

**City of Battle Lake
Economic Development Authority
Tuesday, February 5, 2026**

The Battle Lake Economic Development Authority held its annual meeting on Tuesday, February 6, 2025, at noon at the Battle Lake School Commons area with Rich Bullard, Randy Dorn, Rob Nudell, Steve Young, Josie Thomopolous, Sharon Casey and Majorie Quammen present. Val Martin, Clerk/Treasurer/EDA Director, was also present. Approximately 65 people were in attendance with lunch being served by the Shoreline.

Val Martin welcomed everyone and expressed thank you to Randy Dorn for 10 years of service on the EDA as he plans to retire from his position on the EDA in March.

Attendee introductions were made.

Guest Speaker Ben Winchester from the U of M attended virtually with his presentation of "Rewriting the Rural Narrative: Rural Living in 2026." He provided statistics on rural living and work. He described small communities as regions rather than thinking of each community individually. The relatively higher percentage of seniors living in rural communities, which, combined with their tendency to want to age in place, the emphasis on helping them do so, and the lack of assisted living facilities in rural communities, is causing not only a bottleneck in houses coming on the market but also **increasing the likelihood that the number of dilapidated housing will increase in the future.** He provided some possible strategies to help 55-plus residents consider selling their homes and moving over to another option but still in the community.

Guest Speaker Amy Baldwin from the Otter Tail County CDA provided the CDA Annual report, offering the highlights of what the CDA has done.

Superintendent Rob Nudell and Principal Ryan Syverson provided an update on the school. Thanks to the school for allowing us to use the new commons area for the meeting.

Maddi Clavin, from Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) gave a brief overview of the program that the Battle Lake EDA was selected for. The Rural Capacity program will focus on business, retention and expansion. The city will receive 135 hours of technical assistance along with \$13,500 to help start any new programming that comes out of the program.

Randy Dorn provided an overview of the Year in Review with the meeting ending at 1:30 p.m.



Valerie Martin