Frank Grundmeier – Pine Co. Townships  
Steve Hallan – Pine Co. Commissioner  
Richard Hansen – Isanti Co. Townships  
Steven Kimmel – Chisago Co. Public Interest  
Sue Larson – Isanti Co. Public Interest  
Tom Lawlor – Southern School Board  
Ben Montzka – Chisago Co. Commissioner  
Diane Larkin – Chisago Co. Townships  
Dave Patenaude – Kanabec Co. Townships  
Genny Reynolds – Mille Lacs Co. Commissioner  
Carla Dunkley – Tribal Representative  
Marlys Palmer – Isanti Co. Municipalities  
Paul Venhuizen – Pine Co. Municipalities  
Thom Walker – Mille Lacs Co. Municipalities

**Commission Members Absent:**

Barb Welty – Mille Lacs Co. Townships  
Steve Odegard – Northern School Board

**Staff Present:**

Bob Voss – Executive Director  
Bob Bollenbeck – Transportation/TZD Program  
Jennifer Russell – Economic Development Director  
Penny Simonsen – East Central Sr. Resource Center

1. **WELCOME:** Chairman Montzka called to order the meeting of the East Central Regional Development Commission at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Montzka also recognized North Branch Mayor Kirsten Kennedy-Hagen to the Commission as the region's representative for a city over 10,000 population.
2. **AGENDA APPROVAL:** Larson moved to approve the agenda with the a correction to the Treasurer's report indicating that checks needing approval are for the time frame December 1, 2014 through January 31, 2015. Evans seconded – motion carried.
3. **MINUTES APPROVAL:** Larson moved to approve the minutes of the December 15, 2014 meeting. Lawlor seconded – motion carried.
4. **TREASURERS REPORT:** Ellis presented the December 2014 and January 2015 Treasurer's report. Hanson moved to approve the Treasurer's Report to include the checks written from December 1, 2014 to January 31, 2015. Palmer seconded – motion carried. The general journal entries were included in the review and approved for the time period December 1, 2014 to January 31, 2015.
5. **PERSONNEL & BUDGET (P&B) COMMITTEE:** P&B Chairman Steve Hallan provided an overview of a proposed revised 2014-2015 agency-wide budget which was discussed at the P&B meeting. Two handouts – a revised budget and a final expenses sheet for the aging programs –

were shared during the discussion. The revised budget largely reflected the financial impacts resulting from the discontinuance of the aging programs after January 2015. With current contract work in place, the Commission stands to have a \$54,133 budget shortfall for FY 2014-2015. A number of items contributed to this including unanticipated expenses of \$22,802.36 after January 1<sup>st</sup> to close out the programs and transition them to the Central MN Council on Aging. There were also approximately \$12,000 in reimbursements back to CMCOA for non-qualifying Caregiver unit's during the contract year. Hallan did indicate, however, that there will likely be an audit adjustment of approximately \$33,676 which resulted from a late 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter payment from CMCOA which finally did arrive during the current fiscal year. This audit adjustment would result in a significant reduction of the deficit amount. Larson moved to approve the revised budget as presented. Reynolds seconded – motion carried.

## 6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

- a. **ECRDC Board Vacancies:** *Notices went out to cities in Chisago and Kanabec Counties seeking new municipality representatives to fill seats previously held by Jill Behnke and Bob Jensen. The deadline for applicants was February 9<sup>th</sup> and no applications came in. Reminders were sent out to the cities with hopes someone may apply in a second attempt. Advertisements also went out in Pine County newspapers to recruit a public interest representative to replace Lynn Zeleny who stepped down in December for personal/family reasons. The application deadline was December 12<sup>th</sup> and no applications were received. A second attempt is also being made to fill this seat. The City of North Branch, however, will be sending their new mayor, Kirstin Kennedy, to serve as the "Cities over 10,000" representative to the ECRDC.*
- b. **Pay Equity Report:** *The Pay Equity report was prepared and electronically sent to the MN Department of Employee Relations by the January 31, 2015 deadline. The report requires that data from the last payroll period of 2014 be used. Voss stated that he spoke with the State Pay Equity Coordinator, Cyndee Gmach, a few weeks ago and was told that our report was done properly and appears to be in compliance. Since the report's deadline fell between Commission meetings, Voss requested that it be formally ratified by the Commission. Evans moved to ratify the Pay Equity Implementation report as prepared and submitted to the State. Larson seconded – motion carried.*
- c. **Chisago County P&B Appointment:** *Voss reported that the Commission needs to fill the Chisago County seat on the Personnel & Budget Committee recently vacated by former Center City Mayor Jill Behnke. Chairman Montzka called a short recess at 7:10 p.m. to allow the Chisago County delegation an opportunity to caucus and recommend a replacement. The Commission reconvened at 7:15 p.m. Chairman Montzka announced that the delegation met and recommends Tom Lawlor (southern schools and Chisago City resident) be appointed to the P&B. Kimmel moved to approve the recommendation. Larkin seconded – motion carried.*

## 7. WORK PROGRAM AND PROJECT UPDATE REPORT

- a. **Aging Program Update:** *Voss notified Central MN Council on Aging (CMCOA) on December 18, 2014 of the Commission's decision not to renew the annual contracts for Senior LinkAge and Caregiver Consulting. To avoid a potential disruption in services, all of the aging staff retained employment with the ECRDC through January 15<sup>th</sup>. The P&B met on January 8<sup>th</sup> and approved a request from CMCOA to extend health insurance for the SLL employees through February 28<sup>th</sup> and through March 31<sup>st</sup> for the*

