

**City of Battle Lake  
Economic Development Authority  
Tuesday, November 1, 2016**

The Battle Lake Economic Development Authority met in regular session on November 1, 2016. President Randy Dorn called the meeting to order at 7:05 a.m. with Commissioners Jeff Drake, Leigh Shebeck, Sara Boyum and Milt Paulson present. Absent were Janet Schicker and Don Maslow. Also present was Val Martin, Clerk/Treasurer/EDA Director/Zoning Officer.

Drake made a motion to approve the agenda. Paulson seconded. MCU

Paulson moved to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Dorn seconded. MCU

Nick Leonard & Mark Hanson were visiting to discuss the Otter Tail Lakes Country Association (OTLCA) and the marketing campaign call "Find Your Inner Otter." Nick is Otter Tail County's Director of Tourism and Economic Development. He explained how the County pays his salary and allows a portion of his time to go toward Otter Tail Lakes Country Association efforts. Mark works at sales and marketing for the association, along with some of the on-line work. Nancy Valentine also works for the association part-time and does the day-to-day marketing for the group. Highlights of the discussion:

- OTLCA has been working with H2M, a marketing firm out of Fargo for the campaign. Their initial suggestion for the organization was to develop a "brand." This is where the Inner Otter campaign first started. They've seen some great results from the campaign, seeing more than 100,000 visitors a month, at times, to the web-site. They are currently working with a \$140,000 budget to develop the next season's campaign to include billboards, digital, print and TV.
- The last couple years were focused on the brand recognition and this year, they are adding a Live/Work component. The campaign has expanded to include school promotion, healthcare, etc.
- A free listing is available to area businesses but businesses may want to consider adding a membership with 3 levels available. Each level has different features included for advertising their business on-line and they can also get a discount on advertising in the magazine that comes out each year.
- A number of improvements are being made to the web-site.
- Nonprofits will again receive a free base membership.
- The County is moving toward developing an EDA authority with goals of open communication and developing future opportunities to partner with communities. They continue to work with West Central Initiative on some of these goals.
- Mark stated that many communities look to Battle Lake and what is happening here. They want what Battle Lake has going on. We should be proud of what we've done.

The deadline for the magazine advertising is December 1<sup>st</sup>. The commission discussed the idea of helping Battle Lake businesses with the cost for advertising. After some discussion, the commission felt the on-line advertising is a priority and this is where we should help the businesses. Drake moved to approve the 2017 budget and to help businesses with the Find Your Inner Otter campaign by pay 10% of their membership fee up to \$45 for each business. This will be contingent on the council approving the 2017 EDA budget. Paulson seconded. MCU

The council agenda and past minutes were reviewed, along with the Tri-City living update, etc.

The Board decided to have a breakfast meeting and invite the businesses at the December 6<sup>th</sup> EDA regularly scheduled meeting time. We'll ask Mark Hanson and Nick Leonard to attend and show businesses how the web-site works and how they can get their information on it.

EDA brochure discussion was tabled.

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 am.

Next meeting will be December 6, 2016.