FULL COMMISSION MEETING
Thursday, May 12, 2022
Immediately following 3:30pm Public Hearing
**Southwest Regional Development Commission—Full Commission**

* Board of Directors

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<tr>
<th>Commissioner</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Anderson</td>
<td>Lyon County Commissioners*</td>
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<tr>
<td>JoEllen Benson</td>
<td>Rock County Townships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob Byrnes</td>
<td>City of Marshall &amp; RLF Committee Chair*</td>
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<td>Miron Carney</td>
<td>Murray County Municipalities &amp; Legislative Committee Chair*</td>
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<td>Pam Cooreman</td>
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<td>Bill Crowley</td>
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<td>Keith Elbers</td>
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<td>Eriann Faris</td>
<td>Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council</td>
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<td>Lori Grant</td>
<td>Lyon County Townships</td>
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<td>Donna Gravley</td>
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<td>Eric Hartman</td>
<td>Region 8 School Boards*</td>
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<td>Tom Hoff</td>
<td>Southwest Minnesota Higher Education</td>
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<td>Chris Hollingsworth</td>
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<td>Myron Koets</td>
<td>Pipestone County Municipalities, SRDC Chairman*</td>
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<td>Mike Kuhle</td>
<td>City of Worthington, Immediate Past Chair*</td>
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<td>Paul Langseth</td>
<td>Nobles County Townships, SRDC Vice-Chair*</td>
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<td>Jeff Moen</td>
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<td>See Moua-Leske</td>
<td>Cultural Diversity</td>
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<td>Nora Murphy</td>
<td>Alternate: Lower Sioux Community</td>
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<td>Kevin O’Keefe</td>
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<td>Bob Paplow</td>
<td>Nobles County Commissioners</td>
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<td>Richard Peterson</td>
<td>Jackson County Townships, SRDC Secretary*</td>
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<td>Jenny Quade</td>
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<td>Stephen Schnieder</td>
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<td>Sherrith Thompson</td>
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<td>Mic VanDeVere</td>
<td>Lincoln County Commissioners, Transportation Committee Chair</td>
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<td>Bob Van Hee</td>
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<td>Don Wachal</td>
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<td>Carol Wagner</td>
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<td>Shanda Walker</td>
<td>Southwest Center for Independent Living</td>
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<td>Dennis Welgraven</td>
<td>Murray County Commissioners, SRDC Treasurer*</td>
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<td>Beth Wilms</td>
<td>Health and Human Services</td>
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**SRDC Full Commission Membership**

- One (1) County member from each of the nine counties.
- One (1) Township member from each of the nine counties.
- One (1) Mayor/Council member from each municipality over 10,000 in population.
- One (1) Mayor/council member for each of the nine counties representing cities under 10,000.
- Two (2) School Board members.
- One (1) Lower Sioux Indian Community member.
- Five (5) Public Interest Groups

**SRDC Board of Director Membership**

SRDC Chairman & a regional commissioner from each county elected by the regional commissioners from each county and:

- One (1) Elected commissioner from each city over 10,000 in population.
- One (1) Elected commissioner from any county with a population of more than 20,000 but without a city over 10,000 in population nominated by the regional commissioners of that county.
- One (1) School board member selected by the Commission as a whole.
### AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Action Needed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3:35pm</td>
<td>Call to Order &amp; Pledge of Allegiance</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3:37pm</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>3:40pm</td>
<td>Additions to and Approval of Agenda</td>
<td>Approve Agenda</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3:42pm</td>
<td>Consent Agenda Items</td>
<td>Approve Consent Agenda Items</td>
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<td>• March 10, 2022 Full Commission Minutes</td>
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<td>• April 14, 2022 Board of Directors Minutes</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>3:45pm</td>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Approve Contracts</td>
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<td>• GMRPTC Campground Survey Contract</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>3:50pm</td>
<td>Finance Reports</td>
<td>Approval of Treasurer's Report &amp; March Receipts &amp; Expenditures Report</td>
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<td>• Treasurer's Report, including bank accounts &amp; investments</td>
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<td>• March Receipts &amp; Expenditures Report</td>
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<td>• Administrative Report through April 2022</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>3:55pm</td>
<td>Project Reviews</td>
<td>Accept Project Review</td>
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<td>• Development Planner Bruce-White</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>4:00pm</td>
<td>FY2022 Public Hearing Results</td>
<td>Accept Results of SRDC FY2023 Public Hearing</td>
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<td>• Report on results of SRDC’s FY2023 Public Hearing held prior to today’s meeting</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>4:05pm</td>
<td>Committee &amp; Staff Reports</td>
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<td>9a</td>
<td>4:05pm</td>
<td>Budget &amp; Personnel Committee Report</td>
<td>Approve Committee Recommendations</td>
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<td>• Review topics discussed by Committee</td>
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<td>• FY2023 Budget</td>
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<td>• Draft SRDC FY2023 Work Program</td>
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<td>9b</td>
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<td>Legislative Committee Report</td>
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4:25pm Economic Development Report—Deputy Director Weis & Development Planner Bruce-White
4:35pm Revolving Loan Funds Report—Committee Chair Byrnes & Deputy Director Weis
4:40pm Physical Development Report—Development Planners Bruce-White & Walker
4:45pm Community Development Report—Communications Specialist Welu
4:50pm Transportation Report—Committee Chair VanDeVere & Development Planners Bruce-White & Walker
4:55pm Executive Director's Report—Executive Director Trusty
5:00pm Chairman’s Report—Chairman Koets
5:10pm Reports from SRDC Commissioners Representing Local Units of Government & Public Interest Groups
   - Mic VanDeVere, Lincoln County Commissioner
   - Carol Wagner, Jackson County Municipalities
   - Paul Langseth, Nobles County Townships
5:25pm Unfinished Business
5:25pm New Business
   SRDC Annual Meeting
   - SRDC Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, July 14th at 4:00pm at the Red Baron Vast Clubroom in Marshall. A brief Full Commission business meeting will begin the Annual Meeting.
   - Guest Speaker: Erin Schutte Wadzinski, Attorney/Owner or Kivu Immigration Law in Worthington.
   - The SRDC Awards Committee will need to be appointed by the Chairman for Project/Program of the Year.
   **Action Needed: Chairman makes Awards Committee appointments**
   - The Nominating Committee for the Election of Officers will need to be appointed by the Chairman.
   **Action Needed: Chairman makes Nominating Committee appointments**
10:00am Announcements
   SRDC Commissioner vacancies exist from the following representation:
   Nobles County Municipalities, Pipestone County Townships, Redwood County Municipalities, and Region 8 Cultural Diversity.
   - SRDC Office is closed Monday, May 31st in observation of Memorial Day
   - SRDC Board of Directors Meeting: Thursday, June 9 at 3:30pm at the SRDC Office
5:30pm Adjourn
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Myron Koets, Commissioners Rick Anderson, JoEllen Benson, Bob Byrnes, Miron Carney, Pam Cooreman, Bill Crowley, Keith Elbers, Eriann Farris, Lori Grant, Donna Gravley, Chris Hollingsworth, Dennis Klingbile, Mike Kuhle, Paul Langseth, Tiffany Lesmeister-Knott, Jeff Moen, See Moua-Leske, Jenny Quade, Stephen Schnieder, Sherri Thompson, Carol Wagner, Shanda Walker, Dennis Welgraven and Beth Wilms

MEMBERS PRESENT BY ZOOM Commissioners Kevin O’Keefe and Bob VanHee

MEMBERS ABSENT: Commissioners Eric Hartman (excused), Tom Hoff (excused), Bob Paplow, Richard Peterson (excused), Terry Quiring, Mic VanDeVere (excused) and Don Wachal

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jay Trusty, Rosemary Bruce-White, Elling Mann, Kathy Schreiber, Brooke Swart, Robin Weis, Jason Walker, and Jessica Welu

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Myron Koets called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL
There were two additions to the agenda. Under Contracts: Explore SW Minnesota contract. Under the Transportation report: Resolution for the SRTS planning grant for Tracy.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Carney and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the agenda with additions. Upon vote taken: Ayes-25, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

COMMISSIONER APPOINTMENTS
Chairman Koets announced the following appointment to the Commission: Appointment of See Moua-Leske, representing Public Interest Group/Cultural Diversity.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Gravley and seconded by Commissioner Byrnes to approve the appointment of SRDC Commissioner as presented. Request for opposing votes made. No opposing votes were cast. Motion Carried Unanimously.

SRDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPOINTMENTS
M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Welgraven to approve the following SRDC Board of Directors reappointments: Dennis Klingbile as
Lincoln County’s representative, Rick Anderson as Lyon County’s representative, and Bob VanHee as Redwood County’s representative. Request for opposing votes made. No opposing votes were cast. Motion Carried Unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

M/S/P    Motion made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve January 13, 2022 Full Commission Minutes, February 10, 2022 Board of Directors Minutes, January 2022 Receipts and Expenditures Report and the contract with the City of Pipestone for Technical Assistance. Upon vote taken: Ayes-24, Nays-0. Motion Carried. Commissioner Koets abstained from the vote as he is the mayor of Pipestone.

**CONTRACTS**

Communications Specialist Jessica Welu provided information on the Explore SW Minnesota contract.

M/S/P    Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Carney to approve the Explore SW Minnesota contract. Upon vote taken: Ayes-23, Nays-0. Motion Carried. Commissioners Rick Anderson and Chris Hollingsworth abstain as they both sit on the Explore SW Minnesota board.

**FINANCE REPORT**

SRDC Treasurer Dennis Welgraven referred Commissioners to the Treasurer’s Report, showing bank accounts and fund designations. There were no questions.

M/S/P    Motion made by Commissioner Elbers and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the Treasurer’s Report as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-25, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

Finance Director Brooke Swart reported on the Administrative Report through the end of January 2022. Swart highlighted several line items. There were no questions.

M/S/P    Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Carney to approve Administrative Report as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-25, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

**PROJECT REVIEWS**

There were no project reviews.
COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS

A. Budget & Personnel Committee Report
B & P Chair Welgraven asked for acceptance of the Administrative Specialist job description. Executive Director Jay Trusty informed the board that we will be advertising for the open Accounts Specialist position and the Planning Assistant position.

M/S/P    Motion made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Grant to accept the Administrative Specialist job description. Upon vote taken: Ayes-25, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

B. Legislative Committee Report
Legislative Committee Chair Miron Carney provided the 2022 SRDC Legislative Priorities. Those priorities are Mental Health, Broadband, Casey Jones State Trail and Transportation. Other issues of concern were also presented. The legislative committee will meet in-person on March 29, 2022 with Senators Dahms and Weber and are hoping that some of the area representatives will be at the capitol.

The SW MN Mayors group is working with MnWest Community and Technical College to implement a 5 year pilot project where students in specific high demand/low workforce areas receive a grant/loan to pay for the tuition in these programs in exchange for the student working in that field in Minnesota for 3 years. This grant/loan would be partially forgiven over the 3 years with it totally forgiven if the student stays for the full 3 years. The group will work with the Workforce Development Board to decide which programs will qualify for the grant/loan program each year. They are asking the legislature to fund 75% of the project with 25% coming from communities, EDAs and employers in the Southwest Initiative Foundation service area.

M/S/P    Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Byrnes to approve the 2022 SRDC Legislative Platform. Upon vote taken: Ayes-25, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

C. Economic Development Report
Deputy Director Weis informed the board that our regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan was submitted. Our 3-year EDA planning grant has been submitted also.

The next quarterly meeting for Friends of the Field will be April 13 and will focus on childcare. Staff is currently working on updating our regional childcare resources information.

The Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) met on January 19 to work on action steps, relevance, needed changes, emerging needs, etc. as it pertains to our Local Human Services Public Transit plan that is currently being revised. This committee will meet on March 16 and then again on April 4 to focus on details with in the Local Human Services Public Transit plan.
MN Marketing Partnership will meet March 24. The Minnesota economic development marketing campaign is underway to promote Minnesota as the premier location for business startups and expansions.

The SRDC sponsored Cultures on the Prairie event in February at SMSU. The SRDC will also be a sponsor of World Fest on April 30 in Marshall. The SRDC is looking into having a booth at this event. Weis stated that the cultural diversity fund has about $400 left to sponsor a cultural event so if commissioners know of any upcoming events to have them contact the SRDC for sponsorship to clear out that fund.

Dr. George Taylor from SMSU has asked Weis to participate on the SMSU Entrepreneurial Advisory Council. This group met February 18. In this program students create a small business. Two students presented their business creations they are working on. Weis thought the SRDC could possibly be a mentor for this program.

The SRDC will be a sponsor of a Workforce Solutions Summit to be held in Redwood County. This topic fits nicely with our recent work to enhance succession planning education and assistance in the region.

Regional Workforce Recruitment: Staff attended the Explore SW Minnesota meeting on March 2. Regional recruitment and retention are necessary to address workforce shortages that are affecting business sustainability and expansion. Staff will be attending the Rethos Building on Main Street April 21-22. Staff will be working with Eriann Farris from the SW Private Industry Council on succession planning and with Southwest Business Development Center on a 3 year grant for succession planning.

EDA/C-EDA: Conversations are being held with the Lower Sioux, Redwood County, City of Redwood Falls and the Redwood Area Schools on an Aviation Grant. Weis updated commission members on Planning Intern Elling Mann’s projects. He has been doing research, updating the regional childcare resources, helping the city of Lamberton on a packet to promote the city among other things.

D. Revolving Loan Fund Report

RLF Committee Chair Bob Byrnes updated commissioners on the loan funds available.

COVID-19 RLF (C-RLF) original funds have all been lent out. There is approximately $40,000 in the account with approximately $17,000 added each month from repayments.

The traditional RLF continues to have the COVID flexibilities until June 30, 2022. There is approximately $140,000 in the account with approximately $13,000 added each month from repayments. In addition, there is a Jackson County loan that is approved but has not closed yet for $75,000 and a loan is expected to pay off in the next few days of approximately $42,500.

Conversations are occurring with multiple potential loan clients.

Chair Byrnes stated that the RLF committee will need to meet the beginning of April as the Cares Act provisions for the traditional RLF funds will be done June 30 so policies need to be
looked at and a procedure needs to be put in place to track both funds. COVID RLF funds will need to be reported on to EDA but traditional RLF funds do not need to be reported on as they are now defederalized.

Weis reported that all three contracted revolving loan funds (Jackson County RLF, Heron Lake RLF and Falcon Development RLF) are active at this time. Heron Lake RLF just approved a $50,000 business loan in Windom. She has been working with all of them and she has been working with 3 potential applicants. All three funds have money available for lending at this time. A press release and letter to businesses has been done for outreach for Falcon Development.

PACE
Deputy Director Weis referred Commissioners to their meeting packet for an update on the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program. Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $135,000 (PACE ARRA Funds) and $269,000 (PACE SEP Funds). Weis continues to have businesses complete energy audits and assessments. PACE outreach will focus on reaching out with information to gas stations, grocery stores and contractors. Weis promoted the PACE program and energy audits on the February KDOM Kaleidoscope spot. There are 3 potential applications being worked on.

