

Minutes
Swift County RDA Board Meeting
Thursday, July 12, 2007, DeToy's Benson, MN

Members Present: Ann Delgehausen, Jon Erickson, Belinda Sanders, Ed Ulmaniec, Pete Peterson, Paul Kittleson, Tim Wengler, Eric Rudningen and Jason Heinecke.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Chuck Koenigs - Interim RDA Executive Director.

Others Present: Jennifer Arnold, incoming Executive Director, and Rob Wolfington, Benson City Manager.

President Ulmaniec called the meeting to order at 7:05AM.

100 Agenda

Three items were added: #406 - North American Fertilizer; #504 Business Retention; and #605 Center For Rural Affairs.

200 Minutes

The **Minutes of the 6-11-07 RDA Regular Board Meeting** were reviewed. Ann noted that in Item #406 she thought she had seconded the motion. **MOTION** by Pete second by Jason to approve the **Minutes of the 6-11-07 RDA Board Meeting** as amended. Motion carried.

300 Financial Report

The Board reviewed the May 2007 financial statement for the RDA as prepared by Conway Deuth and Schmiesing. The balance sheet showed \$439,101.04 in total liabilities and equity on 5-31-07. Statement of revenues, expenditures and fund balances showed a net income (loss) of (\$16,543.33) for the period 1-1-07 to 5-31-07. Revenue and expenses for the period 1-1-07 to 5-30-07 were \$5,056.60 and \$21,599.93 respectively. Available to lend on 5-31-07 was \$57,621.94 and available to operate was \$138,747.69. **MOTION** by Ann second by Jason to approve the May 2007 financial statement as presented. Motion carried.

400 Discussion Items

401 Executive Director - As a final step in the process of consummating the employment with the new Executive Director, the Hiring Committee had prepared an **Employment Agreement**. Mention was made of a meeting on 6-20-07 with Jennifer to ratify the document. Members were provided a copy of the entire document and it was recommended that the Board President and Secretary be authorized to sign the **Employment Agreement** document. Members were also provided an updated copy of the **Executive Director Search Budget**. It was reported that final expenses totaled \$4,993.91 out of an approved budget of \$7,500.00 **MOTION** by Ann second by Tim to authorize the Board President and Secretary to sign the **Employment Agreement** with Jennifer Arnold with a starting date of 7-30-07. Motion carried.

402 Benson Corn Pool - Information was provided to members noting that the Fiscal Year 2008 enrollment in the Benson Corn Pool was due by 7-31-07. Copies of the enrollment form and background data was shared. It was recommended that the Board President be authorized to sign the fiscal year 2008 **Corn Pool Purchasing Agreement** and that proxy authorization be given for "all" bushels. **MOTION** by Pete second by Belinda to authorize

the Board President to sign the **Corn Pool Purchasing Agreement** for "all" shares. Motion carried.

403 Swift County Fair Booth - Information was provided to members about the opportunity to have booth space at the Swift County Fair, 8/16-19/07. Koenigs mentioned that in the past, the RDA had shared booth space with the County HRA. However, this year the HRA is opting not to participate in the Fair. Mention was made about exploring interest with either the Benson Area Chamber of Commerce or the Appleton Chamber of Commerce. The pros and cons of spending time at the Fair were noted. Jennifer indicated that she thought this might be a good way for her to meet a lot of people. More exploration on this was suggested. An 8-1-07 deadline for application for booth space was noted. Tim indicated that there has been a decline in the number of booths at the Fair over time.

404 Farm Credit System - Members were informed that Kit Borgman representing Farm Credit Horizons had made contact requesting that the RDA go on record in support of proposed changes to the 2007 Farm Bill which would advance the cause of Farm Credit Horizons. The pros and cons of doing this and some additional background information were provided. Jon mentioned that he had been paying considerable attention to the issues involved and recommended that the Board either take a position opposing what was being requested or at best, remain silent on the issue. **MOTION** by Jason second by Jon to select "Option A - do nothing - remain silent on the issue - side-step taking a position." Motion carried.

405 Interim Director - Copies of the weekly time sheets for the month of June for the Interim Director were presented for approval. It was recommended that the President be authorized to sign the time sheets for payment purposes. **MOTION** by Belinda second by Ann to authorize the Board president to sign the time sheets for the period 6-1-07 to 6-30-07. Motion carried.

406 North American Fertilizer Loan - Koenigs stated that the Wilcox law firm had finalized preparation of the loan documents for the North American Fertilizer loan. These had been prepared in conformity with the prior determination to use this firm for the Western Minnesota Revolving Loan Fund, the City of Benson Revolving Loan Fund and the Swift County RDA Revolving Loan Fund. It was recommended that the Board authorize the Board President and Secretary to sign the necessary documents. **MOTION** by Eric second by Jon to authorize the Board President and Secretary to sign necessary documents for the North American Fertilizer loan with a proposed closing date of July 17, 2007. Motion carried.

