

**City of Battle Lake
Economic Development Authority
Thursday, August 12, 2021**

The Battle Lake Economic Development Authority met in regular session on Thursday August 12, 2021. Randy Dorn called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m. with Commissioners Leigh Shebeck, Richard Bullard, Darren Kern, Steve Young and Don Maslow present. Josie Schmidt joined the meeting via Zoom. As the emergency order has been removed, she could not vote. Also, present was Val Martin, Clerk/Treasurer/EDA Director/Zoning Officer and people representing the LACC Board were Casey Love and Katrina Ball. Kurt Maethner was also in attendance.

Shebeck made a motion to approve the agenda. Maslow seconded. MCU

Shebeck made a motion to approve the minutes with amendment. Dorn seconded. MCU

Kern made a motion to approve the financials. Bullard seconded. MCU

Visitors

- Casey Love, Katrina Ball and Kurt Maethner were in attendance to discuss the changes to the Lakes Area Community Center (LACC).
 - They will be attending the August 24th council meeting to present the changes and make a budget request.
 - They have a purchase agreement for the current building and will be closing in November.
 - They are working with Goodneighbors to secure a space in Hatchery Row.
 - Working on a plan to hire an Executive Director for marketing and promotion of the community. Currently working on a job description for this person.
 - Still working on a membership plan which may be similar to a Chamber of Commerce.
 - Shebeck will be assisting them with by-laws and job description for the director.
 - There was a discussion on how an events committee would roll into the new LACC? Maybe it could be a sub-group of the LACC?
 - Dorn suggested the LACC Board have someone attend the monthly EDA meetings to assist with the transfer as they are moving forward.

Hatchery Row:

- They are currently finalizing the interior layout.

Business Meeting Recap from July 27th

The group agreed that continued information and support from the EDA is valuable. Discussion points included:

- *BR&E project was done about 4 years ago – we continue to use information from this process.*
- *Marketing is important and collaborative marketing would be better*
- *The EDA has hired Steve Henning to do some promotional videos of Battle Lake. Businesses have an opportunity to also work with him.*
- *A full-time social media and marketing person would be a key asset to Battle Lake.*
- *Some businesses would like to expand but shortage of employees makes this almost impossible.*
- *Continued issues with workforce shortage for day-to-day operations.*
- *We need a database of what's going on in the community – maybe a weekly newsletter on top of the weekly flyer?*

Presentation: Sarah Schake, OTC Jobs Portal

- Created with CARES dollars.
- The portal is available on the Otter Tail Lakes Tourism site.
- It's a single, central feed that pulls job listings from various sites on the internet.
- The feed will link to the original posting where people can apply for the job.
- OTC is available to help business owners navigate the best location to post positions that will also show up on the OTC portal.

Events Committee Discussion:

- There is more of a need to have one person in charge of events – a paid position.
- Businesses are willing to pay a membership fee for a marketing person.
- To note: Network Battle Lake members are there to help with events and programs but not necessarily in charge of them.
- The LACC building may be sold with a change to this entity. There is space available at Hatchery Row for a community center and the LACC may be the main leaseholder. This entity may be the point board for some type of events committee and to hire a marketing person. A membership-based program, along with hiring a marketing person through the LACC may be the best option in lieu of a new events committee.

Glendalough Park Updates:

- Yearly attendance pre-COVID was about 85,000/year.
- 2020 and during COVID – attendance was about 127,000.
- 2021 and post-COVID – attendance may reach 140,000 by the end of the year.
- Received a federal grant for a separate bike trail – getting it off the road in the park.
- Trail center building – fundraising continues.

School Community Fun Night – September 1st

Kern stated they are pretty well ready for the event. There will be food, bouncy houses, games, and other activities throughout the event.

Housing Committee

- HRA has submitted the grant application. MN Housing has called them with several questions which is usually a good sign.
- Martin will set up a meeting with Tim Underhill to discuss housing expansion on his property on the west end of town.

Tax Forfeiture Property

- The council discussed the tax forfeiture property and the stormwater management and alley concerns. Martin made a request to the council to keep the land for stormwater management and reimburse the EDA for the cost associated with the purchase of the lot. Council was not in agreement to transfer money from another fund to the EDA Fund and felt the EDA funds came from the General Fund and/or Liquor Store Fund. The EDA decided to not sell the property and probably keep it for stormwater management or consider selling only to Everts Lumber.

CDA Minutes were reviewed.

Next meeting is Tuesday, September 2nd at 7:00 a.m.

Adjourn at 7:55 a.m.

Valerie J. Martin, Clerk/Treasurer/EDA Director/Zoning Officer