

## DRAFT SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

**East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**

*Committee Members: Vacant (Chair), Alice Connors (Vice Chair), Allen Buechel, Brian Smith, Jerry Bougie, Ruth Winter, Jake Woodford*

**Place:** Virtual or In-Person Meeting - East Central Offices (400 Ahnaip Street, Suite 100, Menasha)

**Date:** Wednesday, July 7, 2021

**Time:** 1:00PM

#### Agenda

#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Englebert welcomed attendees to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 1:01P.M.

#### 2. Roll Call

##### Committee Members Present:

Alice Connors, Vice Chair ..... Calumet County  
 Allen Buechel ..... Fond du Lac County  
 Ruth Winter ..... Menominee County  
 Karen Harkness (Alt. for Jake Woodford) ..... Outagamie County  
 Jerry Bougie (Perm. Alt. for Jon Doemel) ..... Winnebago County

##### Committee Members Unexcused:

Paul Mayou (Alt. for Brian Smith) ..... Waupaca County

##### ECWRPC Staff and Guests Present:

Melissa Kraemer Badtke ..... Executive Director  
 Kevin Englebert ..... Assistant Director  
 Adam Pfefferle ..... GIS Specialist II  
 Erin Bonnin ..... Administrative Coordinator

#### A. Introduction of Alternates, Staff, and Guests

Mr. Englebert announced the ECWRPC staff in attendance.

**3. Statement of Compliance with Wis. Stats. Sect 19.84 Regarding Open Meeting Requirements**

Mr. Englebert stated the meeting was posted in compliance with Wis. Stats. Sec. 19.84 regarding the Open Meetings requirement and that it was a legal meeting.

**4. Pledge of Allegiance**

**5. Moment of Silent Meditation**

**6. Approval of Agenda / Motion to Deviate**

Mr. Buechel motioned to approve the agenda as distributed, Ms. Connors seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**7. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**8. Action Items**

**A. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Mr. Englebert provided background history and updates regarding the Chair and Vice Chair positions of the Economic Development Committee.

Mr. Buechel nominated Ms. Connors for the position of Chair. Ms. Harkness seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Connors thanked the committee for their support and called for Vice Chair nominations.

Mr. Buechel nominated Mr. Bougie for the position of Vice Chair. Ms. Connors moved to close the nominations and announced Mr. Bougie as the Vice Chair.

**B. Approval of the April 7, 2021 Economic Development Committee Meeting Summary of Proceedings**

Ms. Harkness motioned to approve the summary of proceedings, Ms. Winter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**9. Informational / Discussion Items**

**A. Staff Report**

**1. EDA Grant News**

Mr. Englebert provided an overview of the EDA grant news. Two grants have been awarded from the CARES Act from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The first grant was made to NewNorth for an 18-county broadband gap analysis. The other grant was awarded to the Menominee Indian

Tribe of Wisconsin for an economic diversification and resiliency planning effort.

## **2. 2021-2023 Planning Partnership Grant**

Mr. Englebert provided an overview of the planning partnership grant technical assistance projects. Staff have been working with the City of Waupaca as the city is interested in applying for EDA planning funds for an innovation center study, a land use redevelopment corridor study, and a workforce housing study. The city is working to combine the three studies together into one grant application for EDA.

Mr. Englebert also noted that the Menominee Indian Tribe has been working on a community kitchen project to be part of the Department of Food and Agricultural Systems. The former recreational center will be converted into a community kitchen. There will be some entrepreneurial programming and opportunities for vendors to prepare food for events and activities.

Mr. Englebert noted an update from the Forestry Council. The Forestry Council is continuing work on the strategic plan process for the Wisconsin forestry sector. In May, there were two statewide listening sessions where members of the public were invited to speak on the forestry sector. The council and partners have been working to conduct stakeholder interviews with those in the forestry and paper industries. This will lead to the formation of a strategic plan and potentially be leveraged into a regional economic diversification summit with EDA and federal partners who will review the projects in the strategic plan and potentially find ways to fund them.

## **3. CARES Act Grant**

Mr. Englebert provided an overview of the CARES Act Grant. Staff continue to work on the disaster recovery economic resiliency plan for the region. Stakeholder interviews have been held over the past few months and chapters have been finished on various sectors. Staff have also been working on an economic development hub to track data in the region over time.

Mr. Englebert noted that in March a request for qualifications was released for a small business and technical assistance program which is funded through the CARES Act grant. Six responses were received and reviews took place with staff and stakeholders. Interviews were held with two of the firms. Ayres Associates was selected to award the contract. Staff are currently working with Ayres Associates on the contract. This will be ready for the Commission's review by the end of July, with the project to start in August. In the proposal, Ayres Associates will be offering downtown walkabouts for communities in the region in October and November. A grant guidance webinar, site selection consultation, and zoning code reviews for small communities are also being offered.

## **B. WEDC – Wisconsin Tomorrow Main Street Bounceback Grant Program**

Mr. Englebert noted that staff were approached by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) through AWRPC about the program. WEDC has approximately \$50 million in funding through the American Rescue Plan Act to put towards a grant program that would assist businesses that locate in vacant storefronts or expand into a vacant storefront. WEDC would like to run the program through the regional planning commissions. The grant program would entail \$10,000 grants to businesses. The funds would flow to the regional planning commissions and the businesses would apply directly to the regional planning commissions. Mr. Englebert provided an overview of the requirements that would need to be met to qualify for the funding. The hiring of additional staff would be needed to implement the program. A limited term employment position will be sought to begin next year. Interest in this program is expected. Mr. Englebert provided an overview of eligibility and ineligibility requirements for the grant. WEDC has \$50 million for this program which will be released in two installments. East Central would receive \$10,000 from WEDC to cover administration costs and an additional \$250 for each grant issued. Additional funding from the CARES Act grant and transportation surplus funding would fund the limited term employment position for the next year. East Central staff have formally applied to WEDC to implement the program.

Ms. Harkness asked about the timeline of the program. Mr. Englebert replied that the position description had been prepared and it is hoped to have a contract from WEDC later this week/early next week. The program will likely begin in August.

Ms. Connors asked if the program ended in December. Mr. Englebert replied that it will go through next June and may go a second state fiscal year as well. Mr. Englebert discussed internal staffing and timelines for the program.

Mr. Bougie asked how staff were planning to advertise the program. Mr. Englebert replied that a database had been compiled and there is at least one contact from every community in the region along with other regional contacts. Mr. Englebert added that he is also hoping commissioners will assist in this effort. WEDC will be marketing as well and this will also be brought to partner groups.

There was discussion regarding the grant program's purpose, vacant space details, and eligibility for the grant funds.

**C. County Roundtable Discussion (*as time permits*)**

Items included in the county roundtable discussion were as follows: Winnebago County Industrial Development Board partnership with Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation to potentially establish a rural small business loan program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Winnebago County partnership with Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation for a small business loan program due to COVID-19.

**10. Upcoming Meetings**

- A. ***Commission Meeting:*** *The next Commission meeting will be held on Friday, July 30, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. at the City of New London City Hall. An agenda and meeting materials will be forthcoming.*
  
- B. ***Economic Development Committee Meeting:*** *The next Economic Development Committee Meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 1:00PM. Further details will be forthcoming.*

**11. Adjourn**

Ms. Connors declared the meeting adjourned at 1:38P.M.

*Any person wishing to attend this meeting or hearing, who, because of a disability, requires special accommodations should contact the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission at (920) 751-4770 at least three business days prior to the meeting or hearing so that arrangements, within reason, can be made.*