

Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA)
December 14, 2015
Board Room-Martin County Courthouse

The meeting was called to order by Chris Pierce at 5:17 p.m. Board members present were: Brent Schultze, Elliot Belgard, Larry Baarts, Randy Grupe, and Dan Schmidtke Absent: Jerry Clark. Others present: Bryan Stading, Business Facilitator for Martin County EDA, Scott Higgins, County Coordinator, Margaret Dillard, President of the Fairmont Chamber of Commerce, Lindsay, Pruess, Fairmont Economic Development Coordinator, Stephanie Busiahn, Director of the Convention and Visitor Bureau (CVB), along with Bruce Peters, Fairmont City Council Member and Board member of the CVB and Desiree Diaz, Reporter Fairmont Sentinel, and Rod Halverson, KFMC/KSUM.

Motion by Schmidtke, seconded by Grupe to approve the agenda as presented. Carried unanimously.

Motion by Schmidtke, seconded by Belgard to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2015 regular board minutes. Carried unanimously,

Dillard and Pruess handed out packet of information and gave an update on the Brain Gain project in Martin County. Dillard stated that they are working on getting video testimonial from the local residents who have returned to the county and tell their story and experience on coming returning to the Martin County. Dillard informed the Board that we are working on a brand for the project to give it an identity. The project received a grant for the project through March of 2017 and hopes to sustain the project after the grant runs its course. The Brain Gain projects meets the fourth Thursday of the month, at US Bank in Fairmont and invited board members to be a part of the meetings.

Dillard gave an update on the Community Calendar project stating that it up and running and that the Chamber is making the effort to include all of the county in the project and will be speaking to the various communities, schools, etc. throughout Martin County and get their participation in using the Community calendar for their meetings, activities and events. The Chamber has received grant money from the Blandin Foundation to help market the Community Calendar. Dillard provided a packet of information to the board on the project. Pruess added that this truly needs to be countywide project stating we will be visiting with the cities of Sherburn, Truman, and Trimont to provide them with information on using the Community Calendar technology.

Busiahn gave an update on the activities of the Convention Visitors Bureau (CVB) activities, stating that the funding for the CVB comes from the local lodging tax collected by hotels. Busiahn provided handouts that included promotional advertising materials. Although the CVB has an agreement with the City of Fairmont for promoting its local tourism activities and events. However, the CVB does promote the lakes, golf courses, community festivals, trails, etc. outside of the City of Fairmont. Busiahn stated that the CVB is looking to continue to work in promoting tourism outside the City of Fairmont and market tourism in the county and working with the EDA in this endeavor. Busiahn further stated that the CVB is willing to assist the EDA

as a resource in promoting tourism Countywide. Busiahn stated that the CVB has a very limited marketing budget and is requesting funding from the EDA to financially assist the CVB. Higgins stated that one of the EDA's established priorities is to promote tourism on a countywide basis using general promotional brochures, social media and advertising, etc. Higgins stated that the CVB is requesting \$3,000-4,000 dollars to assist in a collaborative effort to promote tourism in the county.

Pierce stated that typically the EDA has done specific projects in the past and this is a project the EDA should be a part of. Pierce inquired of strategy to target those outside the county.

Busiahn stated that we have typically put together inserts in newspapers 30-60 miles outside the area. This helps create awareness of tourism and recreational activities in the county,

Grupe inquired how you measure the effectiveness of the inserts.

Busiahn responded that there is no real way to determine the effectiveness, one of our objectives is to get heads on beds with the local hotels.

After further discussion,

Motion by Belgard, seconded by Schultze Be It Resolved that the Martin County EDA approves a financial allocation in the amount of \$4,000 to the Fairmont Convention Visitors Bureau, to collaborate with the EDA in promoting tourism throughout Martin County. Carried unanimously.

Stading gave monthly business consultation report for November 2015 totaling 25 hours; in addition gave an update with regard to non-client work, which included update on the monthly KSUM radio programming. Stading gave a brief update on the progress in finding a larger building for Custom Computers and Software company in Sherburn. Belgard stated that the company needs to know that we are here to help.

