

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

MINUTES

December 17, 2020

Via Zoom Video Conference

- Present: Rollie Boll, Kevin Halvorson, Dustin Kotrba, Kim Larson, Dan Lippert, Michelle Marotzke, Keith Poier and Dan Tepfer
- Excused: Kristy Kallevig
- Absent: Larry Konsterlie
- Guest: Carolyn Lange, West Central Tribune; Tamara Howe and Kim Lippert
- Staff: Connie Schmoll, Business Development Manager
- Secretarial: Diane Beck, Legal and Administrative Assistants, Inc. (LAA)

Chairperson Kevin Halvorson called the meeting to order at approximately 7:34 a.m. Connie Schmoll discussed the funds passed by the Minnesota State Legislature and how they will be distributed to those in need. EDC staff will be meeting with Kandiyohi County on Monday to develop a plan to disburse the funds allocated to the County to affected businesses.

AGENDA—Chair Halvorson presented the Agenda. Schmoll asked Tammy Howe, new Agricultural Department Coordinator, at Ridgewater College, to share information on the Agricultural Program.

MINUTES—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dustin Kotrba, SECONDED BY Michelle Marotzke, to approve the July 16, August 20, September 17 and November 19, 2020 Minutes as emailed. MOTION CARRIED.

REPORTS

Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee. Schmoll reported the Industrial Hemp Exploratory Subcommittee is meeting now on a quarterly basis and met last in November. Interesting news articles are still shared, including one recently about a coop potentially being formed in Indiana. Also discussed was an inquiry by the regional Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) representative, Lisa Hughes, seeking a facility for hemp processing. The subcommittee members did some brainstorming on possible facilities to propose for the anonymous site seeker.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ag Innovation Conference Planning Team. Dustin Kotrba reported the planning committee met on November 30th to recap the 2020 event and begin planning for the 2021 Ag Innovation Conference, which will be held on July 29, 2021 (8:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.); lunch will follow if the event is held in-person. The committee is discussing plans if a virtual event is necessary. The conference will be free for attendees. The overall theme idea includes growth, change and moving forward in the midst of a tough year. Attendance at the 2020 conference increased from past conferences mainly due to the virtual venue. Usually attendance is approximately 125, but in 2020 it was 200-plus. The attendance of producers was lower than expected. The conference seems to attract more attendees from ag business and there is interest in finance and economic development topics. Sponsors are needed; dinner and a golf event supplemented by sponsors is being considered. Speakers may include producer storytellers. The budget carryover is \$6,000. There was a savings in 2020 due to the virtual event, which eliminated food costs and speaker costs were lower due to remote presentations.

NEW BUSINESS

Renewable Diesel/Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program. Kotrba reported Jamey Cline of Christianson, PLLP, will provide information on the renewable diesel/higher blends infrastructure program via a virtual event on January 27, 2021 (7:30-9:00 a.m.). A flyer was prepared by Melissa Knott of Christianson, PLLP and sent out (see attached); she will continue to market the event. Schmoll shared Christianson, PLLP is doing the event free of charge and encouraged members and guests to attend. She will send the registration information to committee members.

Agriculture and Renewable Energy Flyer. Schmoll reported the Ag Marketing and Event Planning Subcommittee is currently looking for new photos and updated statistics. A draft of the flyer will be shared at the January Ag Committee meeting.

Community Ag/Renewable Energy Community Events/Projects. Keith Poier shared information on the USDA Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) regarding financial assistance for ag producers due to increased marketing costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The program ended on December 11th. CFAP 2 followed the first round of CFAP, which ran from May 26-September 11, 2020.

Schmoll mentioned she talked with Andrew Gomer of Nova-Tech Engineering, who recently provided an interesting presentation, including a video of how they work in other countries, such as Cambodia to successfully use Nova-Tech equipment in their unique environment. Schmoll shared Gomer is willing to give a presentation to the Ag Committee at the January meeting; committee members concurred. Schmoll will invite him to the January meeting.

