

**City of Battle Lake
Economic Development Authority
Thursday, December 9, 2021**

The Battle Lake Economic Development Authority met in regular session on Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 7:00 a.m. with Randy Dorn, Richard Bullard, Steve Young, Don Maslow, and Josie Schmidt in attendance. Absent was Leigh Shebeck. Also, present were Val Martin, Clerk/Treasurer/EDA Director/Zoning Officer, Rob Nudell, and Sean Belmont, future EDA Commissioners along with Katrina Ball from Lakes Area Community Center.

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

Young made a motion to approve the minutes. Maslow seconded. MCU

Dorn made a motion to approve the financials. Bullard seconded. MCU An interfund loan from the General Fund to the EDA will take care of the additional needs of Hatchery Row. The pay-back to both EDA and the General Fund will be done when the increments start coming in.

Hatchery Row:

- LACC –Katrina Ball was in attendance to give an update:
 - LACC Board members met with some of the Network Battle Lake members last night. They had a positive conversation, and it was helpful to the board members.
 - They are working on a visioning for the LACC organization and space.
 - Katrina hopes to meet with an interior designer to get some ideas.
 - Val is going to connect them with someone from West Central Initiative to see what type of assistance they can provide.
 - Katrina is also continuing to work with Dan and Lisa Malmstrom.

Housing Committee

- HRA/MN Housing grant – has been funded! Val will bring back more information next month on marketing, etc. There was a discussion on possibly working with the school on one of the houses. Val will check with HRA on this.
- There was some discussion about property available for residential development. The housing committee will meet to discuss.

Student Ex-Officio Member of EDA

Madeline Burkett, along with advisor Janelle Kraemer, were in attendance. EDA members welcomed them and encouraged any input they may have. Madeline thought the meeting has been very interesting and did not know all the activity that has been going on.

Annual Meeting

- Scheduled for Thursday, February 3rd at noon – Shoreline Restaurant.
- Meal – Taco Bar
- Tentative speakers – Jordan Rasmussen (he has confirmed he will come if he is able) and new LACC Director.
- Give LACC some time to speak on a new membership program.
- Annual Update.
- Invite Goodneighbors to join the meeting.

Business Survey -Martin presented some action items based on responses for the business survey:

- *Question 4: Staff Shortages – businesses noted that they were paying more, offering flexibility, phone interviews, hiring & referral bonus, increased marketing and offering work from home. How*

we can help – continue collaborating with the school on programs including the apprenticeship program and job/career fair expo. The County CDA has been working on several initiatives including a job portal which has a link on our website. They are also in the process of developing a Youth Workforce Navigation Program and Occupational Readiness Program and have promoted a job seeker workshop in Battle Lake and other communities. All of these programs can assist our businesses down the road.

- *Question 5: 9 businesses said they were interested in expanding, three moving, three selling and one closing. How we can help – If I know someone has a space for rent or sale, I usually share that information with anyone requesting the need for space. I can certainly post some of those places for sale or lease on social media. I can also share incentives for expansion or building – this would be either TIF or abatement. I think we should make individual contact with businesses again to see what their needs are.*
- *Question 6: Business training: There seems to be some interest but only ten responded. How we can help – Leigh Shebeck has already offered to do customer service training and we decided to conduct it at City Hall and offer a meal and/or snacks. We could pursue other areas – especially social media. I can explore on-line options.*
- *Question 7: Areas for the EDA to work on – Some of the ideas were: attracting nonseasonal businesses; annexation for expansion; parking; residential expansion; retain current businesses; communication of what the EDA is working on; continue to look for opportunities to help current businesses; off-season events; assistance with marketing property for sale or lease; broadband and infrastructure. How we can help – should we have a spot on the website that list properties for lease/sale? We currently have a link to realtors. Send a monthly report with the EDA minutes to businesses. Work with the LACC on marketing and events.*
- *Question 9: Creating a business organization and/or hold regular business meetings – Many people answered yes on this question. How we can help – the last meeting we held was actually well attended but I am not sure how to move forward with this. This may be another joint project with LACC.*
- *Question 10: Other comments – Keep up good communications; expansion of year-round businesses; attracting manufacturing/industrial businesses; monthly EDA reports.*

Additional suggestions included a separate Facebook page for the EDA. Even though the City has one, this might be of benefit to get the word out about the EDA. Martin will take care of this.

Otter Tail County CDA minutes were distributed.

Other Updates

- Bethel Church will not be constructing their building on the site next to the LACC as originally planned. They are purchasing property east of the Dollar General and have been researching annexation and hooking up to the City's water, sewer, and natural gas.
- Rob Nudell gave an update on his position. The school board will be making a decision in January whether to keep their plan of a part-time/shared superintendent or advertise for a full-time position. The commissioners welcomed him to Battle Lake. He plans to get involved in the community as much as possible.

Next meeting is Tuesday, January 6, 2022 at 7:00 a.m.

Adjourn at 8:20 a.m.

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