

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

MINUTES

Wednesday, June 23, 2021, 4:00 p.m. (Public Hearing at 5:00 p.m.)
1707 Technology Drive NE, Willmar MN, 56201

Members Present: Commissioners Robert Anderson, Doug Erickson, Kathy Grochow, Jon Hawkinson, Sue Hilgert, Jill Hoff, Doug Krueger, Tom McDonnell, Tracy Montgomery, Shawn Mueske, Rollie Nissen, Chris Rowan, Lorallen Schmeling, Steve Schmitt, Dave Sebesta, Paul Simonsen, Berit Spors, and DuWayne Underthun

Ex-Officio Member Present: Commissioner Maureen Melgaard-Schneider

Members Absent: Commissioners Jeff Benson, Shirley Carter, Kevin Crowley, Rick Fagerlie, and Robert Moller.

Staff Present: Executive Director Eric Day, Finance Director Sue Gimse, Economic Development Director Les Nelson, Economic Development Professional Michelle Marotzke, Community Planner Kyle Ten Napel, Community Planner Justice Walker, Transportation Resource Coordinator Terry Smith, and Communications Specialist Ben Carlson.

Guests: None

Call to Order

In Chairperson Crowley's absence, Vice-Chairperson DuWayne Underthun called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Introductions

Commissioner provided introductions – Name and entity and/or interest represented. MMDC staff also provided introductions.

Approval of Agenda

Vice-Chairperson Underthun asked for any additions or corrections to the agenda. Executive Director Day added "Economic Developer – Level II Position" as a new first item under New Business J. – Personnel Committee Recommendations. He also added "Michelle Marotzke position reclassification" as a new second item under New Business J. – Personnel Committee Recommendations. All other items under Personnel Committee were moved further down the agenda.

Commissioner Sebesta moved to approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Mueske seconded the motion, which carried.

Approval of March 23, 2021, Full Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Hilgert moved to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2021, MMDC Commission meeting, as presented. Commissioner Grochow seconded the motion, which carried.

Treasurer's Report

As Commissioner/Treasurer Erickson was delayed, Finance Director Gimse provided an overview of the Account of Revenue & Expenditures report. The MMDC's checkbook balance, as of June 15, 2021, was \$3,205.75. The bills approved totaled \$409,689.18 (payroll \$147,076.96; vendors \$83,234.43; transfer to savings \$179,377.79; The savings account balance was \$334,214.94; Long Term Savings were \$576,614.40; and the 4M balance was \$6,091.61.

Commissioner Mueske moved to accept the Treasurer's Report and bills to be paid. Commissioner Hilgert seconded the motion, which carried.

Consent Agenda

The consent agenda consisted of the following:

Executive Committee Minutes – April 23; May 3; May 20; June 15, 2021
Work Program/Budget Committee Minutes – June 15, 2021
Personnel Committee Minutes – June 15, 2021
Nominating Committee Minutes – June 15, 2021
Legacy Revolving loan Fund Committee – April 25; May 11, 2021
MMRTCC Subcommittee Minutes – March 23; April 27; May 25, 2021

Commissioner Schmelting moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Rowan seconded the motion, which carried.

Correspondence and Announcements

Executive Director Day passed thank you cards from the families of former Commissioner Francis Schweiss, who passed away in April 2021, and Commissioner Gary Danielson, who passed away in May 2021. The MMDC had sent a plant to both the Schweiss and Danielson families to express the Commissions sympathy.

Day then passed a recent article from the West Central Tribune, featuring MMDC Community Planner Justice Walker and the upcoming MNGravel 160 bike event, which he is helping to coordinate (September 2021). The purpose of this event is to demonstrate that there are less conventional ways to bring people and their dollars to our region.

Day also reminded the Commission that the MMDC is currently recruiting an economic development professional to replace Rick Bonlender, who recently accepted another position.

Executive Director's Annual Report

Executive Director Day provided a verbal report to the Commission, recapping many of the changes the MMDC has undergone in the past year and expressing appreciation for the support of the Commission and for the efforts put forth by MMDC staff. Included in Day's comments was a commitment to quality and active engagement with regional stakeholders and his dedication to ensuring a good return on the public's investment.

Chairperson's Annual Report

Executive Director Day read a statement prepared by Chairperson Crowley. In that statement, Crowley thanked MMDC staff for their work, as they have adjusted, moved forward, and completed several great projects, including office relocation and the provision of assistance to businesses.

