

**KANDIYOHI COUNTY AND CITY OF WILLMAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (EDC)  
AGRICULTURE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT (AG) COMMITTEE AND  
INDUSTRIAL HEMP EXPLORATORY SUBCOMMITTEE COMBINED MEETING  
MINUTES**

**November 13, 2023**

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

**Ag Committee**

**Present:** Rollie Boll, Kevin Halvorson, Erik Hatlestad (via Zoom), Dustin Kotrba, Kim Larson, Dan Lippert, Keith Poier (via Zoom), Nate Reuss and Dan Tepfer

**Absent:** Noah Hultgren and Larry Konsterlie

**Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee**

**Present:** Kevin Halvorson, Kim Larson, Bob Meyerson, Keith Poier (via Zoom), Harold Stegeman and Janette Wertish (via Zoom)

**Absent:** Larry Konsterlie and Jordan Zeller

**Media:** Levi Jones, West Central Tribune (via Zoom)

**Staff:** Sarah Swedburg, Business Development Manager

**Secretarial:** Diane Beck, Legal & Administrative Services, Inc.

Ag Committee Chairperson Kevin Halvorson called the combined meeting of the Ag Committee and Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee to order at approximately 9:00 a.m.

**AGENDA—**

IT WAS MOVED BY Dustin Kotrba, SECONDED BY Rollie Boll, to approve the Agenda as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

**MINUTES—**Chair Halvorson presented the Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee minutes of July 20, 2023 and September 21, 2023.

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Boll, SECONDED BY Dan Tepfer, to approve the Minutes of the July 20, 2023 Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

[Erik Hatlestad joined the meeting via Zoom and Harold Stegeman joined the meeting.]

IT WAS MOVED BY Rollie Boll, SECONDED BY Nate Ruess, to approve the Minutes of the September 21, 2023 Agriculture and Renewable Energy Development Committee meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

Subcommittee Chairperson Harold Stegeman presented the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee Committee minutes of September 11, 2023.

IT WAS MOVED BY Kevin Halvorson, SECONDED BY Kim Larson, to approve the Minutes of the September 11, 2023 Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee meeting as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**2024 Ag Goals.** The committee reviewed the 2024 6- and 12-month Goals (November 2023-November 2024). One suggestion was to add the following as #4 under Ongoing: Continue to build a relationship with Dun Agro to explore industrial hemp opportunities.

IT WAS MOVED BY Dustin Kotrba, SECONDED BY Dan Tepfer, to approve the Agricultural and Renewable Energy Development Committee 2024 Goals with the addition of the following Goal 4 under Ongoing: Continue to build a relationship with Dun Agro to explore industrial hemp opportunities. MOTION CARRIED.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Farmtastic brainstorming session.** Swedburg mentioned since the contract by the Stingers was prepared, costs have risen. Future sponsorships will aide in covering the cost increase. Swedburg will attend an external planning meeting tomorrow with Ridgewater College, Willmar Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce Agri-Business Committee, Kandiyohi County Corn and Soybean Growers for the Farmtastic event next summer. The Kandiyohi County Corn and Soybean Growers were previously the leaders of Farmtastic and approached the Ag Committee to take over the event as a neutral party and to enlist various commodity groups to assist with the event. The event will be similar to those in the past and based on agriculture education for students and families. The goal is to enlist six to eight commodity groups to lead and hold agricultural activities for one to two hours prior to a Stingers game; sponsorships will also be secured. There will be 300 free tickets given out targeting youth groups in the community, i.e., YMCA, etc.; free food will be included for each ticket holder. The event will be held on a weekday evening game possibly in late July or early August and held on the Kandiyohi County Corn and Soybean Growers night.

Swedburg asked for comments on the following questions that will be presented at tomorrow's meeting:

1. When you think of the goal of us hosting/leading the 2024 Farmtastic event at the Stingers, what comes to mind?

- Agricultural awareness and promotion in Kandiyohi County.
2. Who should be involved in activity booths?
    - FFA, 4-H, EDC Ag Committee, Kandiyohi County Corn and Soybean Growers, Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, Ag educators (Ridgewater College Agriculture Department and public schools), turkey growers, University of Minnesota Extension, AURI (hemp related), USDA, Ag in the classroom, organic farmers, MNyou Youth Garden, Farm to Table (school district program)
  3. What does a successful 2024 Farmtastic event mean to you in a few words?
    - Communication, participation, exposure.
  4. What hurdles might we face?
    - Giveaways were discussed. Swedburg believes the booths will provide giveaways. The EDC has a small budget and could provide a few giveaways. It was suggested that a drawing be held for a larger prize.
  5. How do we measure a successful event?
    - Every ticket given away
    - Organic reach on social media
    - Feedback from those running activity booths
    - Listening to conversations of participants
    - Overall Stingers event
    - Sponsorship opportunities

Swedburg shared she and Kelsey Olson, EDC Marketing and Communications Specialist, will be putting together a business plan for the event. She will share information from today's meeting with the external planning committee and report to this committee in December.

