



**MEETING MINUTES**  
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**JUNE 20 & JUNE 29, 2022**

**DATE APPROVED: JULY 18, 2022**

Darek Vetsch, President  
Christine Husom, Vice-President  
Mark Daleiden  
Mary Wetter  
Michael Kaczmarek  
Phil Kern  
Josh Gehlen

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**Members Present:** Darek Vetsch, Christine Husom, Mark Daleiden, Mary Wetter, Mike Kaczmarek, Josh Gehlen, and Phil Kern

**Others Present:** Clay Wilfahrt, Elizabeth Karels, Andi Gayner, Greg Kryzer, Erin Walsh, David Kelly, Jolene Foss (Remote)

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EDA President Darek Vetsch called the meeting to continue at 8:30 a.m.

**\*IV. EDA Bylaws**

Assistant County Administrator Clay Wilfahrt said this item was requested by Commissioner Michael Kaczmarek to discuss the current Economic Development Authority (EDA) members and the number of them that were appointed from different municipalities. Wilfahrt wanted to discuss the lack of specifications addressing the geographic area that EDA board members represented or where they resided. Kaczmarek asked how the EDA board members were selected and where the number of members had come from. Vetsch said that, statutorily, in order to create an EDA board, there must be a Steering Committee from across the county that would make recommendations on the makeup of the board. The Steering Committee went to the board with the recommendation for creating the EDA board with seven or more members. The board wanted to keep the five county commissioners on the EDA and followed the recommendations of the Steering Committee by adding two members.

Kaczmarek said that, when the EDA started, it was in part to look at what to do with the old Government Center and Human Services Center. He said that since than other initiatives had come forward, such as loan programs, TIFs, and tax abatements, that had brought into the picture specific municipalities. When those projects came before the EDA for a vote there would potentially be uneven representation because of the where the members of the board resided. Kaczmarek said if the vote involved a project in Delano there would automatically be two votes for Delano as there were two members of the EDA board who resided in Delano. He said in District 5 there were four cities with no representation and the one city, Delano, with two members. He recommended the board amend the bylaws to give each municipality one representative maximum. Kaczmarek said another issue was the recent redistricting where the board had two commissioners representing one city, creating an unfair advantage. Commissioner Mary Wetter noted that she was against the redistricting but was outvoted.

EDA President Darek Vetsch said if there were five members from the same municipality, he might agree with Kaczmarek that this could pose an issue. Vetsch said with seven members it would be difficult to find members who did not live in the same municipality. In addition, when looking for EDA board members the board would most likely get applicants from larger cities. The idea would be to not ignore good candidates simply because they were from the same city. He also said because there were seven members, having two votes of seven was not the same as two votes of five. EDA Vice President Christine Husom said the board was looking for the most qualified candidates and she represented three cities and five townships with no other representation which was the same situation the other three commissioners have. She said the EDA could have looked further, but the goal was to do right by the county and, as in her case, she was the lone representative for District 1. She said Districts 2, 3 and 4 also only had one representative. Husom said the board could have done more of a search but chose to go with what was best for the county. Daleiden said there were only two applicants last time the position was posted, and the board had interviewed and selected the best candidate. Kaczmarek

said since the original application process there were more initiatives that had come forward with different cities involved in EDA projects so it would be a good time to revisit the board makeup. EDA Board Member Phil Kern said when the EDA was set up to guide the redevelopment of county-owned properties, partner with local communities, and come up with opportunities for the county to help support efforts to achieve projects and broader initiatives. Kern said the EDA also wanted to access state and federal resources to help assist with development. Kern said the scope of what the EDA could accomplish or discuss was not expressly conveyed when the EDA was set up. The EDA could add different restrictions into the bylaws regarding who the EDA wanted to appoint. However, Kern felt the EDA had the ability to select the best candidate and adding too many restrictions in the bylaws could be detrimental. Wright County Economic Development Partnership (WCEDP) President Jolene Foss noted that Kern represented the WCEDP which in turn represented all 16 cities. Foss said she felt the board member post should remain held by a board member for the WCEDP. Vetsch said he did not believe more restrictions would be appropriate. He said it was the makeup of the board that would vote on the appointment.

Kaczmarek said Wetter was more affected by the extra representation of a city that caused redistricting and asked if she had any comments. Wetter said she was against that vote because previously three county commissioners resided in Buffalo. She noted that while some thought Buffalo received more representation, she had no problem with it herself. She said the multiple representation had been done in the past and other counties found themselves in a similar situation. She said the difference between districts was still within the 10 percent difference. She said there was no way to know which city would be larger in the future. Husom said one of the main considerations was the population difference of 4,000 residents between Districts 3 and 4. By redistricting, the board was able to adjust the represented population by 1,800 residents. Wetter said that at the time of this vote it was not looked at.

Vetsch said he was concerned about going down a rabbit hole regarding what constituted representation. He said the nuances were too complex and thought it appropriate to deal with the appointments as they came up. Kaczmarek said he thought the timing was right to bring up the discussion to address concerns from his constituents. He wanted to be on the record for questioning the EDA member make up and representation.