Vice Chairperson Underthun added his agreement that the MMDC staff are doing well and that things are moving in a good direction. He also added his observation that there is a good deal of commitment to the MMDC organization and region from Commission members, for which he expressed his appreciation.

Staff Reports

Vice Chairperson Underthun asked if there were any questions from the Commission on the written staff reports that were provided within the meeting materials packet. There were no questions. Executive Director Day encouraged Commissioners to reach out to staff directly if they had questions about a project or if they had project ideas to share.

Old Business

There was no Old Business.

New Business – Action Items & Commission Business

Work Program & Budget Committee Recommendation: FY 2021 Budget Revisions

Finance Director Gimse informed Commissioners of the budget revisions that, on June 15, 2021, the Work Program & Budget Committee considered and recommended for approval.

Commissioner Mueske moved to approve the FY 2021 Budget Revisions. Commissioner Rowan seconded the motion, which carried.

Work Program & Budget Committee Recommendation: Approval of Final FY 2021 Indirect and Fringe Benefits Rate Agreement

Financial Director/Office Manager Gimse discussed this proposed action. She informed the Commissioners of the following final indirect cost rate revisions for Fiscal Year 2021: Fringe benefits are 33.3 percent – the base is total salaries including leave, with the total fringe benefits for the year at \$177,679. Indirect costs are 29.5898 percent, which is the lowest this rate has been in recent memory – the base is total salaries plus fringe benefits, with the total budgeted indirect costs for the year of \$178,845. This information was presented to the MMDC's Work Program & Budget Committee on June 15 and, at that time, a motion to recommend approval carried.

Commissioner Schmitt moved to approve the Final FY 2021 Indirect and Fringe Benefits Rate Agreement as presented. Commissioner Mueske seconded the motion, which carried.

Work Program & Budget Committee Recommendation: Dedicated Funds – Update of Classifications

Executive Director Day explained to the Commission that some dedicated reserve fund names have caused confusion over the years and some have changed focus over time. Day stated that, on June 15, 2021, the Work Program & Budget Committee considered and recommended the following adjustments to dedicated reserve funds:

- Changing the title of the “Health Fund” to the “Emergency Staff Coverage Fund”, which would be used to engage temporary staff or services should key personnel need to be out of the office for an extended time due to a medical leave, etc.
- Changing the title of the “Building Fund” to “Facilities Fund”, which would be used to make any necessary facility improvements, when needed.
- Changing the title of the “Regional Planning Fund” to “Planning Assistance Fund”, which would be used to provide greater rate reductions to stakeholders for our professional services when their budgets won’t support them.
- Changing the title of the “Local Services Assistance Fund” to “Community Enhancement Fund”. Day stated that this fund could be used to provide small grants to stakeholders, possibly in the \$3,000 to \$5,000 range, to improve community health, safety, and quality of life. Day stated that this fund might be used to support projects such as first aid or mental health first aid training, park or trail improvements, automatic external defibrillator installations, etc. Day stated that staff would develop an application for funds and present it to the Full Commission for approval. Staff would also ask for volunteers from the Commission to help with project selection.

Commissioner Spores moved to approve the update of dedicated reserve fund designations and uses, as presented. Commissioner Hilgert seconded the motion, which carried.

Work Program and Budget Committee Recommendation: Assignment of Excess Revenue – FY 2021

Finance Director Gimse provided an overview of staff recommendations for the assignment of excess FY 2021 revenue. These recommendations were presented to the Work Program & Budget Committee on June 15, 2021. The Work Program & Budget Committee recommended approval of assignment of excess revenue, in the following manner.

- First, assigning \$30,000 to the MMDC’s Community Enhancement Fund to support local projects that improve health, safety, and/or quality of life.
- Second, assigning \$5,000 to the MMDC’s Emergency Staff Coverage Fund
- Third, assigning \$5,000 to the MMDC’s Succession Fund
- Fourth, assigning any additional balance over \$40,000 to MMDC’s Unassigned fund

Commissioner McDonnell moved to approve the Work Program and Budget Committee’s recommendation for use of dedicated funds for FY 2021, as presented. Commissioner Mueske seconded the motion, which carried.

Designation of Banks

Following Finance Director Sue Gimse's overview of the need to designate banks on an annual basis, Commissioner Rowan moved to approve all banks in the Region as designated depositories for MMDC. Commissioner McDonnell seconded the motion, which carried.

