

**Board Minutes of the
Martin County EDA
September 13, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Martin County Economic Development Authority was called to order by Tim Terfehr at 5:15 pm. Those present were: Wes Anderson, Elliot Belgard, and Richard Koons, Absent: Brent Schultze, Elizabeth Miller, and Steve Fosness. Also present Scott Higgins, County Coordinator, Ned Koppen, President of Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce, Alex Young Williams, American Connection Fellow, Jeff Rouse and Melissa Wolf, Midco Government Relations Manager.

Motion by Belgard, seconded by Anderson, to approve the agenda with the deletion of 3.1 Minutes for August 3, 2021 Board meeting, 5.1 Monthly Client Report and 7.1 Approval of Bills. One addition, Presentation by Alex Young-Williams, American Connection Project Fellow. Carried unanimously.

Koppen informed the Board that the Martin County Leadership Program will take place the year starting October 3, 2021-May 2022. The tuition cost for participants is \$650. Koppen stated that the EDA Board has provided in the past a \$1,000 as a sponsor of the Leadership program.

After discussion,

Motion by Koons, seconded by Belgard Be It Resolved that the Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA) here by approves and authorizes an allocation of \$1,000 as sponsorship of the Martin County Leadership Program for 2021-2022. Carried unanimously.

Rouse presented a promotional sponsorship opportunity “Gong Hog Wild” In Martin County. Rouse stated that it was a concept for the revitalization of downtown Fairmont. It has grown to a countywide promotion. We are working to place multiple concrete hog statues as an attraction to visitors and tourist in the county, each will spotlight a business or organization and recognizing the accomplishment of the pork industry in Martin County. The EDA is being asked to become a sponsor of the promotional campaign. The Sponsors, with their logo and information will be placed on a minimum of 16 hog statues. The sponsors will also be included for all events held in 2022. To be a sponsor of this promotion is \$2, 400.

After further discussion, by consensus of the Board it was determined to hold off the action for sponsorship of the promotion until next the next Board meeting, since there were a number of members not present.

Higgins introduced Alex Young-Williams who is serving a two year AmeriCorps VISTA fellowship through Lead for American Fellowship Program and stated that Alex, as a volunteer Fellow, would be able to assist the county in its efforts for better broadband throughout the county.

Young-Williams noted his work is focused on downtown revitalization, affordable housing, child care and overall economic development. Recently his organization launched an initiative called the American Connection Project for cohort of Fellows to work exclusively on broadband issues in rural Minnesota and eleven other states nationwide. Young-Williams went on to note my host in Fairmont has been Project 1590 and I've been serving as a connector, coordinator, and organizer on a couple of different local initiatives. I've written a couple of grants to regional organizations for public arts projects, strategic planning, and have provided background support for the community center effort.

Young-Williams went on to note he is offering his services to assist the County in coordinating broadband efforts in Martin County. In addition to his work with Project 1590 in Fairmont, if approved, Young-Williams would be able to work up to 10 hours per week on broadband efforts including working with the County Broadband Citizen Committee and contacting providers in obtaining a more comprehensive look at broadband needs for unserved or underserved areas of the County. Young-Williams also noted he would work with the County Coordinator, Commissioners, the EDA, county staff and the citizen Broadband Committee in their efforts for better broadband connectivity and accessibility for residents of the County.

After further discussion,

Motion by Commissioner Koons, seconded by Commissioner Belgard Be It Resolved that the Martin County Economic Development Authority, hereby approve and recommend to the Martin County Board of Commissioners to bring on Alex Young-Williams as a volunteer Fellow with the American Connection Project to assist the County in providing assistance to the County's continuing efforts for better broadband connectivity and accessibility to its residents throughout the County. Carried unanimously.

Higgins stated that as the Board is aware the DEED grant that the EDA received on behalf of RCEF will end on September 31, 2021. RCEF is making application to Business Development Grant through DEED. An important component in a competitive grant is providing a match for the grant. The more match money provided toward the grant, helps increase the application score for the Grant. RCEF is requesting funding from the EDA to provide some sort of financial commitment to RCEF to continue business consulting services in Martin County. Higgins went on to note that RCEF has provided business consultation services to Martin County for several years and has been an integral part of the EDA's programming.

Board discussion included the not only support to RCEF for the grant application, but funding from the EDA to the RCEF for the grant and consulting services the county would receive for committing funds the grant application.

Motion by Koons, seconded by Belgard Be It Resolved that the Martin County Economic Development Authority (MCEDA), providing business consultation services to local businesses throughout the county; and that these business services have been provided by RCEF (Consulting Firm); and that RCEF is making application to DEED for the Business Development Competitive Grant (2021), hereby approve funding to RCEF in the amount of \$25,000 to be applied to the grant application, if approved by DEED; as part of contractual business

consultation services provided by RCEF to Martin County for the grant period. Carried unanimously.

Wolf presented a PowerPoint – “Investing in a Connected Minnesota” Wolf gave an overview of Midco as a company and its Broadband Partnerships and projects with other communities throughout Minnesota that included State of Minnesota Border to Border Grant funding. Wolf gave an update on 2021 broadband expansion projects throughout the state and Martin County and future projects areas in Martin County.

Koons stated various areas in the county that need broadband services. It would be nice to see (Midco) be able to make the whole county yellow (referring to the map of future service areas in the county).

The Board stated their appreciation for the Wolf's presentation and look forward to working with Midco in the future on broadband projects.

No minutes for approval.

No bills presented this month and will be included with the October regular meeting.

Higgins reviewed the CY2021 Year to date financial report for August.

Higgins reviewed the MCIT 2021 Dividend Notice and the MCIT letter notification of the CY2022 Estimated Premium Notice.

With no further business to wit,

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

The Meeting was adjourned at 7:08 pm.

Tim Terfehr, Board Secretary/Treasurer