



**COUNTY OF BECKER**  
**Economic Development Authority**  
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**BECKER COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD MEETING - REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**3:00 p.m.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Floor Board Room/Via Teams**

**Becker County Courthouse**

**ATTENDEES:** Larry Knutson, Hank Ludtke, Karen Mulari, Sean Felker, Abby Anderson, Richard Vareberg

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Robyn Beck, Laura McKnight, Guy Fischer, Mary Hendrickson, Fran Rethwisch, Mary Rotter, Kathy/Kurt Mickelson, Tom Klyve

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Hank Ludtke called the Regular meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
2. **Approval of Board Agenda with change to Add Tax Levy to agenda** Motion by Mulari, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Knutson, motion carried.
3. **Approval of July Meeting Minutes:** Motion to approve by Felker, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vareberg, motion carried.
4. **Economic Development**
  - A. **Childcare:** Staff discussed the newly developed State Childcare Plan (\$550 million). Per discussions, it was explained that a childcare group (which included county staff) had developed a few strategies to help address local childcare needs in conjunction with the State's recently developed and funded Plan. The Two strategies are:
    1. Increase childcare slots by 15% (approx. 80 slots by 2024; there is a need for approximately 600 slots in the County) by providing start up support for new providers; Mulari commented that if support was to be considered that it should be quarterly as opposed to providing all of the proposed support (\$10,000 grant per new start up) up front to make sure that they continue to be in business. **For strategy 1, the EDA asked the childcare group to define the cost parameters of the start up and bring back its findings to the EDA Board for continued discussion; and**
    2. Stabilize local childcare providers – funds calculated on per child basis for each provider: Calculus provided: 790 FT @ \$100/child = \$79,000; 211 PT @ \$100/child x 30% (PT ratio) = \$6,330 for a total of approximately \$85,000 (2021) and \$85,000 (2022); Discussion: County had provided some stimulus to providers earlier this year which was much appreciated by childcare providers; concerns about trying to prop up compensation – what happens when the money goes away? (Knutson); Staff noted that the group had conversations about this relative to compensation and acknowledged that the compensation issue would need to be a long-term commitment on the part of the State – that local govts. Per the availability/consistency of local funds can't be expected to do the heavy lifting on this issue. **For strategy 2 the childcare group was asked to define the expenses for what the emergency funds could be utilized for and bring it back to the EDA Board for discussion.**

- B. Broadband: Staff discussed 2 broadband provider proposals (Arvig/Midco) received to-date and a 3<sup>rd</sup> proposal from HomeTown Fiber which sought to provide the County with technical support.

There was interest in finding out more about previous experience/projects of HomeTown Fiber. The EDA thought that a technical assessment of broadband opportunity within the County could be helpful. The EDA reviewed their Technical Support Specifics cost estimate and other section elements from their proposal and thought that the proposal could be changed to reflect what the County was looking for to better assess local broadband opportunities. **Staff was directed to get more information about their prior experience/projects and to see if they might be interested in attending the next EDA meeting.** Larry was going to bring up the subject at the next County Board meeting.

- C. Economic Vitality Videos: Per review of both estimates provided **staff was directed to watch some other videos (of other potential vendors) that had been developed and determine if Leighton Broadcasting would have the interest/capacity to do this work.** A comment came up about advertising (Hendrickson) and once the videos are developed how would they be utilized – what other outlets would be considered to show them and would that cost more money?
- D. Frazer Industrial: Discussion about providing/giving remaining land to city of Frazer for developing affordable housing. Total acreage 15.85, useable acreage approx. 11.1 acres; value of land parcel on County website is estimated at \$44,100, but per recent transaction with Hoiberg for storage containers the per acre price was \$9,000/acre. Per the later received price per acre a preliminary valuation for the parcel was estimated at \$99,900. **The EDA wanted to know if the City would be interested and directed staff to ask if the City was interested and if they are then to develop a plan as to how the parcel would be utilized for housing for consideration by the EDA.** Potential for the estimated value of the parcel to be reimbursed to the EDA (via ARP funds) by the County was discussed.

## 5. Housing Update

- Statement of Significant Amendment Modification (detailing significant vs. not significant amendments/modifications and clarifying related public processes and notification protocols); **Motion to approve Statement of Significant Amendment/Modification by Mulari, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Knutson, motion carried.**
- MURL –
  - Scramsted – offer deed in lieu to avoid cancellation and/or apprise of options
  - Killsenemy - Ludtke sought some resolution of what was to be done about making improvements to the house foundation – how should the EDA assist with this? Estimated cost of making repairs is \$50k; add cost to mortgage? Perhaps a percentage should be explored – **staff directed to have a conversation(s) with her and develop options to resolve this and bring back to the Board to discuss so that this issue/need can be resolved.**
- HOME Program: There has been a lending pause within this program due to a variety of factors (covid, administrative turnover, lender outreach, funding pool consistency, etc., and so the discussion focused on revisiting some of the lending guidelines per the increasing difficulty of people at 80% AMI have in being able to afford a home per cost increases. **Motion to increase loan amount availability at 80% AMI from \$5,000 to \$8,000 by Mulari, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Vareberg, motion carried.**

6. **Check Registers/Paying Bills/Financials:** Motion to approve July Bills by Mulari, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Anderson, motion carried. Workshop \$936.92, Hwy 34 Group Home \$6,178.15, Low Income Public Housing \$24,991.82; Willow Property \$2,324.64; Maple Ave. Apts. \$6,137.04, Hidden Hills Group Home \$225.00, West River Townhomes \$9,762.89 and Section 8 Voucher \$20,906.00.
7. **Budget to Actual and Balance Sheet:** Motion to approve by Mulari, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Knutson, motion carried.
8. **Tax Levy:** No increase in tax levy for 2022. Motion to approve an EDA Tax Levy of \$124,350 for 2022 by Knutson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mulari, motion carried.
9. **EDA Board – Open Forum: N/A**
10. **Meeting Adjourned.** Ludtke adjourned meeting at approximately 4:50 p.m.

**ATTEST:**

Respectfully submitted:

/s/ Guy Fischer  
EDA Coordinator

/s/ Hank Ludtke  
EDA Board President