Authorizing Payroll and Bill Paying in Executive Director's Absence

Executive Director Day informed the Commission that the MMDC requires a second person on staff who is authorized to sign checks if and when Day is unavailable. In recent years, Economic Development Director Les Nelson has had this additional responsibility. Given Nelson will be retiring on June 30, 2021, Day recommended that the Commission approve Michelle Marotzke to authorize payroll and bill paying in his absence for FY 2022.

Commissioner Grochow made a motion to approve Michelle Marotzke to authorize payroll and bill paying, and sign checks when the Executive Director is unavailable. Commissioner McDonnell seconded the motion, which carried.

US Bank Master Services Agreement

Finance Director Gimse presented the US Bank Master Services Agreement for Commission approval.

Commissioner Hilgert made a motion to approve the US Bank Master Services Agreement. Commissioner Schmitt seconded the motion, which carried.

Investment Recommendation

Finance Director/Office Manager Gimse informed the Commission that the Commission has a CD that will mature on July 8, 2021 (value of \$80,400 and rate of 0.90 percent). Gimse informed that CD rates are currently very low and that the best rate she has been able to find of late is 0.50 percent. Gimse requested a motion to approve MMDC staff to determine an appropriate investment once the CD matures, with a goal of finding an interest rate of at least 0.50 percent

Commissioner Nissen made a motion to provide MMDC staff the authority to reinvest the maturing CD at the best rate available, with a goal of a rate no less than 0.50 percent. After discussion, Commissioner Anderson seconded the motion, which carried.

Commissioner Annual Conflict of Interest Form

Financial Director/Office Manager Gimse asked Commissioners to review the form, which was included in the packet, and asked those that are new or those who have changes to complete the form and return it to her at earliest convenience. Gimse also reminded Commissioners to review expense sheets, sign, and return to her as soon as possible. Gimse will be running checks on June 30, 2021, as that is the end of the Fiscal year.

Personnel Committee Recommendation: Economic Developer -Level II Position

Day informed the Commission that the Personnel Committee approved an Economic Developer – Level II position. This position includes all of the responsibilities of the MMDC’s Economic Developer – Disaster Recovery focus position, which is the entry-level MMDC economic developer position for which both Michelle Marotzke and Rick Bonlender were hired. However, the new Economic Developer – Level II position also includes management of the MMDC’s revolving loan funds, leading the development and maintenance of our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and increased responsibility for EDA reporting. Day reported that, after reviewing the position description, the Personnel Committee it and also approved the reclassification of Michelle Marotzke to this higher-grade position. Day asked for a motion to approve the Economic Developer – Level II position description and a second motion to reclassify Marotzke as an Economic Developer – Level II.

Commissioner McDonnell made a motion to approve the new Economic Developer – Level II position. Commissioner Rowan seconded the motion, which carried.

Commissioner Hilgert then made a motion to reclassify economic development professional Michelle Marotzke to the Economic Developer – Level II position. Commissioner McDonnell seconded the motion, which carried.

Personnel Committee Recommendation: Staff Step/Salary Increases

Executive Day reported that staff evaluations have been completed. All staff are performing satisfactorily. On June 15, 2021, The MMDC Personnel Committee met and carried a motion to support staff step increases for eligible staff, effective July 1. Day then asked the Commission for a motion to approve.

Commissioner Rowan made a motion to approve staff step/wage increases, effective July 1. Commissioner Hilgert seconded the motion, which carried.

Personnel Committee Recommendation: Economic Development Intern Position Description

Day informed the commission that a new, paid MMDC Economic Development Intern position description was brought to the MMDC’s Personnel Committee on June 15, 2021. Day explained that this intern would assist with the MMDC’s economic development activities and said that he would like to have the option to bring on a paid economic development intern if and when the budget permits and if and when quality candidates can be found. Day stated that current projections show that the MMDC’s CARES Act dollars could support an intern in FY 2022. Day then asked for a motion to approve the paid Economic Development Intern position.