E. Physical Development Report
Development Planner Jason Walker reported the Rural Minnesota Energy Board (RMEB) met in person on January 24th with the option to join via zoom. The board had a presentation from Carbon Solutions (a company that is looking at constructing an underground pipeline through parts of Cottonwood, Jackson and Redwood Counties in our service area as well as Chippewa, Martin, Otter Tail, Renville, Wilkin and Yellow Medicine Counties on its way to North Dakota for liquid carbon storage). Carbon Summit Solutions currently has over 30 facilities signed up to participate in the project. RMEB was asked to act as a Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW). Board members stated that they would investigate procedures before making a decision on this request. The next meeting for the RMEB will be March 28 and NextEra will present information about current and future projects in the RMEB region.

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs): Walker is working on electric vehicle education outreach and has been contacting all the utilities in the region to see what they are doing for EV programming, incentives and future plans.

Walker reported eleven schools applied to the Solar for Schools program There are different rules for those schools in an Xcel Energy area and those not in an Xcel Energy area. There is a formula for the amount of funding a school will receive. There will be an incentive to use solar on the schools utility bill.

Development Planner Bruce-White updated the commissioners on the City of Pipestone’s Comprehensive Plan update. Staff has sent the city officials a list of issues impacting Pipestone
and their corresponding goals. The City along with departments are being tasked with creating their own action plan to achieve each goal and identifying responsible parties/positions. Plan completion and public comment will happen after the City finishes their part. The city council will work on this at their April 4 meeting.

Bruce-White recently conducted a focus group meeting on March 3 for the City of Tracy’s Comprehensive Plan update during a Wheels Museum Board meeting. The topics covered included the museum’s function as a community entrance and its connections within and through Tracy. The Planning Commission has approved the recommendations by the focus group, recommendations will now go to the city council for approval.

Bruce-White informed the board the Solid Waste Commission met on January 24 in-person with an option to join by zoom. The Solid Waste Commission voted on a resolution supporting 100% of the solid waste tax revenue be used for recycling and solid waste activities.

F. Community Development Report

Communications Specialist Jessica Welu provided an update on the Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail Association. Monthly newspaper articles are being developed for Casey Jones Trail outreach and should start appearing in area newspapers soon. Three sub-committees have now been formed: 1. Public Relations, 2. Land Purchase and 3. Government Relations. The group is looking for sub-committee members so if anyone is interested please let Welu know.

The Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail were successful in receiving 2 grants. One was $150 Earth Day grant to help with cleanup on the Lake Wilson segment of the trail. The second grant was for $800 for prairie restoration seed collection along miles 6 and 7 of the Pipestone segment. Seeds will be harvested in the fall and spread the following spring. They are hoping to make this an annual event along other sections of the trail.

The next meeting will be March 17 in-person with a zoom option available.

Welu met with a Pipestone business that is applying for a $7,000 SMAC grant about the SRDC being the fiscal host. The project would provide area youth with a 4 day cultural camp this summer with practices held in Pipestone and the performances being in Slayton. This grant is due March 23 and awards will be announced in April.

Welu and Weis attended the Explore SW Minnesota meeting on March 2. This group is looking at becoming active again and what they want to accomplish. Welu went over a short survey with the commission members and asked them to discuss them in small groups. Ideas were shared and Welu will take these ideas to the next Explore SW Minnesota meeting on April 6.

G. Transportation Report

Commissioner and representative on ATP 8 Bob Byrnes reported that at the ATP 8 meeting discussions about what projects should be looked at for 5 years out. These projects will be voted on in April. Byrnes discussed some of the local projects that are scheduled for the next 5 years.
There was a list of all local projects and the timeframe for work being done provided in the meeting packet.

Development Planner Bruce-White explained that MnDOT is looking for ideas on how MnDOT Right of Ways can be used. During the pandemic when restaurants were forced to provide outside seating some businesses setup tables in the MnDOT Right of Ways and MnDOT was impressed with how this worked out.

The District 7 Freight Plan Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Team is an opportunity to provide regional input, perspective, and expertise that will be crucial in shaping the strategies and goals of the freight plan. On March 14 staff will meet with the Technical Team to discuss the results of the re-feasibility studies and overall recommendation and potential projects.

MnDOT has portable counters available for partner agencies to use to collect data for planning future projects.

The quarterly transportation planners meeting will correspond with the MN Transportation Planners Conference in March and be held virtually.

Development Planner Walker updated commissioners on the progress of the Adrian SRTS plan. The next meeting will be March 16 to prioritize goals and action steps. It was announced this week that the Tracy School District has been awarded a SRTS planning grant for the 2022-2023 school year. The SRTS Infrastructure Grants were awarded with Tyler being awarded $500,000 for sidewalk development to their new school and Jackson being awarded $120,000 for sidewalk development. Adrian was not successful this time but will apply next year when they will have more information available as their SRTS plan will be finished.

H. Executive Director’s Report

Executive Director Trusty reported that MADO Executive Directors met last week with Jane Leonard from Growth and Justice and the Center for Economic Inclusion who are looking to partner with agencies throughout out-state Minnesota. The Directors were able to tour the new office of the Mid-MN Development Commission.

Carrie Bendix, Executive Director of the SW MN Private Industry Council announced that the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board was selected by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis to participate in the 2022 Reinventing Our Communities (ROC) Cohort Program. Southwestern Minnesota is one of eleven communities across the United States participating in this year’s program.

The Reinventing Our Communities (ROC) cohort program, largely run by the Feds peers in Philadelphia, provides participants with free access to economic development webinars, technical assistance from national leaders, peer learning, and racial equity trainings. The year-long program aims to build capacity for organizations interested in expanding economic opportunities through the use of strategies to achieve more inclusive regional economies.
Trusty accepted an invitation to be a member of the cohort representing our area. The Southwest Minnesota cohort is made up of only 8 members and will have their first meeting in April.

Last week there was a hearing on the Broadband bill. The Broadband Coalition is working on getting the $110 million that is left in the Capital Investment Fund for the border to border broadband project. The broadband consultant Nathan Zacharias met with Senator Westrom on a bill that would appropriate this money to the project.

Trusty announced the SRDC FY2021 audit is done and the outcome was very good. SRDC will begin advertising for the 2 open positions with interviews and hiring being done in the near future. Planning Intern Elling Mann’s last day will be March 18. Trusty will be off the next couple weeks and the MADO all state staff meeting will be November 2 and 3 at the Hilton Garden Inn, downtown Mankato.

I. Chairman’s Report
Chairman Myron Koets and local mayors met with Senator Klobuchar and discussed the Highway 23 project. She indicated that earmarks needed to be brought back so local projects would benefit. Koets got a notification during the meeting that earmarks have been brought back now. Senator Klobuchar will be the guest speaker at the next meeting of the Highway 23 Coalition.

REPORTS FROM SRDC COMMISSIONERS REPRESENTING LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC INTEREST GROUPS

A. Chris Hollingsworth, Pipestone County Commissioners
Hollingsworth sits on the Explore SW Minnesota and is very optimistic about the partnership with the SRDC to help with marketing and goals. He thinks SW Minnesota has a lot to offer. The County Recorder in Pipestone County is retiring so the county board has decided to make this position appointed instead of elected. The Pipestone County Medical Center (PCMC) was approached by an Eldercare facility looking to sell and they would like PCMC to look into purchasing it. PCMC has hired 2 new doctors for the clinic and hired a doctor who will be bringing 4 more doctors to work the Emergency Room. Caring Hands Dental is due to open in April. This dental service is for low income residents. This will be good for the area as the closest low income dental clinics are in Madelia, Mankato, Willmar and Alexandria.