- Caregiver Consultants. The P&B also approved a request from CMCOA that various computers, equipment, supplies, etc. be transferred with the employees. It was decided to transfer most of the supplies and equipment (i.e. fax/printers, file cabinets, rolling/locking brief cases, portable shredders) specifically relating to the program at no cost. The laptop computers, however, were sold for \$100 each. All of the employees were hired by CMCOA and will continue working in their respective programs.*
- b. **CEDS Update:** *Staff is in the process of preparing an annual update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to be submitted to EDA by March 31<sup>st</sup>. As part of this, a survey was distributed to all local units of government in the region in an effort to update the list of projects that may be eligible for possible EDA funding. The results from the survey will be incorporated into the update along with a report on recent activities and the progress being made on our 5 year CEDS which began on 2011 and ends in 2016. Venhuizen moved to approve and submit the CEDS update subject to a final review by the CEDS Advisory Committee. Hansen seconded – motion carried.*
  - c. **RLF Update:** *Closed a \$50,000 revolving loan with Isanti Spirits on February 18<sup>th</sup> at City Hall in Cambridge. The loan proceeds will be used for purchasing distillery equipment, etc. Payments were set up on 10 year amortization schedule at 6% interest with a “balloon” payment due in 5 years. The business will be owned and operated by Richard Schneider and located in Bradford Township in Isanti County. Loan will be secured with a second position on Schneider’s real estate and also on the purchased equipment.*
  - d. **TAC Update:** *MnDOT District 3 increased our region’s target amounts slightly for FY 18 & 19. The TAC is recommending that the two projects previously recommended – Kanabec County CSAH 11 and Mille Lacs County CSAH 4 – receive the extra funds since they were less than the 80/20 federal ratio. Ellis moved to approve the TAC’s recommendation for the extra funding. Larson seconded – motion carried. The TAC is also recommending that the Commission approve two Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) projects. One is an improvement to a school crossing on T.H. 23 in Milaca and the other are improvements proposed for Rum River Drive in Princeton. Reynolds moved to approve the TAC’s recommendations for the TAP funding. Evans seconded – motion carried.*
  - e. **Scenic Byway Planning:** *Per our agreement with MnDOT, we have completed the process for updating the Scenic Byways plan for the Evergreen Veteran’s Memorial Byway. Transportation Planner Bob Bollenbeck has prepared and submitted the final report to MnDOT. Jennifer Russell is also organizing the second round of meetings for the St. Croix Scenic Byway meetings which will hopefully take place at the Marine on St. Croix City Hall in early March. The planning process will look at improvements that can better highlight amenities along the byways especially those that might eligible for federal Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) funding.*
  - f. **Safe Roads/TZD:** *Staff has been working with stakeholders in Mille Lacs and Pine Counties to develop Safe Roads Coalitions. Crash data indicates that these areas have either seat belt, speed, or impaired driving issues that are above the statewide average. Strategies must include participation from Engineering, Enforcement, Emergency Services, and Education (the 4 Es). Typically, applications for Safe Roads funding will be due to the MN Dept. of Public Safety in June. Successfully funded projects will begin on October 1, 2015.*

- g. **Safe Routes to Schools:** Penny Simonsen has been working extensively with stakeholders in Kanabec County and Hinckley on their respective Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) planning projects and things are proceeding on schedule. So far, the communities have been surveyed and the results have been entered into the national database. Three community meetings have taken place in each area. The final review is currently underway and the plans will soon be submitted to MnDOT for review and approval.
  - h. **Hazard Mitigation Planning:** The MN Dept. of Homeland Security (DHSEM) contacted us in January to discuss revisions to the budget contained in our application for the Mille Lacs County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. It turns out there are limited funds available so DHSEM asked that we reduce our request for federal funds from \$22,064 to \$20,025. DHSEM has forwarded the revised budget to FEMA and we should be hearing back in a few weeks. Staff is working closely with Mille Lacs County Emergency Management Director Al Fjerstad and Jim McClosky of the MN Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management during the application process. Penny Simonsen will be the primary staff person working on the update project. Hazard Mitigation Plan updates were completed for Isanti County were completed in December and are awaiting final approval from FEMA. The update process is currently underway with Kanabec County.
  - i. **Blandin Broadband:** Penny Simonsen and Jennifer Russell participated in Blandin's Broadband Kickoff event in Willmar last month. ECRDC was awarded funding to work with communities to improve access to broadband along the extreme northern portion of our region which is largely underserved. These communities now have the designation of "Broadband Community" and can potentially use these funds to implement strategies. A community event is scheduled for next Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. at the IREC building in Isle.
  - j. **Other:** Staff will be providing an update of ECRDC programs and activities at the Chisago County Townships Association meeting on February 25, 2015. Voss participated in a transportation forum in Cambridge on February 6, 2015.
8. **ADJOURNMENT:** Chairman Montzka announced the next meeting will be April 27, 2015 at the ECRDC office in Mora at 7:00 p.m. Walker moved to adjourn the regular meeting of the ECRDC. Hansen seconded – motion carried.



Robert L. Voss, Executive Director



Ben Montzka, Chairman