Commissioner Grochow made a motion to approve the MMDC Economic Development Intern position description. Commissioner McDonnell seconded the motion, which carried.999

Personnel Committee Recommendation: Compensation Study

Executive Director Day informed the Commission that, given the current economic climate, staff-retention is a major concern. Day stated that it is important to ensure the MMDC remains competitive in the area of staff compensation and that there are at least two other regional

development organizations who have contracted with a firm to conduct an in-depth analysis of their positions and compensation packages. Day requested a motion to approve the option to engage a firm, using a request for proposals process, to conduct an in-depth position and compensation analysis, with the understanding that the MMDC would not move forward with such an RFP if analysis from other RDCs reveals information sufficient for the MMDC to make related position and compensation decisions. Day stated that the matter was brought to the MMDC Personnel Committee on June 15, 2021, and that the Personnel Committee carried a motion to recommend approving the option to engage a firm for the described analysis.

Commissioner Anderson made a motion to provide the option to engage a firm, using a request for proposals process, to conduct an in-depth position and compensation analysis. Commissioner Sebesta seconded the motion, which carried.

Fraud Training (Informational)

Executive Director Day informed the Commission that, while the MMDC has not had any fraud concerns, he will be working with MMDC Finance Director Sue Gimse to identify appropriate fraud prevention-focused training programs. All staff will also be required to review the existing MMDC Fraud Policy.

Cybersecurity Training (Informational)

Executive Director Day informed Commissioners that all MMDC staff viewed a series of short cybersecurity training videos on June 7. Topics included social media safety, ransomware, phishing, and making strong passwords. Additionally, staff were provided informational materials to help them spot fake URLs/sites and social engineering red flags. Day offered to share these resources with any Commissioner who was interested in receiving them.

Commissioner McDonnell then informed Commissioners on a new tactic being used to hijack email systems and trick users into providing information. Commissioner McDonnell's recommendation is to always reach out by phone to verify, even when familiar companies request personal information.

Health Insurance (Informational)

Executive Director Day informed the Commission that he and Finance Director Gimse have had conversations about health coverage. Day informed that, in FY 2021, the MMDC budgeted for a 10% increase and saw an actual 9.7% increase to rates. Day went on to say that the FY 2022 budget was made in anticipation of another 10% increase in the coming year. Day stated that the MMDC currently purchases health insurance coverage through the Public Employees Insurance Program and based on conversations with several other regional development organizations, PEIP remains very competitive. Day informed that the matter would be brought to the Personnel Committee for consideration when the new rates became available, to determine if the MMDC can/should absorb the entire increase. Day reported that COVID-19 continues to be one major reason behind the increase and said that it isn't likely related to staff demographics.

Personnel Policies (Informational)

Executive Director Day informed that he'll be bringing some suggested revisions of MMDC's personnel policies to the MMDC Personnel Committee in the coming months. Day stated that these

policies will reflect a change in office location, add clarity to existing language, and generally modernize policies to reduce legal liability, ensure effective operations, and promote a professional work environment.

Executive Director Annual Performance Review (Informational)

Vice-Chairperson Underthun informed the Commission that the MMDC Executive Committee met on June 15, 2021, to provide a performance evaluation to Executive Director Day. Commissioner Underthun informed the Commission that results from the recent survey of the Commission were used as a basis for the evaluation. Underthun informed the Commission that all comments were positive and that Day had been given his step increase, effective July 1, 2021.

Vice-Chairperson Underthun provided an opportunity for Commissioners who were present at this meeting to provide comment. Several positive comments were shared and Day expressed his appreciation for the support of the Commission, which he has enjoyed since accepting the Executive Director position.

Public Hearing on Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Budget

At 5:00 p.m. Vice-Chairperson Underthun opened the public hearing on the proposed FY 2022 budget and work program for the Commission. The meeting had legal notification, which was read by Executive Director Day.

Executive Director Day presented the proposed Budget and Work Program via a PowerPoint presentation. Vice-Chairperson Underthun called for public testimony on the proposed FY 2022 Budget and Work Program (called three times). There was no person in attendance who desired to give testimony.

Commissioner Underthun closed the Public Hearing and reopened the Commission Meeting at approximately 5:07 p.m.

Work Program & Budget Committee Recommendation: FY 2022 Work Program and Budget Approval

Finance Director Gimse provided an overview of the staff-recommended MMDC Work Program and Budget for FY 2022, which was presented to the MMDC's Work Program & Budget Committee on June 15, 2021. The Work Program & Budget Committee carried a motion to recommend approval of this FY 2022 Work Program and Budget at that time.

Commissioner Nissen moved to approve the FY 2022 Budget, as presented. Commissioner Mueske seconded the motion, which carried.