B. Miron Carney, Murray County Municipalities
Happenings in Murray County Cites include: The City of Lake Wilson is working on a grant for a new fire truck. They are also working with the County on flooding issues of their park. The City of Fulda just purchased a new ambulance for $250,000 of which they secured $50,000 in grant money to put towards the total cost. Their housing addition have 8 of 11 lots sold. The City is working with SEH Engineering on I & I Wastewater issues. This project would cost about $26 million dollars so alternatives are being pursued. The City of Slayton provides a half time officer to the City of Fulda to help their department out. Common concerns with the cities in Murray County are wastewater and streets.
The City of Slayton has a housing development. The lots range from .5 acres to 1.48 acres and sell for $25,000 to $40,000 per lot and this covers the assessments. There are 27 lots in the development with 8 lots sold and 2 more offers coming in. The city bonded for 25 years but at the rate of lots selling they could have it paid off in 12 years. With the City of Slayton’s nursing home closing recently a group of concerned citizens formed Operation Prairie Venture to work on getting this void filled. The current nursing home building was demolished and MN Signature Care will be constructing a new facility. Construction is scheduled to start this spring on an Assisted Living facility including a Memory Care unit. Lack of empty housing and business facilities is an issue for the city. There has been $250,000 worth of new playground equipment purchased and erected in the City of Slayton in the last year. Through Woodstock Telephone Company, DEED awarded a grant for $2.8 million to bring Broadband to the City of Slayton and Slayton Township.

C. Stephen Schnieder, School Board Representative
Schnieder discussed the challenges districts are facing from the pandemic. This included internet issues and the availability of technology when schools went to distance learning. Minority and Special Education students suffered from distance learning. The schools were provided with COVID funding but will not have that extra money going forward now. Some school districts are looking at using their COVID money for facility updates. The connection between those students receiving free or reduced lunches and other funding is in need of change. If families that would qualify for free or reduced lunches do not apply the school loses out on other funding including special education funding. Funding levels on the state and federal level are always an issue as there is never enough funding. Shortage of employees from teachers, PSAs, janitors, cooks, bus drivers, etc. along with backlog of items ordered is putting a strain on school districts. Some schools are having difficulty getting operating levies passed which leads to cutting programs and then students open enrolling to districts that provide programing they are interested in causing the district to lose aid. Security in schools has become a priority with some districts hiring resource officers.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
No discussion.

NEW BUSINESS

Timetable for SRDC’s FY2023 Work Program and Budget Preparation
Finance Director Swart referred Commissioners to the draft timetable for the SRDC’s FY 2023 Budget and Work Plan Process. The SRDC standing committees will be meeting prior to work program completion. The Public Hearing on the SRDC FY 2023 Work Program will be held prior to the May 12 Full Commission Meeting. The Budget & Personnel Committee will meet on April 7 and, if needed, on April 14.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Carney to approve the SRDC Timetable for the FY 2023 Budget and Work
Plan Process. Request for opposing votes made. No opposing votes were cast. Motion Carried Unanimously.

OTHER ISSUES
No discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Chairman Myron Koets referred Commissioners to the announcements included on the agenda.

SRDC Commissioner vacancies exist from the following representation: Nobles County Municipalities, Pipestone County Townships, and Redwood County Municipalities. Commissioner Hollingsworth will work on finding a representative from the Pipestone County Townships. Commissioner Langseth will work on finding a representative from the Nobles County Municipalities. Executive Director Trusty will be visiting city councils in Redwood County to try and find a representative.

ADJOURNMENT
Chairman Koets adjourned the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Welgraven and seconded by Commissioner Elbers to adjourn the meeting. Upon vote taken: Ayes-25, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES
Meeting Minutes prepared by Kathy Schreiber, Administrative Specialist.

Reviewed by: Approved by:

Richard Peterson Myron Koets
SRDC Secretary SRDC Chairman
MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Myron Koets, Commissioners Rick Anderson, Bob Byrnes, Miron Carney, Keith Elbers, Donna Gravley, Eric Hartman, Dennis Klingbile, Mike Kuhle, Paul Langseth Richard Peterson, and Dennis Welgraven

MEMBERS PRESENT BY ZOOM: Commissioner Bob VanHee

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jay Trusty, Rosemary Bruce-White, Kathy Schreiber, Brooke Swart, Robin Weis, and Jessica Welu

CALL TO ORDER
Chairman Myron Koets called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions.

AGENDA ADDITIONS/APPROVAL
There was one addition to the agenda. Under Contracts: Murray County Foundation contract.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Hartman and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve agenda with additions. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Elbers to approve February Receipts and Expenditures Report. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

CONTRACTS
Communications Specialist Jessica Welu provided information on the Murray County Foundation contract.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Hartman and seconded by Commissioner Carney to approve the Murray County Foundation contract. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

FINANCE REPORT
SRDC Treasurer Dennis Welgraven referred Commissioners to the Treasurer’s Report, showing bank accounts and fund designations. There were no questions.
M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Klingbile to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

Finance Director Brooke Swart reported on the Administrative Report through the end of February 2022. Swart highlighted several line items. There were no questions.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Carney and seconded by Commissioner Langseth to approve the Administrative Report as provided. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

**PROJECT REVIEWS**

Development/Transportation Planner Rosemary Bruce-White reported on a USDA Rural Development project review for the City of Currie on the purchase of a used street sweeper. Bruce-White reported for Development/Energy Planner Walker regarding an Environmental Assessment Worksheet for Heartland Colony Section 3 Swine Feedlot to construct and operate a new 9,600 head (2,880 AU) feedlot.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Hartman to approve project reviews as presented. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

**COMMITTEE AND STAFF REPORTS**

A. **Budget & Personnel Committee Report**

Finance Director Swart directed Commissioners to their handouts for the Draft FY 2023 Budget. Swart highlighted the proposed budget. The proposed draft budget shows an overall increase in fund balance. The contract line items shows an increase but current staff will not be able to take on much for new contracts with their current workload. B & P Chair Welgraven added that the Committee is recommending a 6.5% COLA and a step for all eligible employees on July 1, 2022. The Committee recommended Executive Director Trusty advertise for a Planning Intern, Planning Assistant, Development Planner and Administrative Assistant to see what we get for applications in order to fill the vacancies. The CRD building will be paid off in about 4 years. The B & P Committee has decided that once the building is paid for, those payments will be put into an account to be used for building updates and repairs.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Langseth and seconded by Commissioner Carney to approve the Draft FY 2023 budget and personnel items as presented. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

Executive Director Trusty informed Commissioners that the Draft FY2023 Work Plan is being worked on by staff and is almost ready. This will be presented at the next meeting.

B. **Legislative Committee Report**

The legislative committee met in-person on March 29, 2022 with Senators Dahms and Weber at the capitol. The committee is planning on meeting on April 22 with Representative Joe
Schomacker for lunch in Luverne. They are hoping Representative Hamilton will be able to attend also. With the redistricting from the census, Representatives Torkelson and Olson and Senator Rosen will no longer have any area in the SRDC service area. The legislative committee is concerned that this being a bonding year and an election year that there will not be any substantial bonding.

Trusty informed the board that the Broadband Coalition Lobbyist, Nathan Zacharias, is taking a new position at the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC). The Broadband Coalition has a current contract with AMC for administration. The Coalition will be looking for a new lobbyist after the session. The Broadband Coalition is working on getting the $110 million that is left in the Capital Investment Fund for the border to border broadband project. The Governor’s office has given control of that money to DEED for economic development but not necessarily to the Office of Broadband. They are still waiting on the federal funds to be sent to the state. It will cost about $1.2 billion to build out the state with broadband.

