

**OSSEO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
April 13, 2020**

1. ROLL CALL

President Poppe called the regular meeting of the Osseo Economic Development Authority to order at 6:00 p.m., Monday, April 13, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held virtually via WebEx.

Members present: Teresa Aho, Deanna Burke, Harold E. Johnson, Sherry Murdock, Duane Poppe, Mark Schulz, and Larry Stelmach.

Members absent: None.

Staff present: Executive Director Riley Grams, City Planner Nancy Abts, and City Attorney Mary Tietjen.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**A motion was made by Schulz, seconded by Burke, to approve the Agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried 7-0.**

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 9, 2020

**A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Murdock, to approve the minutes of March 9, 2020, as presented. A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried 7-0.**

4. MATTERS FROM THE FLOOR

Executive Director Riley Grams reported Preston Kroska at 601 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE asked if the frontage road between McDonald's and Lynde's could be piggy-backed on the County Road construction. Mr. Kroska anticipated this would save the City money in engineering and construction fees. Mr. Kroska encouraged the City to fight for these savings. Mr. Kroska recommended Central Avenue sidewalks be patched and sealed as most walks were fine noting this should make the pavers last another 10 years.

Grams stated Mr. Kroska had another comment regarding the difference between an RFP versus an RFB. Mr. Kroska recommended the City investigate the cost difference between hiring a contractor to sweep City streets versus buying and maintaining a new sweeper. Mr. Kroska would like to better understand if the City understood the numbers.

Grams explained Kenny Nelson at 509 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE asked what the benefit was for the EDA to join the Chamber of Commerce. While Mr. Nelson understood this was a small amount of money, he did not believe now was the time.

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS – None.

6. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Grams presented the EDA Accounts Payable listing.

**A motion was made by Johnson, seconded by Stelmach, to approve the Accounts Payable. A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried 7-0.**

7. OLD BUSINESS – None.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. CONSIDER MEMBERSHIP TO THE I-94 WEST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Grams stated Dawn Sperr, President of the I-94 West Chamber of Commerce, made a presentation to the Commissioners at the last EDA meeting showcasing the Chamber's mission, goals, and overall reach within the localized area. Staff has been in contact with Ms. Sperr and asked about membership for the Osseo Economic Development Authority. Staff asked what components of the I-94 West Chamber of Commerce would be particularly attractive to the Osseo EDA. Per Dawn Sperr:

- We invite each city to participate in ribbon cuttings of businesses in their city (always a chance to celebrate with them)
- Education opportunities for city staff to have access and use
- Participate in our State of the Cities event in January
- New website to promote communities and the businesses that are members of the I-94 West Chamber of Commerce
- Connect with businesses in the communities around you. We recognize that many people may live in one community and work in another. Connecting them with the city creates a community of inclusion and stronger communication thereby enhancing the health and wellness of any city. WE can do more together as a region.

Grams explained Ms. Sperr notes that almost every other City or EDA at the Business Building Level. The membership dues for that level is \$350 annually. Staff commented on the presentation from Dawn Sperr to remind the EDA of membership benefits.

Johnson commented the \$350 cost was the annual dues but noted there were also monthly fees for attending the meetings.

Schulz asked what the additional costs would be. Grams reported some meetings offer catered meals and this expense would be paid separately.

Schulz commented he supported the EDA being a member of the Chamber of Commerce. He believed this would be a great way for Osseo to network and create relationships with local businesses.

Stelmach indicated he was willing to try a one-year membership with the new Chamber of Commerce. He understood there may be additional costs, but he was willing to see what the net benefit was to the City of Osseo.

Burke questioned if membership should be delayed given the current Coronavirus pandemic. She explained she supported the EDA joining the Chamber of Commerce but suggested the membership be delayed. Grams commented the EDA would not be able to join until the Chamber of Commerce opened again for business and the City could join at that point.

Stelmach thanked Burke for pointing this out and stated it would benefit Osseo to have a membership with this organization in order to highlight local businesses once the COVID-19 crisis was over.

Aho supported the EDA becoming a member of the I-94 Chamber of Commerce for a year.

Poppe agreed with this recommendation.