Higgins presented and reviewed the final draft of the Countywide Broadband Feasibility Study Request for Proposal with Board, stating that the board may recall that the County received a Blandin Broadband Communities grant in the amount of \$20,000 (requires a dollar for dollar match) for a total project cost of \$40,000 this past summer. The Martin County Blandin Steering Committee engaged, with Blandin Consultants in development of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Architect/Engineering Firm to conduct a countywide Broadband Feasibility Study. Once proposals are submitted to the county, the Steering Committee will then evaluate the proposals and make a recommendation to the County Board of the selection of a Firm to conduct the feasibility study. The purpose of the study is to provide the County decision makers with information the availability of broadband throughout the county, and to provide information to ultimately configure, equip and install a broadband system to achieve high speed goals scalable to one gigabit with an alternate configuration providing for a 10 gigabit backbone with one gigabit connection to entities throughout the county to include businesses, homes, schools, libraries, hospitals, public safety, cities, etc. It is anticipated that the information provided through this study will provide information on the areas unserved or underserved with high speed

broadband (internet) throughout the county and provide us with estimated cost projections for the build out of high speed broadband (i.e. Broadband Fiber) network throughout the county.

Pierce stated that he has been involved with the local IT group in working to get better broadband in Fairmont.

Motion by Schmidtke, seconded by Baarts, Be It Resolved that the Martin County EDA hereby approves and recommends approval by the County Board of Commissioners the proposed Martin County Broadband Feasibility Study Request for Proposal as presented for broadband feasibility engineering study for Martin County. Carried unanimously.

Higgins stated that through the Blandin Broadband Communities grant, the Martin County Blandin Steering Committee has developed and applied for two more project grants through the Blandin Foundation. The first proposed project has been applied for by the Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce in the amount of \$5,000 to conduct trainings for businesses in the use of social media and online presence for businesses. Typically the grants require a 25% in cash of in kind. The Fairmont Chamber will provide the match for these dollars and the county is expected to serve as the fiscal agent. The second project proposed will focus on kids (students) and schools to increase and gain good instructional tools in the classrooms and at home for the purposes of education and learning. The proposed grant project will aid the in the replacement or addition of IP ADS/Chromebook in the various school districts in the county and to purchase instructional apps and provide teacher and staff development to better integrate technology in the classrooms, and provide dollars to include a curriculum targeted to kids /students and parents in appropriate use of technology (i.e. personal security, on-line behaviors, etc.), and to conduct a coding and app camps during the summer of 2016. The grant request is in the amount of \$15,000 and it is anticipated that the participating school districts would provide the required matching dollars for this grant.

Motion by Schultze, seconded by Schmidtke, Be It Resolved that the Martin County Economic Development Authority approves for submission to the Blandin Broadband Communities grant program the two grant projects for a total amount of \$20,000 for business training and app/coding camps, purchase of IPADS/Chromebooks and instructional apps, and instruction curriculum on the appropriate use of technology for the participating school districts in Martin County. The required match for the aforementioned project will be provided by the Fairmont Areas Chamber of Commerce and the participating School Districts in Martin County. Carried unanimously.

There were no bills for approval. The bills will be included in January's regular meeting.

The Board reviewed the monthly CY2015 YTD Financial Statements and monthly activity report. Higgins stated that the fund balance as of end of November 2015 is \$252,304.61.

Higgins reviewed the general information in the board packets, which included a donation from ITC to the Martin County EDA, Summary of the EDA Strategic Plan (priorities) to be reviewed at January meeting, Sherburn Civic and Commerce membership application, MCIT dividend letter, MAPCED quarterly minutes (October 2015), Interlaken Heritage Days request for

donation letter, Summary of the Martin County Blandin Broadband Community Vision Summary, MCIT Certificate of Excellence – Outstanding Loss Ratio Under 50%.

Grupe stated that the EDA should be a part of all local Chamber of Commerce in the county and suggested that this be done.

Motion by Grupe, seconded by Belgard to approve membership to all local Chamber of Commerce in the county. Carried unanimously.

The next board meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 4, 2016 at 5:15pm in the Board room (Martin County Courthouse).

With no further business to wit,

Motion by Baarts, seconded by Belgard to adjourn the meeting. Carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Chris Pierce, President

Attest: Brent Schultze, Secretary/Treasurer