Commissioners Byrnes, Koets and Kuhle gave an update on the SW MN Mayors group (which includes 7 communities) and their work on getting funding for the 5 year pilot project with MnWest Community and Technical College to implement a program for students in a specific high demand/low workforce areas to receive a grant/loan to pay for the tuition in these programs in exchange for the student working in that field in Minnesota for 3 years. This grant/loan would be partially forgiven over the 3 years with it totally forgiven if the student stays for the full 3 years. The group will work with the Workforce Development Board to decide which programs will qualify for the grant/loan program each year. They asked the legislature to fund 75% of the project with 25% coming from communities, EDAs and employers in the Southwest Initiative Foundation service area. Mayors Bob Byrnes and Pat Baustian testified to the Education Committee. Mayors Myron Koets and Mike Kuhle testifies to the House committee. They will be testifying to the Tax committee yet as the 25% coming from employers will revert to a tax cut for that business. The group is trying to get the proposal in the congressional spending proposal. The House chair would not put the request in their bill as the democrats have a bill that would provide 2 years of free tuition to all students with no commitment to stay in Minnesota. The unemployment rate in our region was 1.7% in November so that is making it difficult for employers to hire.

C. Economic Development Report
Deputy Director Weis reported that DEED will be holding a webinar on April 19 from 12-1 regarding succession planning/business transitions. Staff had a conversation with SBA about applying for a grant through USDA Rural Community Development Initiative that would essentially offer a train-the-trainer session on succession planning. SBA is available to work with business one on one with business planning and is willing to work with the SRDC on succession planning.

Weis attended the quarterly meeting for Friends of the Field on April 13 with the focus being on childcare. Discussion took place about the Pine Technical & Community College’s on-line accelerated early childhood certificate and mentorship program. It is a 22 week course with
classes meeting twice a week for 3 hours each night for 20 credit. Flyers were provided to commissioners after the meeting.

Weis informed the board that Region 6E RDC in Willmar has asked for an additional $400,000 in RLF funds from EDA.

The SRDC will be a sponsor of World Fest on April 30 in Marshall. A flyer for this event was provided in the packet.

Staff will be attending the Rethos Building on Main Street Conference April 20-22. This will focus on Main Street changes due to COVID.

EDA/C-EDA: Conversations are moving forward with the Lower Sioux, Redwood County, City of Redwood Falls and the Redwood Area Schools on an Aviation grant request to EDA. If the Lower Sioux is the grant applicant there would be no match needed for the grant. If one of the other entities is the grant applicant there would be a match requirement.

Wies mentioned that she had a conversation with the City of Edgerton regarding their need for infrastructure updates for residential areas. Staff is having a hard time finding any funding for the City as they don’t meet any of the criteria for EDA funds. She asked if anyone had any ideas she could pass on to the city to let her know.

Development/Transportation Planner Bruce-White updated the board on the Regional Economic Resiliency Plan. The implementation matrix is finished. Action steps will be implemented next fiscal year. A major problem in the area is that employment is at pre-COVID levels thus making it difficult for employers in the region to find employees.

D. Revolving Loan Fund Report
RLF Committee Chair Bob Byrnes updated commissioners on the loan funds available.

COVID-19 RLF (C-RLF) original funds have all been lent out. There is approximately $61,000 in the account with approximately $17,000 added each month from repayments.

The traditional RLF continues to have the COVID flexibilities until June 30, 2022. There is approximately $21,000 in the account with approximately $13,000 added each month from repayments. The RLF Committee has approved 4 loans and 1 modification. One loan and the modification have closed. One loan has withdrawn their request. The other 2 loans are expected to close soon. In addition, there is a Jackson County loan that is approved but has not closed yet for $75,000. Staff will touch base with the primary lender to make sure this loan is on track to close this spring.

Conversations are occurring with multiple potential loan clients.

Chair Byrnes stated that the RLF committee will be meeting the end of April as the Cares Act provisions for the traditional RLF funds will be done June 30 so policies need to be looked at and a procedure needs to be put in place to track both funds. COVID RLF funds will need to be
reported on to EDA but traditional RLF funds do not need to be reported on as they are now defederalized.

Weis reported that all three contracted revolving loan funds (Jackson County RLF, Heron Lake RLF and Falcon Development RLF) are active at this time. Jackson County RLF has approved a loan for $100,000 for a loan to close this spring. Heron Lake RLF just approved a $50,000 business loan in Windom. Staff have been assisting with GMS entry and amortizing a loan after payments are received. Falcon Development Corporation has funds available and these funds are defederalized so Davis Bacon does not apply to construction projects.

**PACE**

Deputy Director Weis referred Commissioners to their meeting packet for an update on the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program. Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $131,000 (PACE ARRA Funds) and $267,000 (PACE SEP Funds). Weis continues to have businesses complete energy audits and assessments. PACE outreach will focus on reaching out with information to gas stations, grocery stores and contractors. The PACE Committee has lowered the interest rates on PACE loans to as low as 3%.

**E. Physical Development Report**

Executive Director Trusty referred commissioners to their packets for the Rural Minnesota Energy Board update. They last met on March 28. An update from NextEra on 3 projects in the RMEB region that are planned over the next 3 to 4 years was given. The RMEB has scheduled a special meeting on April 29 in Slayton with an option for zoom with commissioners from the PUC and representatives from MISO regarding transmission issues and the curtailment of wind towers causing a substantial loss of wind production tax for some counties. The next regular meeting of the RMEB will be May 23.

The school districts of Marshall and Hills Beaver Creek will be submitting a full application to the Solar in Schools program.

Development Planner Bruce-White updated the commissioners on the City of Pipestone’s Comprehensive Plan update. Staff has sent the city officials a list of issues impacting Pipestone and their corresponding goals. The City along with departments are being tasked with creating their own action plan to achieve each goal and identifying responsible parties/positions. Staff will be at the April 18 City Council meeting to work on the completion of the plan.

The City of Tracy’s Comprehensive Plan update has been approved by the Planning Commission. City departments are reviewing the proposed plan format and recommendations.

Bruce-White informed the board the Solid Waste Commission met on March 28 in-person with an option to join by zoom. The Solid Waste Commission supports proposed legislation that will allow 100% of the solid waste tax revenue be used for recycling and solid waste activities including an increase in SCORE funds available to counties. The resolution has been emailed to the State Tax Committee.
F. Community Development Report
Communications Specialist Jessica Welu updated commissioners on the Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail activities. Their first monthly column appeared in 6 of the 7 newspapers it was sent to. This article was about the legislative priorities and the effect on the trail. The Friends have received 2 mini grants from the Parks and Trails Council. One will be used to help clean up along the Lake Wilson segment of the trail and the second will be used for prairie restoration seed collection on the Pipestone segment this fall and planting of the collected seeds the following spring.

Welu has been working with the Explore SW Minnesota Chair and Vice Chair to discuss how to move forward with marketing and redevelopment of the website. The full group met April 6 and setup subcommittees on brand recommendations, website wire-framing and summer marketing plans. Staff will be working with all three subcommittees. Brand surveys have been sent out.

Welu will be working with the Murray County Foundation on website development and training. This contract will be a quick turn around as they would like the work done by May 26, 2022.

Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) asked the SRDC to submit an RFP to conduct a camper satisfaction and demographic survey as well as collecting and analyzing camping expenditures to identify the economic impact of 7 campgrounds in District 5. Five of these campgrounds are in the SRDC region. This work would be completed May thru October 2022.