Work Program & Budget Committee Recommendation: FY 2022 Indirect Cost Plan Approval

Finance Director Gimse Provided an overview of the FY 2022 Indirect Cost plan, which was presented to the MMDC's Work Program & Budget Committee on June 15, 2021. The Work Program & Budget Committee carried a motion to recommend approval of this FY 2022 Indirect Cost Plan at that time.

Commissioner Grochow made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2022 Indirect Cost Plan. Commissioner Rowan seconded the motion, which carried.

Fiscal Year 2022 Levy

Executive Director Day informed the Commission that the MMDC's Work Program and Budget Committee met on June 15, 2021, and, after hearing justification, carried a motion to support a three percent (3%) levy increase for CY 2022, to be applied to the FY 2023 budget. Day provided an overview of his justification for the increase. It included the following:

- The need to sustain two economic development professionals over the long-term, rather than reducing back to one after the conclusion of the CARES Act grant, to achieve economic development-related goals and accomplish economic development-related tasks in our region, including the management of two revolving loan funds.
- The need to manage the increased cost of doing business, including rising health coverage costs and increasing costs from vendors (Day noted that the Consumer Price Index is up five percent (5%) over the last 12 months).
- The need to ensure adequate matching dollars for grant-funded projects.
- The need to keep indirect cost rates down to acceptable levels.
- The desire to support new projects and efforts that have potential to enhance the MMDC Region's economic resilience and quality of life.

Commissioner Mueske made a motion to approve a three percent (3%) levy increase for CY 2022, to be assessed and applied to FY 2023. Commissioner McDonnell seconded the motion, which carried after some discussion and clarification on the financial impact of the levy increase.

Aging Update

Commissioner Melgaard-Schneider informed the Commission of a newly-approved medicine, called Aduhelm, which will be used to attack a substance that could be associated with the underlying causes of Alzheimer's disease – a toxic and sticky protein in the brain known as amyloid. Commissioner Melgaard-Schneider informed that the Alzheimer's Association estimates that 6.0 million Americans 65 and older were living with the disease as of 2020 – 12% of the 65+ population. That number is expected to grow as more of the baby boomer generation enter their senior years. The increase in the number of people 65 and over with Alzheimer's disease in Minnesota between 2000 and 2025 is expected to be the 18th largest in the nation, at 21.2%, which is above average for the U.S. (the percent of all older Americans with Alzheimer's is projected to grow to 18.5% during that time).

Commissioner Melgaard-Schneider informed that Alzheimer's claimed the lives of 2,436 Minnesotans in 2019, or 43 per 100,000 residents. Medicaid costs related to treating the disease among the state's older population are estimated to increase by 20.1%, roughly the same as the projected national average increase of 20.2%.

Commissioner Melgaard-Schneider provided further insight into the nature of the newly-approved Aduhelm drug. This is the first new treatment for Alzheimer's disease in over 20 years and is provided via intravenous infusion over the course of approximately one hour every four weeks. The drug is considered a maintenance treatment and not a cure for the disease. Aduhelm, which is

produced by Biogen and Eisai is a human-made antibody designed to remove toxic clumps of protein beta-amyloid, which are thought to drive the death of neurons in the brains of people with Alzheimer's disease. The cost of the drug is about \$56,000 per year. However it is estimated that 40% of patients will have an out-of-pocket exposure of approximately \$200 or less per year and an additional 50% of patients will have a cap on out-of-pocket expenses, either because they are covered through a Medicare Advantage plan with maximum out-of-pocket or because they have a form of secondary coverage (e.g., employee retiree coverage). There has been some controversy surrounding this drug and its FDA approval. There has also been discussion surrounding the fact that the cost of this drug will have a large impact to the cost of the Medicare program.

Several Commissioners contributed to discussion on the newly-approved drug, its use, and its projected cost.

Revolving Loan Fund Update

1. Defederalization (Informational)

Economic Development Director Nelson provided an update to the Commission on the status of the Legacy Revolving Loan Fund defederalization. Necessary documents have been submitted to the U.S. EDA. Nelson reminded the Commission that, during the March Commission meeting it was decided that MMDC staff should move forward with the defederalization request but continue to use the funds for a revolving lending program.

