

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (Ag) COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
September 17, 2020
Via Zoom Video Conference**

Present: Rollie Boll, Kevin Halvorson, Dustin Kotrba, Kim Larson and Dan Tepfer

Excused: Christy Kallevig and Michelle Marotzke

Absent: Larry Konsterlie, Dan Lippert and Keith Poier

Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Manager

Secretarial: Nancy Birkeland, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Kevin Halvorson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:33 a.m.

AGENDA—There were no changes to the Agenda.

MINUTES—A quorum was not in attendance to approve the Minutes of the July 16 and August 20, 2020 meetings.

REPORTS

Industrial Hemp Subcommittee. Connie Schmoll reported the Industrial Hemp Subcommittee met Monday and heard a presentation by Kevin Ortenblad on growing CBG (cannabigerol) hemp—he is no longer growing lettuce. Ortenblad needs to do a build-out of his facility and change his lighting to high efficiency lights, but has been unable to obtain funding as banking regulations do not favor hemp growers; thus, he is creating presentations for seeking investors. Ortenblad is growing hemp plants indoors for high-quality seed. He feels growing indoors may be the way of the future as the plant is prone to disease. Seed cost is up to \$10 per seed. He is not at full capacity at this time. Ortenblad invited the subcommittee to tour his facility and Schmoll extended the invitation to this committee. At their next meeting, the subcommittee will hold a planning meeting and will change to quarterly meetings. Harold Stanislawski of the Agriculture Utilization Research Institute (AURI) promotes Kandiyohi County for hemp processing so the subcommittee wants to remain active, even though activity has been minimal. Schmoll stated the subcommittee researched facilities in other states, but no tracking has been done; some facilities have filed bankruptcy. Halvorson spoke of his brother-in-law who grew 200 acres of hemp for fiber last year and made a good profit, but this year the end user did not request any product so he did not plant hemp this year.

Events Subcommittee. Dustin Kotrba reported the subcommittee has not met again, but will probably start again this fall. Schmoll suggested the subcommittee meet to update the EDC's Ag flyer as it is outdated. She uses the flyer as a handout when she attends Ag-related conferences.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS—There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS—Schmoll suggested having a speaker in November and possibly December. Cameron Macht will be presenting tomorrow to the Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers on economic data due to COVID-19; Schmoll will see if Macht has information that would pertain to Ag. A speaker relative to Clean Energy Resource Teams was also suggested. Kotrba suggested inviting Jamey Cline from Christianson CPAs relative to renewable diesel and the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program to expand the sale and use of ethanol and biodiesel fuels. His presentation could be marketed to a larger audience. This potential presentation will be added to the next meeting agenda for further discussion and planning.

AG/RENEWABLE ENERGY COMMUNITY EVENTS/PROJECTS. As no one was able to attend the AURI workshops, Schmoll will see if they were recorded and for independent viewing. Area harvest is on schedule; sugar beets are being harvested and the crop is looking very good. Larson questioned how the Kandiyohi County Fair has done in light of the pandemic. Schmoll stated the County Fair incurred losses and was eligible to receive funds through the CARES Pandemic Relief (CPR) Grant Program.

Schmoll reported on the CPR Grant Program, which the EDC manages for the county's governmental entities. To date, the EDC has received 177 applications with approximately 10 being ineligible. The planning team just modified the criteria to allow newer businesses to receive funds, if they had two months of success. Average grants to small businesses is \$9,500 and to nonprofit organizations is just under \$30,000. Schmoll stated a press release will be done on the update criteria. The grant funds must be spent by November 15, 2020.

NEXT MEETING—The next meeting is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, November 19, 2020** via ZOOM video conference.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:03 a.m.