Tamara Howe, Agriculture Department Coordinator, Ridgewater College. Schmoll introduced Tamara Howe, new Agriculture Department Coordinator at Ridgewater College. Self-introductions were done. Howe shared her interesting bio and vision for the Agriculture Department, i.e., student retention, recruitment and take an outside view of where the agriculture department is currently and how to draw agriculture students to Ridgewater College. She plans to build consistency in branding and work with the Marketing Department to unify the brand of the College as a whole and highlight the Agriculture Department. Schmoll shared this committee is interested in partnering with Ridgewater College to

increase agriculture development for the area. Howe reported Ridgewater College is trying to make the best of the pandemic with transition from in-person teaching to virtual. In response to an inquiry, Howe shared enrollment numbers for spring are down, but the latest information is the numbers are looking better. Dan Tepfer inquired about the Farm Business Management Program moving to the Central Lakes College and Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Granite Falls. Howe feels the program is important for producers and the move to Granite Falls is a good move. Students should not notice a change as they will continue to receive their education in the same format and structure and the instructors remain the same. Kim Lippert inquired how the faculty feels about the transition; Howe stated the faculty seems to be on board. Schmoll thanked Howe for sharing information and welcomed her and wished her the best of luck in her new position.

ADJOURNMENT—

IT WAS MOVED BY Dustin Kotrba, SECONDED BY Michelle Marotzke, to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED.

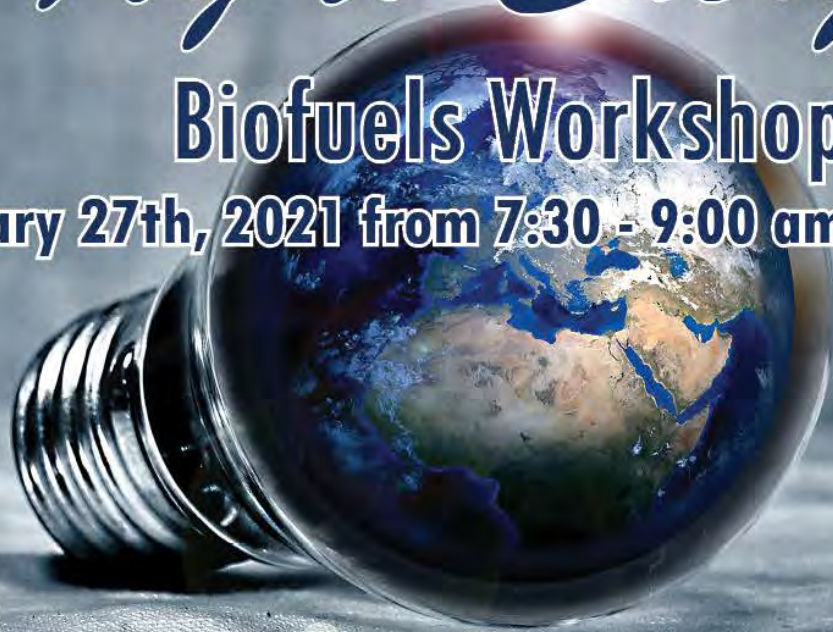
There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 a.m.

NEXT MEETING—The next committee meeting is **7:30 a.m., January 21, 2021**, via Zoom.

Ag to Energy

Biofuels Workshop

January 27th, 2021 from 7:30 - 9:00 am via Webinar



Jamey Cline will be presenting information on the interaction of the agriculture and renewable fuels industries, including:

- The Status of the Renewable Fuels Industry
- The Impact of Renewable Fuels on Agriculture
- Renewable Fuels Funding Opportunities
- Funding Opportunities for Blender Pumps
- Understanding the Governmental Commitment to the Success of Agriculture



Jamey Cline

Business Development Director

Christianson PLLP

Go to www.christiansoncpa.com/workshop to register

