

# EAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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EMCOG Full Council Meeting

**Friday, September 9, 2016**

Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC)

200 East Broadway

Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

## Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Moffit.

Roll was called and a quorum was present.

The Council was welcomed to Isabella County and the Middle Michigan Development Corporation (MMDC) by Kathy Methner (MMDC) and Jim McBryde (MMDC). The following guests were welcomed by the Council to our September meeting: James (Jim) McBryde, Donald Schurr and the new Arenac County EDC representative Lisa Barna.

### **Review and approval of agenda**

Moved by Dworzecki, seconded by O'Farrell to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

### **Approval of July 8, 2016 Full Council minutes**

Moved by O'Farrell, seconded by Dworzecki to approve the July 8, 2016 Full Council minutes as mailed. Motion carried.

### **Chairman's Report**

The Chair reported that he would defer his report on local activities until later in the agenda but he did note that the City has a new Mayor.

### **Director's Report**

The Director's report was previously mailed however she did note that all that write or manage grants should be aware that in addition to the Grants.gov system, there is also now a Grants-on-line management system. US Department of Commerce/EDA is now utilizing the Grants on Line system which was extremely

lengthy and difficult. It took over 6 months for the Region to finally receive approval on our 2016-2019 Partnership Planning Grant because of this new system.

**Treasurer's Report** – presented by Zygmunt Dworzecki

Moved by Moffit, seconded by Methner to receive and file the treasurers' report.

#### **Transportation Staff report – Transit**

In Dave Engelhardt's absence, Jane Fitzpatrick reported that we will be receiving funding to do Phase 3 of the Regional Transit Mobility Study. We have received the final draft plan from MDOT and the consultant. Phase 2 (the Plans) was done on a Prosperity Region basis but Phase 3 is now being asked to be done on a 14-county region basis. She provided background:

- ❖ Phase 1 the initial assessment was based on the 14 county RPA boundaries.
- ❖ Phase 2, which was to have workshops with transit and other people to develop a strategy and Plan, was based on the 8 county Prosperity Region boundaries.
- ❖ Phase 3, which is to pull everybody together and decide whether we want to move forward with a transit strategy is being requested on a 14-county level which will include 3 different transit plans.
- ❖ Dave will be organizing meetings; probably 3 different meetings. One in the Thumb area, one which would encompass the 3 northern counties and then a larger one for the 14 counties. The first two are possible in September with October for the third but that could change.

We likely will wait until October because STARS (Saginaw County) has commissioned the Ezekiel Project to do an outreach assessment of need for a possible county wide system. That is supposed to be done at the end of this month so we want that information at that meeting in October. It's strictly to go over the strategies and find out if there's a will to move forward with implementing a strategy for our Region.

Discussion followed.

#### **Hazard Mitigation Staff Report** – Bill Ernat

Bill reported the following:

- ❖ Roscommon Grant for Hazard Mitigation was a 5-county grant. We've heard from MSP that their Hazard Mitigation Emergency Management staff has approved all 5 plans.
- ❖ FEMA has been advised the plans are available on our website. They have also approved Clare and we are awaiting word on approval of the remaining four. The grant expires at the end of the month.
- ❖ Plans are being presented to the county boards, as quickly as possible - should be in in the next two weeks. FEMA technically doesn't approve a Plan until the County Board approves it. But the County Board usually doesn't approve it until FEMA gives their ok. It's a bit of a Catch 22 situation.
- ❖ Clare's Plan was approved August 5<sup>th</sup> by FEMA. The City of Clare also approved it so they will be eligible now for FEMA funding.
- ❖ Word was received yesterday that Roscommon needs to provide a few small modifications if they want public communities to eligible for FEMA funds. They have been advised and we will get the changes in to them today.
- ❖ Sanilac's application, which was submitted last year, should be approved soon. FEMA requested additional information at the end of last month which we have provided. For some reason the file that they had was corrupted which required the resending of budget documentation as well as clarification of the matching funds. This information has now been provided to them and we

are simply waiting for that grant to be sent. Gratiot's application was approved this year but will not be touched until next year.

**The Community Wildfire Protection Plan for Roscommon** was approved by both the DNR and the County Board of Commissioners last month. This grant also expired this month. A final payment request was submitted two weeks ago.

