

**City of Mora, MN
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Meeting Minutes**

May 4, 2021

Present: Gene Anderson, Jody Anderson, Brett Baldwin, Bob Jensen, Dan Johnson, Rose Krie and Alan Skramstad
Absent: Doyle Casavant
Staff Present: Lindy Crawford and Beth Thorp
Others Present: None

1. Call to order. Skramstad called the meeting to order at 2:01 pm.
2. Oath of Office. Krie pledged the oath of office for the remainder of a 6-year term expiring on December 31, 2022.
3. Roll Call.
 - G. Anderson – Present
 - J. Anderson – Present
 - Baldwin – Present
 - Casavant – Absent (unexcused)
 - Jensen – Present
 - Johnson – Present
 - Krie – Present
 - Skramstad – Present
4. Adopt Agenda. Motion by Johnson, second by Baldwin to adopt the May 4, 2021 agenda as presented. All present voted aye, motion carried.
5. Minutes. Thorp informed the board that item 10d (Notice of Resignation – Ness) should be corrected to reflect that Jensen voted against the motion to accept Ness' resignation. Motion by Jensen, second by Johnson to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2021 meeting as amended. All present voted aye, motion carried.
6. Claims. Jensen questioned the purpose of claims related to legal services; staff explained that the City Attorney was consulted on matters related to a loan repayment concern and a mortgage satisfaction. Motion by J. Anderson, second by Johnson to approve the February, March, and April 2021 claims as presented. All present voted aye, motion carried.
7. Open Forum. No members of the audience were present for open forum.
8. Special Business. None.
9. New Business.

- a. Promotional Video. Thorp reminded the EDA that they discussed in February 2021 the possibility of having a video made for the purpose of promoting the community and that it was suggested that staff check if Mora Public Schools and/or Pine Tech would be able to provide those services. Thorp stated that neither Mora Public Schools nor Pine Tech had the ability to provide video services. Thorp went on to explain that Mora Public Schools reached out to city staff recently explaining that the school district was also interested in having promotional videos created, and offered the opportunity to partner on the project. Thorp explained that the school district wished to contract for services provided by Captivate Media + Consulting (Captivate), and a proposal was presented to the EDA for consideration showing a total project cost of \$8,000 for the creation of three videos. Crawford added that this was not a budgeted item but it was a stated goal of the EDA and sufficient funds were available in cash reserves. Jensen shared that he had viewed several videos created by Captivate and was pleased with their work. Jensen went on to explain that one of the video samples was for Janesville, which was a similar partnership between the city and school district. Thorp shared that the school district was highly motivated and would like to begin video production as soon as possible. Johnson asked if the videos would be generic enough so that they could be used for a number of years; Thorp responded that the goal of Captivate was to create timeless videos. J. Anderson commented that Mora was a tourist destination and the videos would help with tourist attraction. Motion by Johnson, second by J. Anderson to partner with Mora Public Schools for the creation of promotional videos utilizing the services of Captivate Media + Consulting with the city's cost not to exceed \$4,000. All present voted aye, motion carried.
- b. Sign for Available Land. Thorp explained that the city owned the former feedmill site, known as downtown commercial corner, and several industrial park lots and staff was interested in having a sign made to promote the available land. Thorp described the sign as being a temporary, yet sturdy, sign that could be moved from site to site as needed and would direct viewers to either visit the city's website or contact city hall for more information about the property. Thorp added that staff would create one-page documents for each parcel that would be added to the city's website. Thorp shared that she had reached out to three sign companies for quotes; one company stated that they didn't have the ability to create the desired sign and the other two companies intended to submit quotes but they had not been received prior to the meeting. Staff requested that the board discuss the sign concept and provide staff with direction. Johnson asked if the sign would be banner-style sign made of vinyl; Crawford explained that it would likely be made of a sturdy material potentially with posts. Crawford added that most people weren't aware that downtown commercial corner was for sale, despite the RFP, and signage could help generate interest. G. Anderson asked which sign companies had been contacted; Thorp responded that she requested quotes from P-D's Embroidery, Colors by Craig, and Minnesota Sign Company. J. Anderson commented that her store, P-D's Embroidery, wasn't able to make signs the size that staff was proposing. Thorp shared that she was seeking quotes for a 4' x 8' sign, a size that was highly visible yet transportable, with posts and self-supporting feet; Thorp likened the proposed sign to signs that the City of Cambridge used to promote city-owned land. Jensen asked Krie if signs or websites were better for promoting land; Krie commented that both were helpful, but, as a tourist community, signs would help create interest. Jensen commented that tourists likely wouldn't drive through the industrial park and see the sign; G. Anderson responded that companies looking for property were likely to drive through industrial parks and a sign placed on an individual lot would be helpful. G. Anderson suggested that staff contact Kevin Troupe for a quote; Skramstad suggested Lance Strande