G. Transportation Report
Development/Transportation Planner Bruce-White updated the commissioners on the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. During the meeting MnDOT District 7 & 8 presented their planned construction projects for this summer and their ATIP projects for FY2023-2027. One of District 7 questions was whether Hwy 59 south of Fulda was a potential “shelf-project” in case funding becomes available. MnDOT answered that although the original project was pushed out of the district’s CHIP years, it will be taken into consideration if the funding becomes available. One of the District 8 questions was how roadway remedies are selected and the difference between the thin overlays that have been done in the past on MN-75 and 30 differ from the one scheduled for 2024 on MN-23. MnDOT stated that projects prioritized getting as many miles of work done as possible, meaning that projects had to cost less to cover more miles.

ATP 8 met via Teams on April 8 and ATP 7 will meet via Teams on June 10. ATPs have officially kicked off their CHIP cycle and MnDOT districts are working on programming for the next five years of projects.

Local Human Services Public Transit Coordination Plan conducted a planning workshop on April 4. During this meeting the group discussed transit issues with Accessibility, Infrastructure, Funding and Workforce issues. Staff is still working on methods to reach out to more transit users to fill out the ridership survey and are working with transit providers to speak with drivers to gain their insight. There is also a shortage of drivers and paid volunteers.
Staff mentioned that Active Transportation Grant applications went live for cities to apply for grants for Active Living Plan updates.

On February 24 staff received a request from EDA for minor updates to the project budget for the Regional Trails Plan. This was submitted for a change in the total project to $208,998 instead of $209,000. The SRDC’s match remains the same. We are awaiting a response from EDA if the application will be funded.

H. Executive Director’s Report
Executive Director Trusty informed the board that the first meeting of the Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board will be on April 20 and will meet with commissioners from the Federal Reserve. The Department of Commerce has requested a meeting with the CERTS group. A few shingles blew off the building in the very windy conditions. Staff will get the shingles patched.

I. Chairman’s Report
Chairman Koets talked about Right of Ways and how a candidate running for congress built his platform on ways to conserve railroad right of ways and how what might seem like a strange idea can be a good idea years later.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS
None

NEW BUSINESS
Staff is working on setting up the SRDC Annual Meeting in July in Marshall. The SRDC Awards Committee will need to be appointed by the Chair at the May Full Commission meeting along with the Nominating Committee for election of officers.

OTHER
Commissioner VanHee updated commissioners on things going on in Redwood County. He stated the old hospital has been sold to a development company to do a 50 unit apartment complex. There is a new housing development in Redwood Falls and a new elementary school being built. The new Justice Center will be replacing the courthouse and the courthouse will be torn down. Hwy 19 bridge will have major work done starting this summer. Dredging of Redwood Lake will take place and the Veteran’s Cemetery is being started.

ANNOUNCEMENTS
Chairman Myron Koets referred Commissioners to the announcements included on the agenda.

SRDC Commissioner vacancies exist from the following representation: Nobles County Municipalities, Pipestone County Townships, and Redwood County Municipalities.
**ADJOURNMENT**
Chairman Koets adjourned the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

M/S/P Motion made by Commissioner Anderson and seconded by Commissioner Welgraven to adjourn the meeting. Upon vote taken: Ayes-12, Nays-0. Motion Carried.

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**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**
Meeting Minutes prepared by Kathy Schreiber, Administrative Specialist.

Reviewed by:                                         Approved by:

Richard Peterson                                      Myron Koets
SRDC Secretary                                         SRDC Chairman
### USDA Rural Development

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>City of Windom</td>
<td>Purchase of Turnout Gear for Fire Dept.</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
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Agenda Item: 7  
Meeting Date: May 12, 2022

Project Name: City of Windom Purchase of Turnout Gear — USDA Rural Development

Project Description:
The City of Windom is seeking funding for the purchase of 32 sets of turnout gear for the fire department.
The city applied to USDA Rural Development for $55,000 to purchase turnout gear that is estimated to cost $110,000.

Staff Comments:

- Staff approves of the City of Windom applying for funds for new turnout gear. Per the National Fire Protection Association, turnout gear should be replaced every ten years and can cost between $1,500 and $3,000 a set to replaced.

Project Review Time: 1 hour

Income to the SRDC as a result of this Review: $0

Reviewer: Rosemary Bruce-White, Development/Transportation Planner
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)


Our new 3-year EDA planning grant was submitted February 11. The grant was submitted for $210,000. EDA investment priorities can be found at [https://eda.gov/about/investment-priorities/](https://eda.gov/about/investment-priorities/). Priorities include Equity, Recovery & Resilience, Workforce Development, Manufacturing, Technology-Based Economic Development, Environmentally-Sustainable Development, and Exports & Foreign Direct Investment.

EDA PLANNING

**Succession Planning/Business Transitions:** DEED held a webinar on April 19 which focused on business transitions. See speaker bios at [https://www.mnceo.org/calendar/plan-for-the-future-of-your-business](https://www.mnceo.org/calendar/plan-for-the-future-of-your-business). SBA recently held a webinar regarding selling your business and succession planning. They provided the following as a resource to participants: [https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/PARTICIPANT_GUIDE_SELLING_SUCESSION PLANNING.pdf](https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/PARTICIPANT_GUIDE_SELLING_SUCESSION PLANNING.pdf). Staff is still trying to coordinate a date with CareerForce and SBDC regarding a business zoom that includes business assistance through CareerForce and Succession Planning.

**Friends in the Field:** Quarterly, economic and community development professionals in Minnesota get together to learn and collaborate. This group will next meet on April 13 and will focus on childcare. The group will next meet on July 13.

**Southwest Minnesota Youth Committee:** The committee meets in February, May, August, and November. This group last met on May 5. This group gathers members that support career and technical education programs and educate students and parents about local career and training opportunities.

**MN Marketing Partnership:** The group last met on March 24. The Minnesota economic development marketing campaign, [https://joinusmn.com/](https://joinusmn.com/), continues to promote Minnesota as the premier location for business startups and expansions. Together with DEED, MMP works to develop initiatives to promote Minnesota and its business economy through marketing campaigns, site selector events, Minnesota familiarization tours, and more. Two takeaways were 1) Legislative: working towards $4.8 M for a MN marketing campaign and 2) Panel with OtterTail Power, Greater River Energy, and Xcel Energy on the topic of Cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency is an unknown industry that is a big user of electricity (often the equivalent to 10,000 homes). They are cooled with lots of fans which create a lot of noise. Often the electric companies are the first to know about these businesses and their interest in locating in a particular area because of their need for power.

**Cultural Diversity Event Sponsorship:** SRDC was one of the sponsors for World Fest, which took place on April 30 at the Red Baron Arena and Expo in Marshall. They estimate that 950 people attended, which far exceeded their expectation. More information will be available on the event at the wrap-up meeting on May 13.

**Enhancing Main Streets:** Staff attended the Rethos Building on Main Street Conference in April on the main street of Faribault. More information on the event can be found at [https://www.rethos.org/events/buildings-on-main-street-conference](https://www.rethos.org/events/buildings-on-main-street-conference). Their main street group has created much excitement. They would like to be known for year-round events, a walkable community, ample parking, and renovated upper-level housing.
EDA Advisory Council: The committee will meet next on May 6 with a focus on new project areas. Most recently SRDC staff made a referral to the EDA Center for assistance with an economic impact analysis for a business expansion in Rock County.

CARES ACT EDA (C-EDA)

Our most recent progress report was submitted April 30. SRDC has requested a 6-month no cost extension. The reason is primarily due to staff changes and vacancies.

SRDC remains available to provide support and technical assistance to businesses and local units of government. Contact staff if you need research completed, maps developed, surveys compiled, grant reviewed, etc.

For a list of state and federal programs (SBA, Unemployment and DEED) for businesses, visit [https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/?id=425890](https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/?id=425890).

EDA Funding Opportunities: There are several grant opportunities still available through the federal EDA. More information can be found at [https://eda.gov/arpa/](https://eda.gov/arpa/). Contact staff with project ideas. Staff can assist with application review, project partner facilitation, regional and local data, etc.