**Iron Belle Trail** – As part of an approved MDEQ grant, EMCOG is working with the four Counties of Arenac, Bay, Saginaw and Tuscola on the siting of the Iron Bell Trail within those counties. We now have contact people for the four counties. We hopefully will have about a 6 mile stretch in the middle of Arenac County that the Saginaw Midland Municipal Water Corporation has agreed to lease the property. In the southern part of Arenac and the northern part of Bay, there is a 20 mile stretch that we're working on with Consumers Energy. Significant progress is being made.

In the other three counties, we are working on making the correct connections to determine the way forward in those areas.

In the next contract period – beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> – we will be working on obtaining grant funding to continue moving the project further along.

Discussion followed.

**RPI** – Jane Fitzpatrick

Jane reported we are anticipating the same grant application package for 2017. The application is anticipated out by October 1<sup>st</sup> and likely will be due November 30<sup>th</sup>. In the summer, we sent out requests for letters of support for the 2017 application.

She thanked everyone that had sent in a letter and stated that if we had missed anyone, and if they are in the Prosperity Region, please let us know, we would love to send you the template for a letter. We will be discussing this month what we are going to include in that application for projects. We are strongly considering a Mini-grant category for this round of funding. This approach can build upon other projects that we have been doing or can stand alone.

**Other areas of note:**

- ❖ Jane will be pulling our Centers of Excellence committee back together after October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ❖ We're anticipate that our Talent Assessment Study will be done by the end of the quarter. This will piggy back onto the project that the MEDC Collaborative is doing with Great Lakes Bay Regional Alliance's Business Attraction Plan.
- ❖ For our current year, we have a tiny amount of discretionary money - only \$15,000.00, but the Strategic Management Team consensus at our last meeting that this money will be tagged onto the results of the Business Attraction Plan to put together a description of the 8 counties on why we live here, why we work here, why we have a business here. We are waiting for the results of the Silverlode Study which is due by the end of this month.

**CEDS** – Jane has received an e-mail from EDA which piggy-backs to what Sue's been saying. We submitted our new CEDS document on January 31, 2016, and it has not been approved yet. I've been reporting since May it's in line for review. This morning we have heard that it is in line for review.

We need to know the status of the document before we come up to our 30-day public comment on updates, which will be in December. EDA advises that they have been busy working on other things.

She reported that we are not having a RED Team meeting in November as she will be on vacation. A progress report on the CEDS will be prepared for your review and we'll have a meeting in January before we send in our progress report. If there are any issues with our CEDS that we know by then you'll be getting a revised CEDS then too. This can all be done electronically.

**A. NEW OR Unfinished Business (All action items)**

The Executive Committee recommends Full Council consideration of the following recommendations – Chairperson Moffit:

**2017 Work Program and Budget:**

The Director reported:

- ❖ This is basically the same work program and budget as we have had in the past 3-4 years. It includes several MDOT projects as well as anticipated RPI revenue at an unknown level. There are no big surprises anywhere.

**Highlights:**

- ❖ Dues will remain the same.
- ❖ We will receive 2017 MDEQ Iron Belle funding
- ❖ Our Asset Management program was refunded and we were advised that there will likely be a revisit of the overall Asset Management budget for the RPAs at the state level. We could receive additional money but with that will come additional responsibilities.
- ❖ The Department is also going to move heavily into local roads by having local Road Commissions use Road Soft more extensively in their Asset Management reporting. For those of you who work at the agency level this likely seems boring but it is a big deal.
- ❖ In terms of reporting conditions of roads, Lynne rates roads throughout the Region using PASER and determines their condition. This information is then given to MDOT and from that appropriations are determined. Going forward, requirements are going to get considerably more stringent for your local units of government
- ❖ There is going to be a big push by MDOT for local units of government to do Asset Management Plans locally not just at the county level. It does provide flexibility in terms of use of the money. Don Schurr questioned how local is local? Lynne advised that this is Cities, townships and villages. Additional information was requested for local requirements which Lynne will obtain if possible. Asset Management is a national project not just Michigan.

Motion by C/O'Farrell, seconded by C/Dworzecki, to approve the proposed 2017 budget and work program. The Chair also reported that the Executive Committee looked long and hard at staff increases for 2017. Staff increases were in the range of 2.5% with the Director taking less. Motion carried.

**2016 Final Revised Budget:**

Motion by Dworzecki, seconded by O'Farrell to authorize the Executive Committee to review and approve the final 2016 budget revision by 9/30/16. Motion carried.

**2017 RPI Application Resolution:**

Motion by C/Byard, seconded by C/Dworzecki, to approve EMCOG Resolution 17-1 in support of the 2017 PR-5 Regional Prosperity Initiative application. Roll Call vote. Motion carried.