2. Meyer's Market Loan Update (Informational):

Economic Development Director Nelson provided an update on the Meyer's Market Loan. He informed the Commission that the borrower has struggled during the last year, both due to the pandemic and some serious health concerns. However, the lines of communication are open, the MMDC has offered technical assistance, and a payment was received just this week. Nelson reminded the Commission that the MMDC and Renville County EDA have a guarantee from the Fairfax EDA in the amount of 50% of the loan balance (original MMDC loan amount = \$30,000).

Commissioner Simonsen mentioned that his family does try to shop at Meyer's Market. However, the store is often out of the items they need.

MMDC will continue to work with the borrower and other involved lenders to come to solutions which lead to repayment and a sustainable grocery store for the Fairfax community.

3. Willmar Child Care Center Update:

Economic Development Director Nelson informed the Commission that the owner of the Willmar Child Care Center (WCCC) has improved the building purchased with RLF funds from the MMDC (\$50,000 MMDC loan) and partner lenders, and that it is ready to house a childcare program (site is licensed), but for the lack of a playground and fenced yard. However, the owner has been unable to open and has not made payment to the MMDC since December 2019. All lenders have gone the extra mile to provide the lender with

resources and technical assistance. However, the owner and his manager have often been out of town and have not been able to give the center full attention. They have also lacked the operating capital needed to float the operation (pay for teachers, aides, utilities, etc.). Nelson reported that the Southwest Initiative Foundation has arranged for an appraisal and phase one environmental study, which should be completed in late-July or early-August. The current strategy is, unless the owner is able to open in the near future, encourage them to take a dignified exit by selling the building and walking away with a profit on the sale. The other option is to foreclose. Nelson asked for a motion to write off this loan, pointing out that a write-off is primarily an accounting move and that it will in no way preclude the collection of the debt by the MMDC.

After discussion, Commissioner Hilgert made a motion to write-off the Willmar Child Care Center Loan. Commissioner Hawkinson seconded the motion, which carried.

MMDC will continue to work with the borrower and other involved lenders to come to solutions which lead to repayment and, ideally, open a childcare facility at the WCCC's location, either with the current borrower or another operator.

4. Overview of Portfolio (Informational)

Economic Development Director Nelson reported that, aside from the Meyer's Market and Willmar Child Care Center loans, the MMDC's Legacy RLF portfolio is in good shape. Borrowers are doing well and are making timely payments.

5. Funds Available for Lending (Informational)

Economic Development Director Nelson informed the Commission that few Legacy RLF dollars are available for lending and that there are businesses who have expressed interest.

EDA RLF CARES Act Update

1. Overview of Portfolio

Economic Development Director Nelson reported that all of the loans made via the MMDC's EDA CARES Act RLF are currently in good standing. Borrowers are making timely payments.

2. Funds Available for Lending

Economic Development Director Nelson reported that the vast majority of RLF funds have been lent out, well ahead of the EDA's two-year deadline. There is currently about \$60,000 - \$70,000 that is not yet spoken for, though there has been some recent interest. Nelson clarified, when asked, that the plan is for the MMDC to continue to administer this RLF over the long-term, and that it will be eligible for defederalization seven years after it's initial capitalization (approximately six years from now).

EDA CARES Act Grant Update (Informational)

Executive Director Day reminded the Commission that the MMDC is just about to the half-way point of the CARES Act Grant. Day stated that it is his goal to ensure the MMDC doesn't leave money on the table and so staff will likely be developing and publishing a request for proposals to secure the services of an outside contractor who can support the MMDC's CARES Act mission. Day reported that it is likely this contractor would provide grant-writing assistance to our regional stakeholders, as both Michelle Marotzke and Rick Bonlender have spent considerable time in this activity and the EDA Received an additional \$3 billion, much of which will be pushed out to cities and counties via infrastructure grants. This contractor could also help stakeholders go after other federal, state, and local grants.

Day also informed the Commission that the MMDC is in the process of recruiting a second Level II Economic Developer, who will join Marotzke. Together, they'll work to improve economic resilience throughout the MMDC region. Their work may include connecting Businesses with solutions that improve their bottom line or protect their operations. They'll also collaborate with other regional partners to tackle common issues such as broadband, childcare, and housing shortages. Day said that his plan is to get the second economic developer in place prior to moving forward with any RFP. He stated that his long-term goal is to ensure the MMDC is able to maintain two economic development professionals over the long-term, emphasizing that there is too much to do to drop back to one economic developer, especially now that the MMDC has two revolving loan funds to manage.