Regional Economic Resiliency Plan: Over the last year, staff have been working on the region’s first Economic Resiliency Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort began with a comprehensive review of available planning documents and available data packages, including local and county Comprehensive Plans, One Watershed One Plan Water Management Plans, Census Bureau Data, USDA Census of Agriculture Data, and much more. This review assisted staff in identifying three overall priority issues impacting economic resiliency. Those issues are: the deficit between employment projects and regional population growth; the mismatch of desired skills and the skills of the available workforce; and the delicate balance between land stewardship and agricultural productivity.

After the initial analysis, staff hosted regional workshops using priority issues as guides for each discussion. Workshop participants included family farming operations, business owners, local government officials, first responders, and economic development professionals. During these workshops, participants talked about the successes and resiliency in their communities. During these efforts, four themes rose as foundations of economic resilience. These themes include the importance of community resilience/social capital, business community diversity, access to adequate and diverse workforce, and the importance of having an inviting community for young professionals to live.

During 2021, resiliency planning shifted from technical analysis of available resources to establishing SRDC’s role in fostering economic resilience for the region. This effort started in the business community with a COVID-19 Business Response survey. SRDC heard from 56 businesses around the region on the resources they were aware of, technical assistance needed, and how the pandemic has impacted their businesses.

The information and input collected in the first phase of the planning process has been used to establish draft goals and objectives to support economic resilience in Southwest Minnesota. The three goals aim to address the three priority issues, and the objectives are intended to support the foundations noted by workshop participants and survey respondents. Each set of objectives includes opportunities to build upon SRDC’s capacity to support each overall goal.

During the Board Retreat, the SRDC Board of Directors assisted staff with the prioritization and assessment of draft strategies. Strategies noted by the Board to have the most impact per SRDC resources were prioritized. Action steps were then determined for the next 18 months.

The plan has been updated to include the impacts of COVID-19, and stakeholder input process.
RLF COMMITTEE

The committee consists of five members and meets as needed. The committee covers both the COVID-19 RLF and Traditional RLF. The committee last met on April 27. This was the first in-person in quite some time. This committee meeting discussed committee directions regarding interest rates, life insurance as collateral, loans with balloons, reporting, etc.

RLF PLANS AND FLEXIBILITIES

EDA provided flexibilities to recipients of EDA-funded Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) awards in light of the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, the increasing demand for RLF loans, and the need for RLFs to provide credit quickly and efficiently to their communities. These flexibilities, discussed further below, continue to be available under our Traditional RLF through June 30, 2022:

• Establish a minimum interest rate for RLF loans (13 CFR 307.15(b)(1))
• Require RLF loans to leverage additional capital (13 CFR 307.15(c))
• Require evidence demonstrating credit is not otherwise available (13 CFR 307.11(a)(1)(ii)(H))

Application and Checklists: The Application (fillable — same application for both RLF programs) and Requirements Checklist for both SRDC RLF and COVID-19 RLF are online and can be found at http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/revolving-loan-funds/.

COVID-19 RLF (C-RLF)

Funds Available: Funds on hand, uncommitted, are in the approximate amount of $103,000.

Original funds available to SRDC were $1.48 million. We have closed on 100% of our original funds with 26 C-RLF loans thus far.

TRADITIONAL RLF

Funds Available: Funds on hand, uncommitted, are in the approximate amount of $135,000. The committee has approved but has not yet closed on three loans, totaling $225,000.

RLF SUCCESS STORIES

To promote RLF programs, success stories can now be found at http://www.swrdc.org/economic-development/revolving-loan-funds/rlf-business-spotlights/.

CDFA INTRO TO RLF LENDING

Staff presented on March 28 during two sessions: 1) RLF Management in partnership with Lori Finnesand from Grow SD, and 2) Marketing your RLF Program.
**Contracted RLFs**

Staff continues to assist inquiries made regarding business start-ups, retentions, and expansions and financing. Staff assists with three additional revolving loan fund programs within the region.

1. **Jackson County RLF:** JCRLF now has four active loans. An application in the amount of $100,000 was approved by the committee and county commissioners and will close spring 2022. There are still funds available for businesses in Jackson County with gap financing needs.

2. **Heron Lake RLF:** HLRLF now has three active loans. HLRLF focuses on economic development within a 20-mile radius of Heron Lake. These are Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. SRDC continues to assist them with GMS entry and amortization schedules as requested. One loan application in the amount of $50,000 has been approved and now under further consideration. One loan is in default and another loan has their business up for sale. The committee will next meet on May 3 to consider a loan application for a business acquisition.

3. **Falcon Development Corporation (FDC):** Information on FDC can be found online at [http://www.swrhc.org/economic-development/falcon-development-corporation/](http://www.swrhc.org/economic-development/falcon-development-corporation/). FDC focuses on economic development improvements within a 30-mile radius of Heron Lake. These funds are de-federalized; therefore, Davis Bacon does not apply to construction projects. Approximately $100,000 is available for lending. The committee will next meet on May 3 to consider a loan application for a business acquisition. There is room on the FDC board for one additional member. Interest rates can now be as low as 2.44%, or 75% of prime.

**PROPERTY ASSESSED CLEAN ENERGY (PACE)**

**Funds Available:** Funds are currently available in the approximate amount of $63,000 (PACE ARRA Funds) and $267,000 (PACE SEP Funds). Thirty-two loans have now closed with our latest loan closing with a business in Windom in the amount of $80,000 for spray foam insulation and a pallet burner. Please help spread the word about PACE to property owners looking to make improvements that lower their energy usage.

**PACE Committee:** The committee meets as needed or in conjunction with the RMEB. Committee members are Metz, Wildermuth, Wachal, VanDeVere and Paap. The committee last met on April 27. The committee lowered the interest rate to as low as 3% effectively immediately.

**General Information:** PACE is available to property owners of small businesses, including agri-businesses and some non-profits based on usage.

**Energy Audits:** Energy assessments/audits are informational to property owners and may be the start to cost saving energy improvements. Contractor estimates and the energy assessment/audit are the two first steps to PACE financing. Energy assessments/audits are often free and there is no obligation to submit a PACE application for financing.

The PACE application and brochure can be found at [http://rmeb.org/pace.htm](http://rmeb.org/pace.htm).

If you have groups in your area that would benefit from hearing about PACE, please contact Robin.

*If you have questions about the RLF, PACE, or about energy audits, please contact Robin Weis, Deputy Director, at 507-836-1638 or via email at robin@swrhc.org.*
ENERGY

Rural Minnesota Energy Board (RMEB): The RMEB had a special meeting with commissioners from the PUC and representatives from Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) on April 29. Presenters and audience members discussed the issue of transmission constraints, curtailment, loss of production tax revenue, and what is being done to solve the issues. The next regularly scheduled meeting is for May 23.

Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs): Staff assisted World Mart with a feasibility study grant with the RSDP to have a student research options for making the bus more energy efficient, including looking at the option of solar.

CERTs is currently updating their 5-year plan. Staff participated in the first of several sessions to give feedback for the update.

Land Use, Planning & Zoning

City of Pipestone Comprehensive Plan Update: Staff sent city officials a list of issues impacting Pipestone and their corresponding goals. The Pipestone City Council voted on a resolution to accept the recommended changes to the Comprehensive Plan Update.

City of Tracy Comprehensive Plan Update: Staff concluded focus groups and has presented recommended goals for the City of Tracy. The recommended goals were positively received by the City’s Planning Commission and currently the City and its departments have reviewed and provided input to the goals as well.

