

**Northern Maine Development Commission
ZOOM/In-Person Meeting Minutes
of the Executive Board
March 14, 2024**

PLACE: ZOOM/In-Person Meeting
DATE: March 14, 2024 3:00 p.m.

Attendance: Vice Chair Suzie Paradis, Michelle Bernier, Tim Goff, Dave Cyr, Martin Dionne, Norm Fournier, Jim Gardner, Kelly Garrison, Max Lynds, Steve Pelletier, John Sutherland, Patricia Sutherland and Penny Thompson.

Others Present: Robert Clark, Judy Dinsmore, Brandon McDonald, Athens Sanchez, Paul Towle, Shawn Manter, Jon Gulliver, Jay Kamm, Josh Nadeau, and Craig Lincoln.

1. Call to Order and Introductions:

Vice Chair Paradis brought the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m. She welcomed everyone and asked those who were attending in person to pass in their travel vouchers to Ms. Dinsmore.

2. Approval of Executive Board of Directors Meeting Minutes of December 14, 2023:

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Cyr, seconded by Mr. Pelletier, to approve the Executive Board of Directors meeting minutes of December 14, 2023 as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

3. Financial Accounting Operations:

A. Revenue and Expenditure Statement for the Period ending January 31, 2024:

Mr. Clark discussed the R&E:

Federal Grants are up

Tax Credits are down, IRS has not processed our request yet.

Cash Contributions is down, results in less cash having to be injected for match.

In Kind Income is down

Expenditures:

Lodging is up due to the Eastport staff traveling to Caribou main office.

Conference Registration is up as these were prepaid.

Consultants is up due to CDFI Round 2 Financial Application

Cell phone is up due to new employees requiring phones.

Service Agreements is up due to the new Sage and DownHome financial programs.
 Direct Program Exp. – Subrecipients is up due to the Regional HUB program.
 Indirect Cost is holding at 48.11%
 Agency Balance of \$109,843.22

B. Balance Sheet for the Period ending January 31, 2024:

Mr. Clark discussed the Balance Sheet:

Balance Sheet:

Operating Cash - \$555,741
 Accounts Receivable – \$79,986
 Notes Receivable - \$30,986,778
 Total Assets - \$35,671,943
 Accounts Payable - \$250,922
 Notes Payable - \$4,785,928 (USDA and SBA Relending)
 Total Liabilities - \$6,739.896
 Total Projects - \$28,932,047
 Total Liabilities and Projects - \$35,671,943

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Gardner to accept the Revenue and Expenditure Statement and Balance Sheet for the period ending January 31, 2024 as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

4. Ratification of Service Contracts and Agreements:

Madawaska EDA Grant Downtown Revitalization	\$33,000
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MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Pelletier, seconded by Mr. Dionne to ratify the service contracts and agreements as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

5. Report of the Loan Committee:

Mr. Lincoln reported that under staff authority there were 31 loans approved in the amount of \$1,112,200. Leveraging \$376,000. There were 11 expansions and 10 startups.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Pelletier to accept the Report of the Loan Committee as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

6. Authorization to Borrow \$750,000 from USDA Intermediary Relending Program:

Mr. Clark explained the resolution is to authorize borrowing \$750,000 from USDA Intermediary Relending Program to fulfill the charter objectives of NMDC. The monies will be capital for loans in progress. There will be a \$37,500 match.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Dionne, seconded by Mr. Fournier to authorize the borrowing of \$750,000 from the USDA IRP Program and further authorize the Executive Director to execute all necessary documents pertaining thereto as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

7. Acceptance of the Five Year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy:

Mr. Gulliver indicated the CEDS is updated every 5 years for Aroostook and Washington counties. This is to drive funding to the counties.

The key component is the SWOT analysis. Despite its positive attributes, the Aroostook and Washington counties region faces significant challenges. An aging demographic, consistent population out-migration, global market pressures on traditional industries, high poverty rates and decades of economic stagnation all contribute to the area's vulnerability.

Mr. Gulliver indicated the Aroostook and Washington counties need more from EDA or other federal organizations to be able to rise above these challenges.

