

Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA)
February 22, 2010
Sisseton Conference Room (Courthouse)

President Sukalski called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Board members present were: Pierce, Grupe, and Clark. Absent: Schmidtke, Boler, and Pribyl. Other present were: Scott Higgins, County Coordinator, Bryan Stading, RCEF Director (Business Facilitator), Jeff Jensen, Rural Advantage, Bob Wallace, Fairmont Chamber, and Garey Ferguson, Minnesota Workforce Center.

Motion by Clark, seconded by Grupe to approve the agenda as presented. All voting in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Grupe, seconded by Pierce to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2010 regular EDA meeting as presented. Carried unanimously.

Finalizing adoption of the Action plan for MCEDA was tabled until all board members could be present.

Sukalski reminded the board that the upcoming Area Career Exploration event is coming up in April and encourage all to be a part of this program. Grupe stated that some changes that need to be made would be to make sure that the students show some sort of acknowledgement of the businesses they had talked to. Sukalski stated that all the businesses have been asked to engage the students as well and not sit behind their booth tables. Overall it should be another successful event.

Ferguson stated that currently there were 127 businesses expected to be in attendance, which is an increase over last year.

Jensen presented the final “Technical Feasibility report for the Exploring Commercialization for Building Farm Scale Microwave Assisted Pyrolysis Units in Martin County.” Jensen stated the feasibility study was conducted between the University of Minnesota with Dr. Roger Ruan, Wayne Kahler, Kahler Automation, Linda Meschke and Jeff Jensen, Rural Advantage, Bryan Stading, Riverbend Center for Entrepreneurial Facilitation, and the Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA). Jensen proceeded to review the components of the study and drawings of the unit with the Board. Jensen stated that the conclusion of the study was that Kahler automation has the expertise and know how, labor supply, and required space to manufacture these Microwave Assisted Pyrolysis (MAP) units. However, given the underdeveloped markets for bio-oil and biochar, the lack of a proven reactor design, and high cost of the microwave generator-applicator, Kahler has made a decision not go move ahead with manufacturing at this time. Factors that will influence future opportunities to move ahead in manufacturing such units include: development of the carbon market, demonstration of proven reactor design, increase in petroleum and other fossil fuels prices, demonstrate a proven reactor design. It is expected that there will be a unit that will be demonstrated throughout the state in the near future.

Clark inquired if there was any way we could keep Kahler Automation involved with the project. Jensen stated that a letter could be sent to Dr. Ruan asking that he keep Kahler Automation involved with the project in hopes that as this project progresses, these units could be manufactured in Martin County. Sukalski stated this is the type of technology the EDA should be supporting.

Sukalski thanked Jensen for the report and the work Rural Advantage put into the project.

Wallace presented budget information for this year's Area Career Exploration (ACE) event, scheduled for April 7, 2010 at the Fairmont High School. Again the effort is to educate and encourage our youth that jobs are available in our area and they do not have to move to the city to get jobs.

Schmidtke arrived at 6:00pm.

Higgins stated that the EDA will again have a booth this year and that a sign up sheet to work the booth will be sent out to all members.

Wallace requested \$500 contribution from the EDA for the ACE event. After further discussion,

Motion by Clark, seconded by Grupe to approve \$500 contribution to the Fairmont Chamber of Commerce to allocated to the ACE event for CY2010. All voting in favor. Motion carried.

Wallace presented a new leadership program to be started in Martin County and presented a budget for the new leadership program requesting \$1,000 from the EDA as a sponsor of this event. Wallace stated that the purpose of the leadership program is to develop future leaders in Martin County in order to become better educated on the issues that face the county, schools, cities, and townships and to make people more aware of the resources available throughout the county. Riverland Community College will be assisting the Chamber in putting this nine (9) month program together and will be teaching the leadership component of the program. Participants will be expected to attend one full day each month for the nine months. It is expected the first class will be approximately 15-20 people. Each month there will be a different topic and focus. It is expected that the fee will be \$650 per participant. The hope is that not only will the participant contribute, but the businesses or agencies these individuals work for will help pay the tuition costs. It is also expected scholarships will be made available too. The Program is expected to begin in September.

Grupe left the meeting at 6:15pm.

It was stated that this is an opportunity to get people involved with our county. It would be imperative to have the first class have participants that will get a lot of good out of the program and be able to continue the program in the future. After further discussion,

Motion by Pierce, seconded by Clark to approve allocation of \$1,000 to the Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce for the Martin County Leadership Program to begin September 2010. All voting in favor. Motion carried.

Stading reviewed the business facilitation monthly client report for February. Stading gave an update of the upcoming Core Four Business Planning courses stating that there are fourteen participants this year, which is a large class. Stading reviewed the brochure for the internship program with Presentation College and received input on the brochure.

Higgins presented the bills to be paid for December 2009 and February 2010.

Motion by Clark, seconded by Schmidtke to approve the December 2009 and February 2010 bills to be paid. Carried unanimously.

Higgins presented information for the Annual KSUM/KFMC Spring Expo coming up on March 12-14, 2010 at the Five Lakes Centre in Fairmont. In the past the EDA had a booth set up for this event. After discussion, it was determined by consensus not to participate this year.

Stading stated that he attended a workshop pertaining to the USDA Energy Grants that are available to businesses and may be option to refer businesses needing financial assistance to make their businesses more energy efficient.

With no further business to wit,

Motion by Sukalski, seconded by Pierce to adjourn. Carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55p.m.

Lawrence Sukalski, President, MCEDA

Attest: Chris Pierce, Secretary/Treasurer