(Bluestar Graphics). Board members discussed sign size, discussing advantages of 4' x 4' and 4' x 8'. Krie suggested that sign companies may be able to provide suggestions for sizing and materials. Board members, generally supporting the sign concept, discussed timing, pricing, and sign options. Motion by Jensen, second by Johnson authorizing staff to spend up to \$1,200 for the creation of up to three signs (ideally one 4' x 8' sign and two 4' x 4' signs) to promote available city-owned land. All present voted aye, motion carried.

10. Old Business. None.

11. Communications.

- a. Quarterly Financial Reports – 1st Quarter 2021. The EDA received 1st Quarter 2021 financial reports. Crawford summarized the purpose of each section.
- b. Kanabec County EDA Meeting Minutes – January 13 and February 10, 2021. The EDA received January and February 2021 meeting minutes for the Kanabec County EDA. Jensen asked G. Anderson if the county had been successful in distributing all COVID-related funds to businesses; G. Anderson responded that the total requested was less than what was available so the county disbursed the remaining funds proportionately amongst the grant recipients.
- c. Initiative Foundation Correspondence. The EDA received a letter from the Initiative Foundation thanking the EDA for its 2021 contribution to support the work of the foundation.

12. Reports.

- a. City of Mora COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Fund. Thorp informed the board that several grants and loans were still available despite efforts to market the Emergency Assistance Fund. Thorp added that the program was scheduled to expire on June 30, 2021 and the EDA would consider the future of the program at its August 2021 meeting. Thorp also informed the board that the EDA Review Committee had met recently to consider a written request from Jillian Stulen, a delinquent loan recipient, to further defer her loan payments to June 2021. Thorp stated that the EDA Review Committee approved the request – with the first payment due on June 20, 2021 – however the committee increased the monthly payment amount and shortened the term of the loan so that the loan would be repaid in full by the end of 2022 as originally intended. Thorp added that the EDA Review Committee would pursue legal action if Stulen defaulted again.
- b. Small Cities Development Program. Thorp provided an update on the two-year residential rehab program, sharing current numbers of approved applications for owner-occupied single family homes, single family rentals, duplex rentals, and multi-family rentals. Following Thorp's comment that three applications for multi-family rental rehab had been denied due to rents being over fair market, Jensen asked what fair market was; Thorp didn't have that information but stated she would provide it following the meeting. Thorp added that Central Minnesota Housing Partnership (CMHP) was administering the Small Cities Development Program grant, which included reviewing and acting on all applications. Jensen asked if Mora had any low-income multi-family housing; Crawford responded that the HRA owned low-income housing. J. Anderson asked if rental units located above businesses would be eligible; Thorp responded that she would inquire with CMHP and follow up with the board after the meeting.

- c. SMMPA Economic Development Credit Program. Crawford shared that the City Council reviewed and approved use of the economic development credit program offered by SMMPA, offering another incentive for new and expanding businesses.
- d. Administrative Services Director. Crawford shared that the PUC and City Council would consider at their May meetings Crawford's recommendation to hire a candidate to fill the position of Administrative Services Director. Crawford added that the position was new, replacing the former City Clerk / Treasurer position filled by Mason Hjelle, and that the Administrative Services Director would oversee the finance and administration departments and be the acting City Administrator in Crawford's absence.
- e. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations. J. Anderson reported that she was seeing more and more use of the electric vehicle charging stations (EVCS). Crawford commented that approximately 110 cars had used the EVCS since December 2020 with the vast majority of cars having used the stations located in the downtown area. Board members and Crawford discussed costs for using the EVCS.

13. Adjournment. Motion by Jensen, second by J. Anderson to adjourn. All present voted aye and the meeting was adjourned at 2:38 pm.



Alan Skramstad, President



Beth Thorp, Secretary