**2017 RPI Application cover letter:**

Motion by Dworzecki, seconded by Byard to authorize the Chairperson, Robert L. Moffit and Executive Director Sue Fortune to sign and submit the cover letter transmitting the 2017 PR-5 RPI application to the State of Michigan when due. Motion carried.

**2016 RLF Plan Certification:**

Motion by Dworzecki, seconded by Byard, to authorize Chairman's signature and submission to USDOC/EDA. Motion carried. Kathy do we use yes

**MICHIGAN FEDERAL PROJECT REVIEW**

Motion by C/Dworzecki, seconded by C/O'Farrell to approve project reviews for member projects thus authorizing their submission to the applicants and granting agencies and to acknowledge and assign numbers for the non-member applications. Motion carried.

**Council member reports:**

Tracy Byard (Clare County): In the process of finishing up 2017 budget and dealing with Emergency Management and MSU extension issues, cuts and appeal. They have signed a contract for 50% match for crack sealing of the airport runway – cost \$7,044. Also, in the final stages of completion of a \$1.5 M bond for county courthouse renovations; energy savings will pay off the bonds.

Jim McBryde (MMDC): The Hops summit held last spring was a success. MMDC then partnered with Saginaw Chippewa Tribe on a USDA grant. The tribe is the primary applicant with MMCC and MMDC as secondary for the feasibility study. This is also one of the four (4) identified Centers of Excellence in the RPI Economic Development Strategy as well as the CEDS. It hoped that local support for a Hops processing facility for drying and pelletizing can be found. Study is also underway on custom Ag equipment to be used for custom seed sorting of popcorn. There are many new Ag processing opportunities because there is a fair amount of craft brewing going on in the area. The lowest hanging fruit identified from the Silverlode Consulting study is agriculture processing. (NOTE: Silverlode Consulting was hired by GLBRA to do the RPI-5 Business Attraction Plan. The whole region is suffering from lack of workers).

Kathy Methner (MMDC): Currently working on a road project with Clare to enhance the north exit in Clare; can use Small Urban and Category A grants from MDOT (one is fed, one is state).

Zygy (Tuscola County): A manufacturing company is coming into the area and there will be jobs; Caro City airport lost their ratings resulting in downgrading; A Phase 2 windfarm proposed for Elmer Township did not pass – they will retry next May. The Food Incubator kitchen approval is pending and a 2nd location for a kitchen in Cass City is being considered.

Jay O'Farrell (Iosco): The County is currently experiencing a lot of growth, building permits are up: Iosco County Airport (north of East Tawas) has historically been used for equipment storage. The landlord has announced that they need to move out. The county received a 70/30 grant to build their own county-owned building. Received one bid for \$180K on a \$100K project. Also, in the process of locking down their courthouse because of the potential for domestic terrorism. A new camera system has been

installed; will only have 1 entrance into the building and additional deputies will be hired to monitor the area.

Arenac Co: Brenda reported that Arenac County now has a new EDC director – Lisa Barna (present today) and is also working on the broadband initiative.

Brian Smith (Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe): The new hotel in Arenac County (Saganing District) will have its own sub-station. A new roof is also being placed on the Mt Pleasant casino and hotel next year; then some exterior work will be done on the casino over the next 3 years. The Tribe is also looking for an economic development analyst: someone who likes to crunch numbers. The job is posted on their website.

Kacey Zehner (Greater Gratiot Development): Gratiot County is doing their county-wide master plan update process; doing the land use phase for all local governments. All cities in the county now have their own farmer's markets; there is a quilt trail, over 50 on barns and businesses and homes with 35 on the waiting list. Oct 15th - open house tour.

Don Schurr (Greater Gratiot Development): expansions going on in every community in the county. Agri-industry will be receiving the most attention from MDARD this year.

Mandy Chasey (Ogemaw County EDC): Will be holding once a month customer service workshops with the economic outlook on Oct 19<sup>th</sup>. This will focus on site selection.

Rosalie (Roscommon County EDC). The County's second economic outlook forum will be on Trails and will be held September 30th; an upcoming Pure MI Business Connect will be hosted in Houghton Lake. Business Focus magazine (Halifax) highlights four counties per year in Michigan. Rosalie has just been advised that they are doing an article on Roscommon County.

#### Public Comment Period

No one wish to be heard.

Adjournment at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Lynne*