**2023 Budget.** Swedburg reviewed the committee's 2023 budget and expenditures. She noted the \$1,300 for a POS system for the New London Food Co-Op approved in 2022 was just paid last month and the contribution to Ultimate Ag for a farm succession education event did not materialize. Currently there is approximately \$2,400 left in the 2023 budget.

Swedburg highlighted the flyer (see attached) she emailed last night regarding a free Farm Succession Education Event co-hosted by the EDC and Thrivent Community - Redwood Financial Advisors on December 5, 2023, at Max's Grill in Olivia. Two identical sessions will be held, one at 4:30 p.m. and one at 6:45 p.m. with dinner. Ultimate Ag reached out to Swedburg about co-sponsoring this event. During dinner, there will be an ambiguous loss session (the emotional side of farm succession or losing a loved one). Last year, this committee sponsored this event at the \$250 level; this year, the EDC was asked to consider a \$500 sponsorship, which would be paid to Ultimate Ag (David and Samantha Nelson) as speakers for the event. Swedburg noted the committee's budget would cover \$500. Following discussion, the committee approved sponsoring at the \$250 level. Stegeman suggested that if Ridgewater College's Ag Department hosts a similar event, this committee sponsor it at \$250. Swedburg will research a similar event at Ridgewater College.

**Other.** Stegeman inquired if a representative will attend the 2024 NoCo Hemp Expo in Estes Park, Colorado, April 11-13, 2024? Swedburg commented this will be discussed at a future subcommittee meeting.

Swedburg presented a 2024 budget request from Chris Radel of Kandiyohi Power for the Healthy Earth, YMCA Healthy Kids Day and Community Eco Fair to be held at the Willmar Civic Center in April 2024. The event will focus on sustainability and various entities will be involved in the event. They would like to create an annual environmental award (to be named) and asked if this committee would consider a sponsorship of \$250 and be the namesake for the annual environmental award. Farms, individuals or businesses would be eligible to receive the award. The goal for attendance is 300 adults and 300 children. It was noted this could be the Ag Committee's opportunity to use the sponsorship as a promotion for the Farmtastic event. A discussion was held on the parameters and details of the event; Swedburg will check on the criteria, parameters, and decision information. The topic will be discussed further at the December meeting.

Swedburg encouraged the committee to think of opportunities to expend the its remaining budget of approximately \$2,000, i.e., educational events, etc. and report back at the December meeting.

## REPORTS

**Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee.** Swedburg mentioned the subcommittee met in October. They continue to build relationships with Dun Agro. She and other representatives will leave for the Netherlands tomorrow to tour its manufacturing facility and meet with farmers/growers. She shared the itinerary for the visit. She will check if there are other production plants to visit in the Netherlands.

Swedburg announced the airport is not available to store hemp bull. If committee members know of a large storage facility, contact her.

**North Central Regional Food District Center.** Reuss shared there are no updates at this time. The mission statement and value mapping will be shared at the next meeting. He is interested in receiving feedback of value mapping from committee members at the December meeting.

**Other.** Stegeman commented on the reconstruction of the Jennie-O kill plant and inquired if hemp could be incorporated for bedding. Swedburg noted additional data is needed on bedding before continuing a discussion of using hemp; she will bring up this issue while meeting with Dun Agro.

[Levi Jones and Erik Hatlestad were excused from the meeting.]

## **Ag and renewable energy opportunities.**

- Farm Succession Education Event at Max's Grill, December 5, 2023.
- Tour of Willmar Poultry's new hatchery Thursday, November 16, 2023, hosted by the Chamber's Agri-Business Committee. No registration is required.
- MN Ag Expo, Mankato, January 17-18, 2024.

- Ridgewater College Ag Career Fair and Trade Show, December 1, 2023, 8:30 a.m.-Noon. Swedburg will attend the event, which is at no charge, and have EDC and Ag flyers available. If a committee member would like to attend, they should contact her.

[Chair Halvorson was excused from the meeting.]

Larson mentioned he and Keith Poier visited Northern Crops Institute in Fargo, North Dakota, and the soybean crushing facility at the Ag Innovation Campus in Crookston. He invited Jennie-O and Willmar Poultry representatives, but they were unable to attend. Larson recently was contacted by the CFO at Willmar Poultry, who would like to meet with him and Poier to obtain information on the soybean crushing facility.

**ADJOURNMENT**—There being no other business,

IT WAS MOVED BY Kim Larson, SECONDED BY Dan Tepfer, to adjourn the meeting.  
MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:15 a.m.

#### **NEXT MEETINGS**

- The next **Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee meeting is 9:00 a.m., Monday, December 11, 2023** at the EDC Board Room and via ZOOM video conference.
- The next **Ag Committee meeting is 7:30 a.m., Thursday, December 21, 2023**, at the EDC Board Room and via Zoom video conference.