

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (AG) COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**June 16, 2023**

**EDC Board Room, Willmar, and Via Zoom Video Conference**

Present: Kevin Halvorson, Dustin Kotrba, Nate Reuss and Dan Tepfer

Absent: Rollie Boll, Abdulcadir Gaal, Larry Konsterlie, Kim Larson, Dan Lippert and Keith Poier

Media: Shelby Lindrud, West Central Tribune

Staff: Sarah Swedburg, Business Development Manager

Secretarial: Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Kevin Halvorson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:34 a.m. noting a quorum was not present.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**EDC Fast Facts flyer.** Sarah Swedburg reported the EDC is awaiting additional statistical information from various individuals for the back page of the flyer. Swedburg inquired if committee members have ideas on specific high-traffic locations where the flyer could be displayed other than just at community meetings, events, etc. The flyer will also be posted on the EDC's website and available for emailing.

**Committee Membership.** Swedburg encouraged committee members to be thinking of community members who may be interested in joining this committee. There are currently 10 members.

**Visit to School Greenhouses.** Swedburg has been unable to connect with representatives at New London-Spicer High School or the Willmar High School to schedule a visit of their greenhouses and asked if anyone knows the appropriate contacts. Dan Tepfer stated Tracy Tebben is the contact for New London-Spicer; he will reach out to him later this summer/early fall and inform Swedburg.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Resignation of Laura Arne and Chris Radel.** Swedburg announced Chris Radel resigned from this committee due to a job change and Laura Arne resigned from the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee. These committee vacancies will be addressed at the July committee meeting.

**EDC 2024 Budget.** Swedburg shared the EDC Joint Operations Board approved a substantial increase to the committee's 2024 budget due to the committee's goals and projects (see attached). Increases in line items include:

\$1,400 Advertisement (Industrial Hemp *Rooted* magazine ad)

\$5,000 Ag Projects (Industrial Hemp Economic Impact Study)  
\$6,000 Stinger's Package  
\$850 Giveaways at Farmtastic (Stingers Night)  
\$300 Supplies (a \$50 increase from 2023)

There is a slight reduction in the General Administrative Services line from \$2,700 to \$2,500. The committee's total 2024 budget is \$22,775 compared to \$12,650 in 2023. Dustin Kotrba inquired if a retainer could be secured in 2023 for the Industrial Hemp feasibility study. Swedburg will review her notes and place the topic on the July agenda. She will also bring an updated 2023 budget to the July meeting for the committee to discuss how to utilize the available dollars by the end of the year.

**Status of 2022-2022 Goals.** Kotrba provided an update on the July 25 Partners in Ag Innovation Conference to be held at the MinnWest Technology Campus. He shared all presenters are confirmed, sponsors are secured, the committee continues to work on content and everything is coming together for a successful conference. Currently they are 75 registrants which is an increase of 25 from the 2022 conference. Swedburg commented she felt the marketing push last fall has increased attendance. She will register all Ag Committee members for the conference.

## REPORTS

**Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee.** Swedburg reported the subcommittee has not met recently. She shared a brief update on an industrial hemp test plot and announced there may be an opportunity for the committee to visit the test plot to view a special piece of equipment that will be used.

**Ongoing Ag-related EDC work.** Swedburg shared she serves on the Willmar Area Lakes Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Committee and feels it would be beneficial to partner with that committee in 2024. She will place the topic on the July agenda. Other July agenda topics will include the New London-Spicer and Willmar High School greenhouse visits and the Farmtastic Stinger's event (framework and sponsorships). Swedburg announced Noah Hultgren is a new member of the EDC's Joint Operations Board; she is hopeful he will serve on this committee. Swedburg shared that Simply Shrimp received funding through the EDC's Elevate Community Business Academy budget to advance its growth and development. Swedburg thanked Tepfer for Kandiyohi Power Cooperative's support of the industrial hemp project. Swedburg gave an update on county broadband projects, childcare grants and the purchase of 145 acres in the Willmar Industrial Park by MB Rail of Kentucky to construct a rail spur that will support new development and local agribusiness. She noted there are possibly four or five businesses interested in connecting with the rail spur.

## AG AND RENEWABLE ENERGY OPPORTUNITIES

- Precision Dairy Conference, Bloomington, June 20-21.
- Partners in Ag Innovation Conference, July 25. Swedburg will register committee members.
- Minnesota Farmfest, August 1-3. Swedburg will place this topic on the July agenda.

**Other.** Kotrba suggested a list be prepared for future speakers for Ag Committee meetings. Swedburg will work on the list i.e., Ridgewater College, University of Minnesota Extension, Mid-Central Research

and Outreach Center, United States Department of Agriculture, Latino Economic Development Center, etc.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:10 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING**—The next meeting is **7:30 a.m., Thursday, July 20, 2023** at the EDC Board Room and via ZOOM video conference.