

Cook County/Grand Marais Economic Development Authority
Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2020, 4:00 PM, via Zoom

PRESENT: Howard Hedstrom, Scott Harrison, Hal Greenwood, Heidi Doo-Kirk,
Carol Mork, Anton Moody

ABSENT: Bev Green ALSO PRESENT: Pat Campanaro, Mary Somnis

Hedstrom called the meeting to order. There were no public comments. Upon a Motion by Mork, second by Greenwood, and all ayes, the Agenda with additions and the June 9, 2020 Minutes were approved. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Greenwood invited the EDA board members to review and comment on the proposed amendments to the City of Grand Marais ordinance regarding residential use. Somnis will FW red-line and clean copies of the proposal.

The board discussed a request from Hamilton Habitat for a letter of support. Upon a Motion by Moody, second by Greenwood and all ayes, the board approved the letter as presented. Motion carried.

The board considered a Resolution to apply for an IRRR Taconite Area Community Relief Grant. With the commitment of \$50,000 from 2020 Business Development funds and \$50,000 from 2020 Housing Development funds, the EDA can apply for a \$400,000 grant. This will enable the EDA to create a community lending program for local businesses adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon a Motion by Greenwood, second by Doo-Kirk and all ayes, the Resolution was approved. Motion carried.

The EDA has been asked to administer the Cook County CARES Business Relief Grant program. Pat Campanaro and Jim Boyd will serve with Somnis. The County has made available \$200,000 for grants plus funding to cover the administrative costs. Upon a Motion by Mork, second by Greenwood and all ayes, the board approved that the EDA should administer this program on behalf of Cook County. Motion carried.

Somnis announced that a thank you plaque has been received from the Catalyst, in recognition of the EDA's support of that program in 2019.

Somnis announced that the AEOA lease to rent office space is terminated as of July 31, 2020. AEOA now has office space at Cook County Higher Ed.

FINANCIALS

Harrison reviewed financial reports and working capital projections for the EDA and Superior National. The financials will be forwarded for audit.

Harrison presented EDA bills to pay. Upon a Motion by Greenwood, second by Doo-Kirk and all ayes, the bills were approved to pay as presented. Motion carried.

It has come to our attention that we should amend the employment agreements for Superior National to include the ability to provide a bonus at year end, at the discretion of the Management Team. Upon a Motion by Harrison, second by Greenwood and all ayes, the board approved this amendment to the employment agreements, effective immediately. Motion carried. Somnis will update the documents and acquire signatures for the file.

OLD AND ONGOING BUSINESS

The owners of the businesses lost to fire in April are meeting with Hedstrom, Campanaro and Somnis tomorrow. This the beginning of discussion on the use of the grant from the Northland Foundation.

Short Term Rental Property Tax Classifications may be included in the Special Session at the MN Legislature.

Somnis recommended that the EDA cancel the balance of \$2362.52 remaining on the contract with the Northspan Group to update the Prosperity Agenda. The board approved, by consensus, that now is not the time to work on the Prosperity Agenda, as the focus is community recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. Somnis will contact Northspan with this decision.

The developers of Assisted Living, Hedstrom and Somnis are in meetings to move the project forward. The City of Grand Marais is considering the creation of a Tax Increment Finance District. North Shore Health is considering management of the facility. Both discussions are in early stages, no commitments have been made.

Cook County Workforce Recruitment began again in June, from Puerto Rico and the Twin Cities. As of July 2, 11 new hires have been accomplished.

The closing on the sale of the last home at Nordic Star is scheduled later in July.

The CEC, Chamber of Commerce Great Place Project and GM Art Colony have collaborated on a public art project to provide 8 painted trash cans to the City of Grand Marais. They will arrive near the end of the month. Doo-Kirk requested trash cans for the Tread Lightly group, which is partnering with the US Forest Service on clean-up projects on the forest. Somnis will connect them with a source for barrels, via email.

The next meeting of the EDA board is scheduled for August 11, 2020. There being no other business before the board, the meeting was adjourned by consensus.