

BUFFALO COUNTY MINUTES

Committee of the Board: Economic Development Committee

Date of the Meeting: Thursday, July 21, 2022

Chair Schmidtknecht called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

Board Members Present: Mr. Max Weiss, Mr. Brad Schmidtknecht, Mr. Brian Michaels, Ms. LeeAnne Bulman, and Mr. Tom Taylor.

Others Present for All or Parts of the Meeting: Ms. Roxann Halverson, Mr. Ryan VanDeWalle, Mr. Dennis Bork, Ms. Tina Anibas, Mr. David Danzinger, Mr. Lee Gehrke, Ms. Renee Schoonover, Mr. Shawn Squires, Ms. Laura Gullickson, and Mr. Tyson Gullicksrud.

Public Comments regarding Agenda Items: None.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Great River State Trail – Flyway Project Updates: Mr. Danzinger explained Phase 2 of the project is in the engineering stage. A review is being done for endangered species in the area and for railroad crossings. The Finance Committee is working on a referendum to see if the citizens of Buffalo County want development of a bike trail to continue past Phase 2.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding Broadband Provider Updates: Tri County has been working in Naples but has no future plans for more projects in Buffalo County. CCT was awarded a grant for the Town of Cross. They have started installing fiber and have one household already hooked up. They have also been working with other townships to obtain grants or assisting with preliminary work that needs to be done before applying for grants. Ntec has been awarded grants for Town of Canton, Town of Mondovi and Town of Gilmanton. Fiber is being installed in Town of Mondovi and Town of Gilmanton. They are open to new projects and working in collaboration with other providers.

Chair Schmidtknecht challenged the providers to continue to work together and get rural broadband deployed in Buffalo County within 5 years.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding a Broadband Ordinance Update: Chair Schmidtknecht would like the ordinance updated. The broadband speed limits, timeframe to complete a project, and making the requirements match the PSC grant application requirements were items discussed to be updated.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Grant Writer Position: Ayres and Associates gave a presentation last month to review how they can assist Buffalo County with writing and obtaining grants. Mr. VanDeWalle explained the HR

Chair wanted to see if any employees would be interested in taking the training and doing the duties on a part-time basis. No employees have expressed interest, but one employee said their spouse is interested. Mr. VanDeWalle will look into having Ayres as our grant writer and talk with the one individual who is interested.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Economic Development Director Position: Mr. VanDeWalle explained he spoke with Trempealeau County, and they are interested in sharing their Economic Development staff. He will work out more of the details with them.

Review/Discussion regarding the Chairperson Report: Chair Schmidtknecht explained he would like to find a way to have seed money for businesses to start in Buffalo County. This would be something an Economic Development Coordinator could work on.

The next meeting date will be September 15th immediately following the Finance Committee.

Mr. Taylor made a motion to adjourn at 11:56 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxann Halverson
Buffalo County Clerk