Kaczmarek thought the WCEDP should be designated as a commissioner as there would always be a commissioner on the WCEDP and the EDA. He said he wanted the WCEDP to come to the EDA to request project partnerships and not rely on the EDA members who were also a part of the WCEDP to do it. Vetsch said this had already been addressed and if it came up in the next five years the EDA could revisit it. Vetsch said there was no guaranteed seat for the WCEDP on the EDA board per the bylaws. Kaczmarek said that the EDA board seat was a six-year guaranteed seat. Vetsch said that was the statutory rule that the EDA or County Board cannot change. Commissioner Mark Daleiden said that Kaczmarek could tell District 5 that there were three commissioners who were on the EDA board from their District. Kaczmarek said that there would not be any other city in District 5 with three votes, which seemed unfair. Daleiden said that no city in the county would have three votes, not just District 5. EDA Board Member Josh Gehlen said he was not selected to represent Delano, he just resides in Delano. He said his qualifications would not differ if he lived in Buffalo, Monticello, or anywhere else. Gehlen said he went through the application process and appreciated everyone having confidence in his abilities. He believed that he was on the board to represent Wright County, not Delano. He said his approach was what he believed would be best for the county and taxpayers as a whole.

#### **\*V. Central MN Manufacturing Month**

Vetsch said the Central MN Manufacturing month is coming in October. Last year the board visited TylöHelo, a sauna manufacturing company in Cokato. Vetsch asked the board if it would be appropriate to do another tour of a manufacturing plant in the county. Vetsch said it would be good to visit Landscape Structures in Delano and Daleiden agreed. Kaczmarek asked if a visit would substitute for a meeting. Vetsch said the board worked with the company for a time and date and it was a posted gathering, not a meeting. Daleiden thought it was advantageous to tour the sites. Foss recommended also touring Craft Pattern and Mold located in Montrose. Vetsch said he would work on the timing of the visit and see which companies would work best. Husom asked if the board could visit two manufacturing plants. Vetsch said the possibility of visiting two would be considered. Project Administrator Elizabeth Karels asked if the board wanted October declared Minnesota Manufacturing Month. Vetsch said yes and requested a resolution be drawn up and presented at the following meeting to designate October as Central Minnesota Manufacturing Month.

#### **\*VI. Human Services Center Update**

Karels said the county team was still going through its due diligence period working to secure an anchor tenant. The due diligence period was 180 days and the plan for closing was scheduled for November. Some of the cubicles had been moved out of the building and Wright County Community Action had removed everything it wanted. Kaczmarek asked if there were any other usable items that department heads may want. Daleiden said that the department heads had already gone through the building. He said it would be good for cities who may want anything to have a chance to go through as well. Daleiden asked Assistant County Attorney Greg Kryzer if the closing would be earlier than the 180 days. Kryzer said the due diligence dictated 180 days.

**\*VIII. Closed Session to Develop and Consider Offers and Counteroffers for the Sale of Real Property, MINN Stat. 13D.05 Subd. 3. PIDs: 103026002011, 103026001061, 103026002010, 103026001050, 103026001040, 103026001010.**

Meeting recordings and minutes stopped at 8:56 a.m. for the closed session.

At 9:23 a.m. a consensus regarding the closed session topic was reached by those present. Present were Vetsch, Husom, Daleiden, Wetter, Kaczmarek, Kern, Gehlen, Wilfahrt, Kryzer, County Administrator Lee Kelly, Karels and Intern Andi Gayner.

The session reconvened and resumed recordings at 9:29 a.m.

**\*IX. Action Items/Agenda for Next Meeting**

Vetsch hoped there would be more information to discuss regarding the closed session topic. He said there would be another Health and Human Services (HHS) update and the resolution declaring October Central Minnesota Manufacturing Month. Kryzer recommended a closed meeting session as well. Karels said staff would like to have city and township updates discussed and noted that Clearwater discussion was earmarked for a later date. She said a discussion on the tax abatement policy should occur as Wilfahrt would be working on developing one. She said the EDA board should talk about setting a budget for 2023 for the EDA. Kaczmarek asked about a joint ditch meeting scheduled for Monday, September 19, and asked if it would be the regular EDA meeting. Vetsch said action could be retaken in July or August as there were more than one member of the EDA who had conflicts with the September date and the Monday, September 19 EDA meeting would need to be rescheduled. It was noted that McLeod County had asked for confirmation on the joint ditch meeting. Kaczmarek said he would reach back out to McLeod County to confirm the EDA's attendance at the meeting. Kaczmarek asked for an EDA General Ledger balance, Karels said the balance as of Wednesday, June 29, was \$28,742.32. Karels confirmed that the balance, at the beginning of the fiscal was \$100,000. Gehlen said he would be absent for the Monday, July 18 meeting.

Meeting adjourned Wednesday, June 29 at 9:34 a.m.

Economic Development Authority Minutes submitted by Phil Hodges, Administrative Specialist.