500 Discussion Items

501 Entrepreneurship Network Academy - Jennifer made several comments on her participation in the SWIF-sponsored Academy on 6/18-19/07. The value of networking with other persons involved in economic development in Southwest Minnesota was noted. Plans call for Jennifer's participation in the 9/19-20/07 follow-up Academy sessions. In this context, Koenigs mentioned that SWIF had requested additional renewable energy marketplace pamphlets as part of package SWIF was preparing for some guests. This led to concern about the need to update the pamphlet and also consideration should be giving to posting the document on the web site. This led to a call for re-examination and updating of the web-site itself.

502 Former Curves Building - Koenigs stated that he had not yet received the Building Inspector report from Don Fischer. He had spoken with Roman Fidler last week and had been provided assurances that once that report was complete, that the RDA office would receive a copy. He further noted that Byron Giese had made a visit to the premises recently and his assessment was congruent with that made by Tim and Jason previously.

503 2008 Budget and Tax Levy Request - Preparations for next year's budget were shared with the Board. A copy of a draft **2008 Budget** document was provided. Conversations with the County Auditor were shared for background. The need to have the RDA's 2008 tax levy request to the County Auditor by 9-4-07 were noted. Several of the line items in the draft budget document were reviewed. Koenigs stated that he had decreased the County levy request by 3% or \$2,100. Concerns were voiced about the kind of message that this would send to the County Board and it was strongly suggested that a decrease not take place. The potential of terminating services with CDS for accounting services beginning with the new fiscal/calendar year would net a reduction of \$3,600 in contracted services. The rationale for projecting payroll and fringe benefit costs was provided. It was suggested that this item re-appear on the 8-9-07 Board Agenda for more discussion.

504 Business Retention - Pete indicated that he was concerned about the apparent lack of attention given to business retention. He asserted that there seemed to be more emphasis on new business development and not enough attention paid to activities and programs to retain existing businesses in the County. Discussion followed with numerous comments shared from different perspectives. It was noted that there is one responsibility statement included in the Executive Director's job description that deals with this aspect of economic development. The potential for focusing in on this subject in the context of the board's annual retreat was noted. Collectively, this issue was seen as important.

600 Information Items

601 Interim Executive Director Report - Members were provided a copy of the Interim Director's report for the previous month. Additional comments were shared on several items taking place since issuance of the report. Among them included: a) a meeting of the Loan Committee to review the G Demolition loan request; b) continued contacts with a person interested in purchasing the Longhorn Corral; c) Earthtech Energy's plans to contest recent decisions made in a neighboring county and the still viable potential that the company could locate in Swift County; and d) handout of the Blue Ribbon Commission final report and presentation on 7-17-07 at 1:00PM to the Swift County Board.

602 Significant Correspondence - Significant incoming and out-going mail since the last Board meeting was routed past members.

603 CERT Forum - Comments were shared about the 6-21-07 Clean Energy Resource Team forum held in Sunburg. Koenigs stated that he had received some helpful resource material about USDA programs that could be beneficial to potential RDA customers. He also commented on Andrew Falk's presentation about wind energy programs and opportunities.

604 Comprehensive Plan - Members were reminded that the Swift County Board is receiving comments on it's **Comprehensive Plan** during three separate public comments sessions. A press release announcing the dates and times of these hearings was provided. Some members expressed interest in attending one of the two remaining meetings, one

slated for 7-18-07 at 4:30PM in Appleton and the other on 7-25-07 at 7:30PM in Benson. Rob noted that with the recent release of data from the State Demographer's Office, that a lot of the demographic assumptions and data contained in the **Comprehensive Plan** could raise considerable implications about some of the conclusions and recommendations in the **Comprehensive Plan**. This led to discussion of perhaps inviting the State Demographer and/or Ben Winchester of the Center for Small Towns out to meet with inter-governmental entities in the County to share information, observations and the like. Jennifer expressed a willingness to consider coordinating such an event.

605 Center For Rural Affairs - Koenigs stated that he had been asked to coordinate a meeting at which Kathie Starkweather, Policy Organizer of the Center For Rural Affairs out of Lyons, Nebraska, would be present. She would be discussing the 2007 Farm Bill and some of its implications for rural economic development and rural communities. Two meetings were slated for 7-19-07: a) the first from 11:00AM to 12:00PM at the Commissioners Meeting Room in the Courthouse; and b) with the City of Benson EDA from 12:00PM to 1:00PM at the City Council Chambers. Any interested RDA member was encouraged to attend.

A request was made to have an email sent out early next week summarizing all of the various meetings that are taking place next week.

700 Adjournment

The next regular meeting of the Board will be on Thursday, 8-9-07, at 7:00AM at DeToy's.

MOTION by Paul second by Jon to adjourn the meeting at 8:25AM. Motion carried.

Approved by:	_____	_____
	Ed Ulmaniec, President	Belinda Sanders, Secretary-Treasurer
Prepared by:	_____	_____
	Chuck Koenigs, Interim Director	Date