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**Winona County Economic Development Authority
Thursday January 27, 2021 - 4:30 p.m.
Ring Central Meeting**

Members Attending: Commissioners Chris Meyer and Greg Olson, Duane Klein, Mike Kennedy, Ken Fritz, Scott Sherman

Also attending: Kay Qualley and Lew Overhaug, Planning & Environmental Services; Assistant County Paul Ellison, Winona County Attorney’s office, and guest speakers: Bob Bambenek, County Recorder; Ron Ziegler, CEDA President; Dusty Liston, Community and Business Specialist of CEDA and Tim Penny, Southeast Minnesota Initiative Foundation

Regular Meeting

1. Call to Order

Secretary and Acting EDA Director Kay Qualley called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. Introductions, welcome new members

Introductions were done; new EDA board member Ken Fritz was welcomed. Mr. Fritz recently retired as the County Administrator.

3. Election of Officers

Kay Qualley conducted the election of President. Nomination by Mike Kennedy for Duane Klein as President was received. The EDA voted to approve Mr. Klein, who then took the gavel. Duane Klein nominated Mike Kennedy as Vice President. The EDA voted to approve Mike Kennedy as Vice President. Mr. Klein recommended Kay Qualley to continue as Secretary of the EDA, which was approved by all.

4. Approval of Agenda

On motion by Commissioner Meyer and seconded by Mike Kennedy, the EDA voted to approve the agenda. Vote: Yes – All.

5. Approval of Minutes – October 28, 2021

On motion by Mike Kennedy and seconded by Commissioner Meyer, the EDA voted to approve the minutes. Vote: Yes – All.

6. Financial Reports, Kay Qualley

A. & B. October – December 2021

Kay Qualley reviewed the financial reports with the EDA and the balance of the Revolving Loan Fund, as of December 2021. Additionally, Kay Qualley explained the status of the 3 outstanding loans through the EDA.

46 On motion by Ken Fritz and seconded by Mike Kennedy, the EDA voted to
47 approve the October-December 2021 financial reports. Vote: Yes – All.
48

49 **7. Loan Updates, Kay Qualley**

50 **A. Current Loan Status**

51 Kay Qualley showed the financial statements which indicated that no loans are over
52 30 days in payment arrears. No new applications were received. Work with OpenGov
53 to create an on-line application for loans continues well, thanks to staff member
54 Megen Kabele.
55

56 **8. New Business**

57 **A. Southeast Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) Presentation by President/CEO**
58 **Tim Penny**

59 Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation is a regional development and
60 philanthropic organization that fosters economic and community vitality in 20
61 counties of southern Minnesota. The WC-EDA is a partner with SMIF. Mr. Penny
62 stated that SMIF has invested \$8.4 million in Winona County and specifically has
63 made 43 loans - \$2.2 million to local entrepreneurs and provided 339 grants - \$2.8
64 million to support community initiatives as an example. Focus areas include: Early
65 Childhood Development, Economic Development, Financial Support, providing
66 Business Expertise, fostering Community Vitality, supporting Community and
67 Designated Funds and other areas such as regional work connections. He provided
68 details on County COVID relief:

- 69 • 29 childcare providers received emergency grants
- 70 • 66 businesses received DEED Small Business Relief Grants
- 71 • St. Charles Area Community Foundation received matching grant dollars

72 Total: \$678,600
73

74 **B. Community Economic Development Associates (CEDA), Presentation by**
75 **President/CEO Ron Ziegler**

76 Mr. Ziegler introduced Ms. Dusty Liston, CEDA Community and Business Specialist for
77 economic development. Ms. Liston will be the CEDA representative who will work
78 with County EDA and staff to create greater County coordination and impact for the
79 Winona County Economic Development Authority. The contract for two days a
80 month EDA consulting aid to the EDA, was approved in the last EDA meeting, and the
81 County Board approved the professional services budget for the WC-EDA. The
82 contract will be reviewed by Attorney Ellison as to form, prior to forwarding for
83 signing/approval. Ken Fritz reminded staff that the County Board would likely need
84 to provide final approval. Kay Qualley mentioned that work on updating the website
85 and other outreach will commence when the contract is approved. Mike Kennedy
86 stated that a new emphasis on EDA has long been desired.
87

88 Ron Ziegler's presentation shared that CEDA's corporate mission focuses on the
89 strategic growth and success of small, rural communities. The organization is

90 passionate about helping small communities be proactive about development. They
91 have facilitated over \$55M in grant dollars and their team of 38 talented staff
92 members have over 100 years of combined experience. That expertise is shared
93 across the organization and can be tapped into by Winona County, as well. CEDA
94 provides on-site business counseling, training and aids collaboration with state, local
95 and regional organizations to leverage projects.

96

97 **C. Winona County Recorder Bob Bambenek, 2021 Real Estate Highlights**

98 Mr. Bambenek shared his presentation about the unprecedented sales of homes,
99 land and commercial establishments throughout 2021. Amounts over asking prices
100 increased, availability of homes in affordable price ranges had narrowed to the point
101 of nearly none on the market other than those in poor condition. He mentioned that
102 discussions about a County Housing Study did seem prudent, in the light of what his
103 office is experiencing.

104

105 **D. County Housing Study, when was the last one, demand for a new one?**

106 Lew Overhaug, Planner, was able to locate the last County-wide Housing Study, that
107 from 1999. Twenty-three years later, the business climate, housing shortages and
108 interest rates are all changed. The City of Winona contracted for a City Housing Study
109 several years ago, which provided census-rich information for their decision-making.
110 Small cities in the County need the assistance of an updated housing plan and study
111 to encompass the analysis of their own plans, such as those for transportation,
112 infrastructure buildouts and capacity, existing programs or the need for programs to
113 maintain existing housing stock, etc. Ken Fritz stated that ARPA Funding may be able
114 to be used, that it should be investigated as housing ties to economic development.
115 The WC-EDA voted (motion by Chris Meyer, seconded by Ken Fritz, approved all) to
116 allow staff to solicit Requests for Proposal for a County Housing Study from
117 experienced consultants. Mr. Ziegler mentioned that the CEDA organization may be
118 of assistance in this endeavor.

119

120 **9. Old Business**

121 Ryan Grobe has resigned from the EDA Board citing over commitments in volunteer
122 boards. He mentioned in a phone call to Kay Qualley, that with interest rates on the
123 increase, he did not see any compelling reason to change the current EDA small business
124 loan interest rates. Duane Klein concurred and added support for leaving the current
125 floor at 3% or 1% below the Prime rate, should rates continue to climb. No further action
126 was taken.

127

128 **10. Member Updates Reports/Comments**

129 None

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131 **11. Adjournment**

132 On motion by Commissioner Meyer and seconded by Mike Kennedy, the EDA voted to
133 adjourn at 6:15 p.m. Vote: Yes – All.

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Notwithstanding the need for contract review or new loans, the next scheduled meeting is April 28th, 2022.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Kay Qualley, Planning & Environmental Services Director
Acting Director, Winona County EDA

Signed by: 
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EDA President/Vice President

May 3, 2022 | 7:35 AM PDT
Date