Schulz commented the benefit received from this group would be dependent upon how much the EDA puts into the Chamber of Commerce. He stated it would be important for a staff and EDA members to be active in the Chamber.

**A motion was made by Stelmach, seconded by Aho, to approve membership with the I-94 West Chamber of Commerce. A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried 7-0.**

#### B. REVIEW EDA BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONSES

City Planner Nancy Abts explained a survey was distributed to businesses listed in the City's business directory. It was available for pick up at the business forum on February 27 and was mailed to all other businesses. The survey could be mailed back to the EDA or completed online. A unique identifier code was added to all printed surveys and entered online to track responses. This way, reminder post cards will not be sent to those who have completed the survey. The online response option will be able to reach home-based businesses and others not on the directory. The survey was mailed to 210 business addresses. To date, 41 responses have been received with 5 additional surveys returned as undeliverable. This makes the response rate 20 percent—which is a typical response rate for mailed surveys. Summaries of results to date were reviewed with the EDA. It was noted a reminder notice would be sent to businesses that have not yet responded.

Johnson stated he appreciated the responses the City received from the business survey. He feared that some of the questions were too geared to retail businesses and therefore led to less positive responses.

Stelmach commented there was a strong theme of location throughout the business survey. He indicated networking and collaboration were other important themes.

Aho stated Osseo had a diverse business community. She believed the survey was well done and had a wide variety of questions that pertained to all businesses. She appreciated the feedback that was received and understood that people appreciated having businesses in Osseo.

Schulz explained he had received great feedback from the survey. He understood not all questions pertained to each business, but that overall the questions were well done. He stated he was not surprised about the lack of interest in façade improvements. He believed the downtown area was looking good at this time. He indicated Osseo was a great place to own and operate a business and he was looking forward to getting back to work.

Abts stated she would be sending out reminder postcards in hopes of receiving more responses.

#### C. REVIEW SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT INFORMATION DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

Grams explained the COVID-19 health pandemic has greatly affected local businesses. He stated many small business owners are struggling to stay afloat due to being shut down or a huge decrease in sales. The State of Minnesota and the Federal Government recognize this and has attempted to provide support for those local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 situation.

Grams reported the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) has created an emergency loan program to help Minnesota small business owners that need immediate assistance to meet their families' basic needs during COVID-19 closures. The loan program was created under the Small Business Assistance Executive Order 20-15 announced by Governor Tim Walz on March 23. It is intended to help businesses temporarily closed which stopped onsite customers dining at restaurants and bars and closed an extensive list of other small businesses whose owners may not have adequate cash flow to withstand temporary closures. There is information that explains the loan program in more detail and provides a link to the DEED website to support those businesses.

Grams explained the US Chamber of Commerce has also created an emergency loan program for small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act allocated \$350 billion to help small businesses keep workers employed amid the pandemic and economic downturn. Known as the Paycheck Protection Program, the initiative provides 100% federally guaranteed loans to small businesses who maintain their payroll during this emergency. Importantly, these loans may be forgiven if borrowers maintain their payrolls during the crisis or restore their payrolls afterward. He indicated City staff is here to help any Osseo business who may find themselves struggling during this time. If any business owner has questions or concerns, please ask them to reach out to City staff to assist them.

Johnson explained the I-94 Chamber of Commerce has sent out three mailings discussing these various programs, which was valuable information at this time. He stated Osseo has over 200 businesses at this time and he would like the information provided in the packet to be provided to local business owners. He suggested this information be posted on the City website.

Schulz anticipated that the local small business owners were aware of these programs given the crisis going on at this time.

Stelmach agreed the small business owners were aware of this information and were working hard to apply for the funding. He suggested the City place a message on the gateway sign to direct business owners to the City website.

9. REPORTS OR COMMENTS: Executive Director, President, Members

Burke thanked staff for putting together the WebEx meeting.

Stelmach thanked staff for their efforts as well. He encouraged the community to continue to be patient during the COVID-19 crisis.

Johnson reported the State of Minnesota would be reducing pay by 10% for many employees until the end of 2020.

10. ADJOURNMENT

**A motion was made by Schulz, seconded by Stelmach, to adjourn at 6:39 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. The motion carried 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Guenther  
*Minute Maker Secretarial*