Economic Developer Marotzke then provided an overview of some of the work she has been focused on in recent months, including:

- Participation in the Rural Child Care Innovation Program in Meeker and Renville Counties (Renville program started as a result of an MMDC grant application), with the assistance of First Children's Finance.
- Partnering with Ridgewater College and the Willmar Area Community Foundation to bring some basic journalism training to multilingual individuals, in an effort to help non-English speaking residents of our region connect with important information.
- Provision of technical and grant application assistance to a number of businesses and organizations in the MMDC Region.
- Partnering with other entities to provide public information and technical assistance related to the expansion of broadband.
- Promotion of the MMDC's revolving loan funds.
- Facilitation of meetings related to vitality in Litchfield's historic downtown district.
- Work on the MMDC Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs).

MMRTCC Update (Informational)

Executive Director Day expressed to the Commission that the current fiscal year has presented some challenges with regard to the Mid-Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Council grant. First, the pandemic greatly-reduced ridership. The MMDC worked to assist regional transportation providers, helping them to procure personal protective equipment and share their service updates. The MMDC also experienced significant staff turnover with this program during the last year. Day reminded the Commission that Heather King resigned her position to care for her ailing parents and that her replacement, Kate Selseth, left shortly after starting at the MMDC to accept her dream position as a regional Ombudsman for the State of Minnesota. Day stated

that he was happy to report that Terry Smith has been with the MMDC since the end of December 2020. In his short time he has made significant progress. Day then asked Smith to provide an overview of recent MMRTCC efforts, which include:

- Launching a multimedia campaign, built off of a recent volunteer driver-focused story, in the West Central Tribune, to recruit both volunteer and professional drivers in our area, as the driver shortage is a major concern among our region's transportation providers and a major transportation-related gap for our region.
- Connecting regional human services directors and other personnel to ConnectAbility Minnesota and providing them an opportunity to learn how they might be able to use waiver dollars to fund client rides, via LYFT, when appropriate. ConnectAbility has taken a "neighbor-helping-neighbor" approach and is working with counties around the state to help with ride administration (they are the link between the counties and LYFT).
- Preparing for Phase 4 of the RTCC grant, which will include existing tasks with the additions of:
 - Working with county emergency management professionals to ensure their emergency preparedness plans include a transportation component for nondrivers.
 - Exploring options for vehicle sharing (between organizations such as nursing facilities and transit companies, etc.)
 - Supporting MMDC Planning staff as they complete Local Human Service – Public Transit Coordination Plan-related work (separate MnDOT contract funds planners' work).

Selection of Public Interest Memberships

Executive Director Day listed the interest members. They include:

1. Jeff Benson, representing the transportation sector,
2. Shirley Carter, representing the healthcare sector,
3. Sue Hilgert, representing the mental health and substance abuse treatment sector,
4. Jill Hoff, representing the Local Workforce Development Board,
5. Thomas McDonnell, representing the manufacturing & production sector,
6. Maureen Melgaard-Schneider, representing aging individuals,
7. Robert Moller, representing agriculture and aggregate mining,
8. Shawn Mueske, representing higher education, and
9. Berit Spors, representing people with disabilities and youth.

Day asked for a motion to approve these special interest members, all of whom would participate in the public interest, for FY 2022.

Commissioner Nissen made a motion to approve the list of special interest members, as presented. Commissioner Krueger seconded the motion, which carried.

Election of Officers

In Commissioner Moller's (Nominating Committee Chair) absence, Day explained that there are currently two seats up for consideration. He reported that Commissioner Sue Hilgert is finishing her first term as the MMDC's Board Secretary. Commissioner Hilgert has expressed interest in a second term and Day reported that he is aware of no other Commissioners interested in this seat at the time of the meeting. Day reported that the MMDC Nominating Committee met on June 15, 2021. At that time a motion to nominate Sue Hilgert to a second term as secretary was carried.

The MMDC Commissioners then elected Commissioner Hilgert to a second term as MMDC Secretary, by show of hands, with no dissenting votes. This term will expire on June 30, 2023.

Day reported that Commissioner David Sebesta is finishing his second term as the MMDC's Commissioner At-Large. Day reported that Commissioner Sebesta has expressed interest in a second term and stated that he (Day) is aware of no other Commissioner interested in this seat at this time. Day stated that, on June 15, 2021, the MMDC Nominating Committee met and carried a motion to nominate Commissioner Sebesta to a second term as Commissioner At-Large.