Solid Waste & Natural Resources

Solid Waste Commission: The Solid Waste Commission met March 28. During the meeting it was noted that the House Tax Committee was meeting the next day and planned to discuss HF2367. This proposed legislation will allow for 100% of Solid Waste revenues to be used for Solid Waste activities alone, including an increase in SCORE funds available to counties. SRDC staff emailed the committee the SWCOM resolution supporting HF2367 (passed during the January 2021 meeting) to the Tax Committee.
LOCAL ASSISTANCE

Friends of the Casey Jones State Trail: The Friends last met on April 28. The Earth Day event planned for April 23 was rescheduled to May 21 due to high wind. DNR provided an update on planned rehabilitation of the Currie Loop. Construction is still planned for this year. Funding for expansion to the trail is still included in the bonding bill. The Friends is gathering letters/resolutions of support for the future development and maintenance of the trail to its completion. Sample letters/resolutions are available at [https://www.caseyjonestrail.org/friends-of-the-casey-jones-trail-association.html](https://www.caseyjonestrail.org/friends-of-the-casey-jones-trail-association.html).

Staff recently assisted the Friends with the development of a funding success story for Environmental & Natural Resources Trust Fund awards for DNR state trail development projects. The stories will be shared with LCCMR members. Since 2007, the Casey Jones State Trail has received $2,740,000 from this funding, which is nearly half of all funding received for the trail’s development.

The Friends will next meet May 19 at 11:30am in Slayton (zoom available). A discussion of a trail link between Luverne and Pipestone is being planned for the May meeting. Their Annual Meeting is being planned for June 16 in Walnut Grove.

Explore SW Minnesota: Staff met with the Brand Committee on April 27 to discuss survey results, review sample logos, and make recommendations on brand elements. Staff met with the Website Committee on May 4 to review recommendations for a new website organizational structure and a draft homepage and main page wireframes. Work will continue on logo and tagline development and website development. Brand and Website Committees will meet again in May and will make recommendations at the next regular Explore SW Minnesota meeting on June 1 at 2pm at the SRDC office.

Staff is also working with Explore SW social media. Staff developed a shareable social media calendar and content folders. Beginning in May, social media goals are to share a minimum of one original post per county plus three original regional posts per month.

Website Assistance: SRDC received a request from the Murray County Foundation to assist with website development and training. Staff has begun building the foundation’s website, with work planned for completion by the end of May. Staff will provide website management training to foundation members on May 31.

Economic Impact and User Survey Assistance: SRDC has been awarded a project with the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) to conduct a camper satisfaction and demographic survey as well as collecting and analyzing camping expenditures to identify the economic impact of 7 campgrounds. Five of these campgrounds are within the SRDC region. This work will be completed May-October 2022.

COMMUNITY PLANNING & ACTIVITIES

MADO Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Group: The group last met May 4. The group also discussed how we define equity as it relates to MADO and our work as economic developers.

RSDP Resilient Communities Workgroup: The workgroup met April 22. Guest speakers presented on a multi-language journalism course project in Willmar which was funded by RSDP.
SRDC COMMUNICATIONS

**Newsletter:** The next issue will be mid-June. If there is information that you would like shared in the SRDC newsletter, please reach out to staff. An archive of SRDC newsletters can be found at: [http://www.swrdc.org/category/newsletter-archive/](http://www.swrdc.org/category/newsletter-archive/).

**Website Redesign:** Staff has started working on recommendations for a redesign of the SRDC website. This work is an item in the FY 2023 budget.

**Communications Plan:** Work continues on implementation of the plan goals and strategies.

*If you have questions about the Communications Report, please contact Jessica Welu, Communications Specialist, at 507-836-1644 or via email at jessicaw@swrdc.org.*
TRANSPORTATION REPORT
May 2022
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE | ATPs | TRANSPORTATION PLANNING | ACTIVE LIVING & SRTS

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)
Staff will be reaching out to TAC members regarding their availability for the annual SRDC TAC meeting. During this meeting, county/city engineers, city admin and other transportation professionals from the region are invited to discuss current transportation projects, issues, and provide feedback to state planning efforts.

AREAS TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIPS (ATP)

ATP 7: MnDOT D7 ATP 7 will meet June 10 via Microsoft Teams.

ATP 8: MnDOT D8 ATP 8 met April 8 via Microsoft Teams.

ATPs have officially kicked off their CHIP cycle and MnDOT districts are working on programming (scheduling and acquiring funds for) the next five years of projects. Local opportunities such as the TAP, Local HSIP, MnDOT HSIP, and some local rail safety projects are part of the CHIP cycle and are used to select projects for the next programmable year (2026).

Stay updated on MnDOT road projects, construction progress, and detours at http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadwork/. The South-Central District (District 7) includes Cottonwood, Jackson, Nobles, and Rock Counties. The Southwest District (District 8) includes Pipestone, Murray, Lincoln, Lyon, and Redwood Counties.

SRDC is available to assist in navigating and disseminating information as needed.

MnDOT offices are opening back up to the public for future meetings this summer. Remember to check with individual district offices and their policies before attending any meeting in-person.

JOINT SMTP-MNSHIP EQUITY WORK GROUP

Staff accepted an invitation to serve on the Joint Statewide Multi-Model Transportation Plan (SMTP)-Statewide Highway Improve Plan (SHIP) Equity Work Group. The work group will advise MnDOT on how to use its plans and investments to advance equity throughout Minnesota. SRDC staff, along with other volunteers, co-authored the equity review that will be used for all strategies in the SMTP.

LOCAL HUMAN SERVICES TRANSIT COORDINATION PLAN

Staff, in coordination with the Southwest Minnesota Rural Transit Coordination Council, conducted a planning workshop on April 4. During this meeting the group discussed transit issues with Accessibility, Infrastructure, Funding and Workforce issues. Staff is still working on methods to reach out to more transit users to fill out the ridership survey and is working with transit providers to speak with drivers and to gain their insight.

Transportation Planning

Local Assistance to Fulda: Staff have been working with a newly formed trails group in Fulda to leverage their current planning documents for future infrastructure funds/projects. The group met with the previous SRTS committee on April 26 and May 10 to gauge interest in reigniting active transportation efforts in Fulda.
Portable Counter Borrowing Program: MnDOT has portable counters that are freely available to partner agencies such as cities, counties, MPOs, RDCs, and active transportation advocacy groups. These counters help collect important pedestrian traffic data that can be used to plan projects, apply for funding, and much more. Counters are available through each MnDOT District Office and can be reserved online. More information can be found at https://www.dot.state.mn.us/bike-ped-counting/borrow.html.

Minnesota Transportation Planners Conference: The MADO Transportation Planners will be meeting May 20. This was scheduled to follow the Minnesota Transportation Planner Conference to allow for staff to discuss and reflect on the content covered at the conference. Other topics that will be covered during this meeting include MnSHIP updates, MnDOT’s equity statement and commitment to equity, and the Statewide Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Plan.

Quarterly Transportation Planners Meeting: Transportation Planners from across MADO (and MnDOT districts not represented by an RDO) will meet virtually March 2022.

ACTIVE LIVING & SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS)

Safe Routes to School (SRTS): The final SRTS meeting for Adrian took place on April 20. The final draft of the plan is under review. After July 1, work will begin on the Tracy planning grant.

REGIONAL TRAILS PLANNING

Staff submitted the revised regional trails plan application on October 22. Staff received a letter from EDA in December notifying us that the application has been reviewed and selected for further consideration. On February 24, staff received a request from EDA for minor updates to the project budget. Staff submitted the updated budget for a change in total project cost from $209,000 to $208,998 with SRDC’s match remaining the same.

On April 26 SRDC received notice that the EDA approved our grant. They will fund $167,198 (80%) of the $208,998 project.