

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)
JOINT POWERS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING**

MINUTES

November 20, 2023

EDC Board Room, Willmar and Via Zoom Video Conference

Present: Julie Asmus, Corky Berg, Vicki Davis, Steve Gardner, Roger Imdieke and Doug Reese

Staff: Aaron Backman, Executive Director; and Kelsey Olson, Marketing & Communications Specialist

Media: Jennifer Kotila, West Central Tribune

Secretarial: Cathy Skindelien, Legal & Administrative Assistants, Inc.

Chairperson Julie Asmus called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. and declared a quorum was present.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

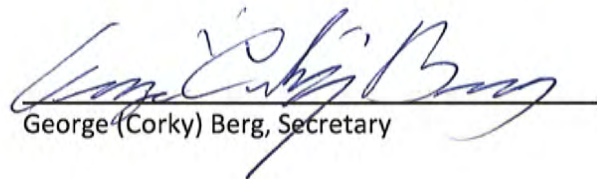
Rebranding the EDC. Aaron Backman presented a spreadsheet (see attached) showing results of the rebranding survey sent to the EDC Committees and the Joint Operations Board, which prompted 39 responses. Backman explained that 20 years ago the EDC was established as a joint activity between Kandiyohi County and the City of Willmar. The organization has evolved over time, prompting us to re-evaluate our name to properly identify the organization and who we are. We need to recognize our audience and the people we represent while maintaining good visibility in the community. The survey showed a strong recommendation for Kandiyohi County Economic Development. Backman received an email from Harlan Madsen, former Kandiyohi County Commissioner, who made several pertinent points, stating that “each town plays a role in our success as a county. We do not want to favor or slight any community. The proposed name change fits the prime objective of our organization.” Ultimately the decision rests with the EDC Joint Powers Board. We want to be as inclusive as possible. Backman opened the meeting to comments and concerns were raised that Willmar is easier to identify than Kandiyohi County. People outside the area may not differentiate it from Koochaching or Kanabec Counties, for example. The availability of Google makes this less of an issue. There was a general consensus that this name will make other communities in the county feel more connected and that a shorter name is beneficial. Kandiyohi County will serve as the geographic indicator, which everyone agreed is a necessary part of the name. We are all part of a whole and being inclusive includes how we are named. If people are looking at a region, they will track us down by actions, not just words. We are here to represent everyone and it will be business as usual. The Joint Powers Agreement will remain in place. Willmar will still show up on the address. Taglines will have flexibility, which could include “serving Willmar.” We will continue to work with the city, for example, this morning Backman gave a tour of the city to the new planner, Chris Corbett. It is important the staff has a clear and concise name with which to work. The EDC Committees spoke pretty loudly on their preference.

IT WAS MOVED BY Roger Imdieke, SECONDED BY Doug Reese, to accept Kandiyohi County Economic Development as the new public name to be used for marketing purposes, with Kandiyohi County and City of Willmar Economic Development Commission remaining the legal name. All present voted unanimously in favor by roll call.

As the next step in the process, the Marketing and Public Relations Committee will consider logo options, which will be presented to the boards for approval. The name will be implemented in conjunction with the new website, which will happen quickly once the site map is approved. The City of Willmar is going through rebranding as well, and Kelsey Olson will meet with Kyle Box to discuss logo and language collaboration.

ADJOURNMENT—There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:20 p.m.

NEXT MEETING—The annual meeting is **11:30 a.m., Thursday, January 28, 2023** at the EDC office and via Zoom video conference.


George (Corky) Berg, Secretary

APPROVED: 1/28/2024:


Steve Gardner, Vice Chairperson

EDC Rebranding

11/9/2023

| Proposed Name Votes | FIRST CHOICE | SECOND CHOICE |
|--|---------------------|----------------------|
| Prosper Kandiyohi County | 6 | 8 |
| Prosper Economic Development | | 2 |
| Kandiyohi County Economic Development | 26 | 5 |
| Kandiyohi/Willmar Development | 2 | 2 |
| Willmar/Kandiyohi County Development | 2 | 4 |
| Kandiyohi County/Willmar Development | 3 | 9 |
| Total Votes | 39 | 30 |

| Agriculture & Renewable Energy Votes | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prosper Kandiyohi County | 3 | 3 |
| Prosper Economic Development | | 1 |
| Kandiyohi County Economic Development | 4 | 1 |
| Kandiyohi/Willmar Development | 1 | 1 |
| Willmar/Kandiyohi County Development | 1 | |
| Kandiyohi County/Willmar Development | 1 | 2 |

| Broadband & Advanced Technology Votes | | |
|--|---|---|
| Prosper Kandiyohi County | 1 | 2 |
| Prosper Economic Development | | |
| Kandiyohi County Economic Development | 5 | 2 |
| Kandiyohi/Willmar Development | 1 | |
| Willmar/Kandiyohi County Development | | |
| Kandiyohi County/Willmar Development | | 2 |

| Business Retention & Expansion/Recruitment Votes | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prosper Kandiyohi County | | |
| Prosper Economic Development | | |
| Kandiyohi County Economic Development | 4 | |
| Kandiyohi/Willmar Development | | 1 |
| Willmar/Kandiyohi County Development | | 2 |
| Kandiyohi County/Willmar Development | 1 | 2 |

| Finance Committee Votes | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Prosper Kandiyohi County | | 1 |
| Prosper Economic Development | | |
| Kandiyohi County Economic Development | 7 | |
| Kandiyohi/Willmar Development | | |
| Willmar/Kandiyohi County Development | | 1 |
| Kandiyohi County/Willmar Development | | 1 |

| Marketing & Public Relations Committee Votes | | |
|---|---|---|
| Prosper Kandiyohi County | | 2 |
| Prosper Economic Development | | 1 |
| Kandiyohi County Economic Development | 5 | |
| Kandiyohi/Willmar Development | | |
| Willmar/Kandiyohi County Development | | 1 |
| Kandiyohi County/Willmar Development | 1 | 1 |

| EDC Operations Board Votes | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Prosper Kandiyohi County | 2 | |
| Prosper Economic Development | | |
| Kandiyohi County Economic Development | 1 | 2 |
| Kandiyohi/Willmar Development | | |
| Willmar/Kandiyohi County Development | 1 | |
| Kandiyohi County/Willmar Development | | 1 |