



Leslie Messer, Executive Director

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A Non-Profit Countywide Economic Development Corp

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# Full Board Meeting Minutes

January 11th, 2023

Pella Lutheran Church

Leif Anderson brought the meeting to order at 6:43 AM. Board members present were: Leif Anderson, Craig Averett, Jason Brothen, Dave Garland, Chip Gifford, Shane Gorder, Walt McNutt, Rick Norby, Randy Olson, Vanessa Pooch, Mark Rehbein, Gary Schoepp, Alan Seigfreid, Morgan Taylor, and Leslie Messer. Members absent were; Jen Doty, Bill Henderson, and Blaine Rogers.

**Approval of Minutes:** Randy motioned to approve the minutes. Jason seconded. Approved.

**Financial Reports:** Leslie presented the financials for the year to date. The memberships are coming in, and Leslie is meeting with the renewing members as she delivers plaques. Gary moved to approve the financials. Cami seconded. Approved.

**Confidentiality docs signed:** Leslie passed out the new year's documents for all board members to sign. Leslie also welcomed Mayor Rick Norby as the City's rep on our board. She also informed the board that we updated all the signature cards at the financial institutions with some directors stepping off.

**Monthly happenings:**

- Leslie reported that she attended a town hall meeting with several community members and the Tourism folks from MT Dept of Commerce. There is a focused push to get additional grant funds into eastern Montana for tourism projects.
- Leslie created a year end demographics document as a report of the activities that REDC accomplished in 2022. She is also using this as supporting information to recruit new members.
- Based on the energetic discussion with the executive board, Leslie researched what other EDC's were using as data for projections and future trends. She contacted Williston, Great Falls, Colstrip, and Havre. The best system ESRI is incredible and comes with a price tag of \$1,100 per year. Jason stated that his coop has the system, so he will check to see if we can use their license. There was deep discussion about the possibilities of having this information, which is current, and possibly sharing a license with other EDC's.
- Leslie registered with the Commission of Political Practices as a lobbyist. There are 4,400 bills in the hopper. Leslie supported one bill HB-188, to extend the funding and sunset date of the Coal Trust. Leslie said she visited both the City and the County about potential bills they were watching as well.
- Leslie mentioned the Facebook posts of honoring outgoing members and RLF award
- Cami and Leslie participated in a call with Gillette Vaira from Rebel River Creative, to discuss a marketing proposal and strategy.

**Office environment:** Leif recapped the illness of Corinne. She had gone to the walk-in clinic, and the Dr discovered that she had a fungus in her nostril, and it may be from mold exposure. Leif contacted Bryan McDowell from Restorx and had him stop by our office to investigate. Bryan found red flag areas that could be issues, and he recommended that we hire a certified company, Industrial Hygiene, to come and test the office. Leif discussed the topic with Corey Wheeler, our landlord, and he was supportive and concerned. IH came and conducted the testing, lo and behold, we do have a mold issue at the office. Air samples showing mold were detected in our office spaces. Corey said that he will be moving forward on a remediation plan and hire a contractor. Leif wanted a timeline so that we could hire an assistant. Corey stated that the contractors all are busy and slammed, so it could be a while. Craig A stated that his building has some office spaces open that Leslie could look at. Chip stated that we should move out of the office for health reasons, so this is the time to look at other options.

**Updated Richland County information:** Leslie improved the location guide information from its 13-page format to a condensed 4-page format. The executive board fully approved.

**County report:** Shane is keeping an eye on legislation affecting the county. He will be traveling to Helena for the MACO conference in mid-February. The county requested qualifications for engineering companies for three years, and Interstate Engineering won the bid. The Thiel subdivision group is deciding whether to have the county assist them dig a well. Which means they would have to vote to increase their taxes. The county is also seeking firms for planning services, and they will be interviewing those soon.

**City report:** Mayor Norby reported that the city crews are still battling snow removal. The city will be watching the legislature, and the League keeps them informed. The League will also be meeting in mid-February as well. The mayor would like to see additional regulations for marijuana sales within the city limits. A public hearing was held for N & S Meadow and the flooding issues there. There will also be an increase in the water rates to replace the water tower.

**Open discussion:**

- Walt stated to keep an eye out for bills that state “generally revise”... as it’s too broad
- Dave reported that the Sidney Sugars’ slice wrapped up. The tonnage was down, and the sugar content was down as well. The company lost money this year. The growers received a letter that they must consider regarding the 2023 crop, with a deadline of Feb 1. Sugar prices are up which helps.
- Jason reported that the PSC approved the first 200 MW power plant expansion in ND since 1984 and Basin Electric will build it, with many more projects to come.

**Adjourned at 8:00 AM**

**Next Executive Board Meeting:** Wednesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Next Full Board Meeting:** Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023