The MMDC Commissioners then elected Commissioner David Sebesta to a second term as MMDC's Commissioner At-Large, by show of hands, with no dissenting votes. This term will expire on June 30, 2023.

Committees and Other Appointments

Executive Director Day pointed to the committee listing that was included in the board packet. Day noted that there is currently only one Commissioner, Commissioner Grochow, who is assigned to the Marketing and Communications Committee. Day explained that he did not expect that this committee would often meet, but that members would be asked to review documents and provide guidance and/or content with regard to social media and other public-facing communications. Day informed the Commission that, prior to the meeting, Commissioner Hawkinson did express some interest in participating and could participate pending Chairperson Crowley's approval, but said that it would be helpful to add at least one additional Commissioner.

Committee Assignments are then as follows:

Executive Committee

Kevin Crowley (Chair)
Doug Erickson (Treasurer)
Sue Hilgert (Secretary)

David Sebesta (Member At-Large)
DuWayne Underthun (Vice Chair)

Bylaw Committee

Kathy Grochow – Watkins
Steve Schmitt – Eden Valley

Doug Krueger - Glencoe
Shawn Mueske – Willmar

Work Program/Budget Committee

Kevin Crowley
Doug Erickson (Chair)

Steve Schmitt
Robert Moller

Shawn Mueske

Personnel Committee

Rick Fagerlie
Sue Hilgert
Robert Moller

Berit Spors
DuWayne Underthun (Chair)

Nominating Committee

Doug Erickson
Robert Moller (Chair)

Rollie Nissen
DuWayne Underthun

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee*

Jeff Benson
Shirley Carter
Kevin Crowley
Thomas McDonnell

Maureen Melgaard-Schneider
Shawn Mueske
Christopher Rowan

* Also includes Ex-Officio Member Eric Day and key non-Commissioners from around the MMDC Region (Economic Developers, Regional Analysts, etc.)

Legacy Revolving Loan Fund Committee*

Kevin Crowley, Chairperson

*Also includes key non-Commissioners from around the MMDC Region (Financers, etc.)

CARES Act RLF Committee*

Kevin Crowley
Doug Erickson

*Also includes key non-Commissioners from around the MMDC Region (Economic Developers, etc.)

Area Transportation Partnership Representatives*

Doug Krueger - Glencoe
Rollie Nissen – Willmar

* Also includes one County Engineer

Transportation Advisory Committee*

Robert Anderson
Jeff Benson
Doug Krueger
Thomas McDonnell
Robert Moller

Rollie Nissen (Chairperson)
Christopher Rowan
Lorallen Schmeling
Paul Simonsen
DuWayne Underthun

* Also includes key non Commissioners from around the MMDC Region

MMRTCC Committee

Sue Hilgert
Jill Hoff
Maureen Melgaard-Schneider

Rollie Nissen
David Sebesta
Berit Spors

Staff Marketing /Communications Committee*

Kathy Grochow
Jon Hawkinson (pending MMDC Chair approval)

* Also includes MMDC staff members

Automated Electronic Defibrillator (AED) Conversation (Informational)

Executive Director Day informed the Commission that Commissioner Chris Rowan, as Mayor of Watkins, received a presentation from a company – Advocates for Health – that installs outdoor AED units in public spaces, to maximize their availability in case of emergency. Commissioner Rowan reported that, according to the presenter, units had been used as a life-saving measure at least twenty times over the course of the last several years in the City of Cold Spring. He reported that the company installs and monitors the units, which range in price from \$4,895 to \$5,495 each, to ensure they are ready in the case of an emergency. Commissioner Rowan also informed that an audible alarm sounds, pictures are transmitted, and local authorities are notified when the unit is removed from its location/housing.

Commissioner Schmeling offered that he is aware that the Cedar Mills Gun Club recently installed an indoor unit at a much lower price but acknowledged that it was kept indoors and not always accessible to the general public.

Day stated that he believed the MMDC's Community Enhancement fund could be used to fund or partially fund this and other projects. Day thanked Commissioner Rowan for bringing the conversation to the Commission and encouraged other Commissioners to let him (Day) know if they had a particular interest or discussion topic to bring forward.

Adjournment

With no further business, Commissioner McDonnell moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Mueske seconded the motion, which carried.

Vice Chairperson Underthun adjourned the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Day, Acting Secretary

DuWayne Underthun, Vice-Chairperson

Suzanne Hilgert, Secretary

