

LA CROSSE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND, INC.

La Crosse County Administrative Center, Rm. 3220

Thursday, October 7, 2010

7:30 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Steve Doyle, Jill Billings, Don Brenengen, Steve Burgess, Vicki Burke (7:40), Gary Ingvalson, Tara Johnson, Audrey Kader, Dennis Manthei, Steve O'Malley, Michael Richards (7:41), Bill Shepherd, Mary Jo Werner

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Dirk Gasterland

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Wettstein

STAFF & GUESTS: Brian Fukuda, Charlie Handy, Margaret Norden, Greg Flogstad, Karl Green, Peter Fletcher, Jason Gilman, Jenny Kuderer, Nathan Patros, Todd Mandel

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Chair Doyle called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None requested.

APPROVE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2010

Greg Flogstad pointed out that UC 101 should have been included in the proof forms in the motion regarding revolving loan fund jobs reporting. **MOTION** by Manthei/Kader to approve the Minutes of September 2, 2010, as amended. **Motion carried unanimously.** Burke, Gasterland, Richards excused; Wettstein absent.

APPROVE PAYMENT OF VOUCHERS – WEST SALEM RESERVOIR REIMBURSEMENT/EDA GRANT UPDATE

Brian Fukuda explained that EDA funding is paid to La Crosse County and is to be passed along to the Village of West Salem for their water reservoir. The Village can make the decision about paying down TIF or reservoir debt. Fukuda reported they are in the process of closing out the grant. There will be one additional payment to the Village. **MOTION** by Johnson/Brenengen to approve payment of a voucher in the amount of \$219,820.78 to the Village of West Salem toward the water reservoir. **Motion carried unanimously.** Gasterland excused; Wettstein absent.

COMMUTER BUS PROPOSAL

Peter Fletcher, Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, spoke about a proposed commuter bus from La Crosse south to Coon Valley, Westby, Viroqua, Genoa, Stoddard, and Prairie du Chien. The MRRPC will present a funding application to the Wisconsin DOT. The City of Prairie du Chien and Crawford County Transportation Coordinating Committee have applied for funding on the Highway 35 corridor. MRRPC is proposing that the first two routes to be implemented would be as follows: 1) originate in Genoa, and proceed clockwise, making five stops in La Crosse, then go to Viroqua, and return to Genoa, and 2) originate in Viroqua, and take the opposite, counter-clockwise route to Genoa, then return to Viroqua. They are proposing the following times: Early morning for job commuters, twice at midday to serve elderly and disabled commuters to medical centers, and late afternoon for workers to return home. They are proposing a \$3 fare one way. Buses are for 12 passengers, and are handicap and bicycle accessible. A third route would originate in Mt. Sterling to serve Crawford and southern Vernon Counties. A fourth route would be along Highway 35 between Prairie du Chien and La Crosse. Lengthy discussion followed regarding routes, potential populations to be served, and

funding. They will be putting out a Request for Proposal for an existing bus service to be the provider. Fletcher stated that STRAP funding runs out at the end of the year, but could fund the first few months. Discussion was held regarding local match dollars. Mary Jo Werner suggested also checking with Northeast Iowa communities where there are job commuters, and the USDA's rural development program. Fletcher will return with more details.

CITY OF ONALASKA MTU SERVICE

The City of Onalaska Common Council voted to discontinue MTU service in 2011 as a cost-saving measure. This will impact residents and business customers and employees who rely on bus service. Jason Gilman reported there were 50,000 MTU riders in Onalaska in 2009, and they are on track for 70,000 riders in 2010. He has met with other transportation providers to explore options. They are looking at reductions in service hours, shared ride service, and reducing the number of routes. Gilman stated that there are agencies writing letters of support for retaining service. **MOTION** by Billings/Johnson to send letter of support for retaining bus service in the City of Onalaska. **Motion carried unanimously.** Gasterland excused; Wettstein absent.

CITY OF LA CROSSE HOUSING STUDY

Karl Green's presentation was referred to the November 4, 2010, meeting.

SKIPPERLINER INDUSTRIES – UPDATE ON CHAPTER 128 BUSINESS LIQUIDATION

Bill Shepherd updated the status of Skipperliner's Chapter 128 liquidation. There was a meeting with Jeb Griffith, the new owner of Skipperliner's assets. Griffith has formed three different business entities for management of the assets. He has indicated he will seek to restructure the debt, but will not seek to reduce the amount. Discussion was held regarding the possibility of a special committee meeting to review their proposal.

REPORT ON 2011 BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Steve O'Malley provided an overview of the 2011 economic development budget. He reported that he has been told by Supervisors Feehan and Ebert that they are hesitant about funding outside agencies. Supervisor Feehan has also indicated he questions the County's role in economic development, and intends to propose an amendment to the County budget to eliminate funding. Discussion followed regarding agency roles, collaboration efforts, strategic planning, and grant monies that have been awarded for economic development. Agency representatives will be invited to the November 4, 2010, meeting.

REQUEST FOR HOUSING REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Staff requested establishment of a revolving loan fund of \$25,000 to assist qualifying home buyers in the Rockland housing project. A maximum of \$5,000 would be available per recipient, which would be repaid to the County. The fund would be administered by Couleecap. It would be made available to buyers in the Village of Rockland in 2011, and would then be reevaluated annually for the most need. Todd Mandel, Couleecap, spoke about their administration role, their plans for the Rockland project, and a WHEDA employer-assisted loan that could become available. He estimates generating \$1.5 million in taxable value. Discussion was held regarding deferred payments, terms of the loans with regard to refunding the revolving loan fund, and Couleecap's history of successful loans. **MOTION** by Johnson/Burke to approve \$25,000 for the Meadow Park Estates development with

Couleecap, pending clarification of details at the November 4, 2010, meeting.
Motion carried unanimously. Gasterland excused; Wettstein absent.

NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 4, 2010, AT 7:30 A.M.

Discussion was held regarding staff conflicts on November 4, 2010. Members will be polled for an alternative date.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Nothing further requested than previously indicated.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Ingvalson/Werner to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously.** Meeting adjourned at 9:30a.m.

Approved, October 28, 2010, Margaret Norden, Recorder