We received 7 comments on the CEDS which is very good input. This is a living document with the next rewrite scheduled for late 2028.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Pelletier, seconded by Mr. Fournier to approve the 5-year CEDS as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

8. Acceptance of the Aroostook County Affordable Housing Tool Kit:

Mr. Kamm stated the Housing Tool Kit was funded by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), and the US Department of Treasury Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI).

Mr. Kamm indicated LD 2003 is state mandated legislation that requires municipalities to review comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances from a housing standpoint. LD 2003 requires municipalities to allow higher residential development in growth areas or areas where residential development is allowed. And finally, it requires municipalities to allow accessory dwelling units to be located on the same lot as single-family units.

He stated it is hoped that the tool kit helps breathe life into comprehensive plans and ordinances as they are updated and implemented.

The Steering Committee is made up of members from throughout the County such as:

- Realtor
- Town Manager
- Housing Authority
- Public Utility Superintendent
- ACAP
- Code Enforcement Officer

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Pelletier, seconded by Mr. Dionne to accept the Affordable Housing Tool Kit as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

9. Adoption of Remote Work Policy:

Mr. Clark announced all remote work or telecommuting arrangements are made on an individual employee basis and must be approved in advance, based on the needs of NMDC. These arrangements will be established by supervisors or may be requested in writing by employees. Establishing these work arrangements include operational requirements, job duties, employee work performance and other logistics.

Employees are expected to follow all policies, procedures, and work rules as if they were in the office, including but not limit to maintaining time records for non-exempt employees, working per an agreed upon schedule, professional appearance and attire for video meetings, and maintaining productivity.

NMDC will not be responsible for costs associated with initial setup of an employee's home office such as remodeling, furniture or lighting or repairs. Employees will be provided with appropriate office equipment and supplies necessary for successful completion of job responsibilities depending upon work arrangements. Any equipment supplied by NMDC is to be used only by employees. Occasionally employee personal use may be allowed.

Employees will be expected to maintain the confidentiality and security of company and customer information. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to NMDC.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Pelletier to adopt the Remote Work Policy as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

10. Report of the Aroostook Partnership:

Mr. Towle announced he would be retiring at the end of March. The new President/CEO is Scott Dionne who relocated back to his hometown Caribou. Scott worked at Timber HP in Madison and is well versed in large company startups. He will take on his new AP position on April 2.

Mr. Towle indicated AP along with NMDC will be sponsoring a housing symposium at the Northeastland Hotel on March 29. There will be presenters from all over the state. At this time, not many municipalities have signed up for the symposium. He asked the Board to pass this information along to other municipalities. Working groups at the event will focus on transportation, housing, and childcare.

11. Annual Meeting Date, Time and Place:

Mr. Clark noted we will be holding an Executive Board meeting in May. The Annual Meeting of the Members will be held in June.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Cyr, seconded by Mr. Pelletier to authorize the Chairperson to select the annual meeting date, time and place.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

12. 2024 Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Grant Application:

Mr. Gulliver stated the catalyst program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that will modernize water and wastewater systems, revitalize transportation infrastructure, establish workforce development programs and facilities, grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies and construct new childcare and healthcare facilities.

- The pre-application is due by March 22, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.
- The new grant application is on the online portal and became active on Monday, March 11.
- The registration process is difficult
- Full applications, if invited, are due May 3, 2024 by 5:00 p.m.

Mr. Gulliver stated NMDC is currently assisting with three applications:

- Washburn
- Mi'Kmaq Nation
- Grand Isle

We have also had other inquiries from Mars Hill and Island Falls. NBRC has historically been generous to Aroostook County, with recent grants to Caribou, Houlton, Presque Isle, Eagle Lake, Frenchville, Fort Kent, Danforth and the Loring Development Authority.

NBRC in addition to the catalyst funding, has additional dollars for timber transit projects, and the forest economy. There will be more NBRC funding in the fall.

NBRC is also promoting partnership funding like workforce opportunity for rural communities initiative, and recreation economy for rural communities initiative.

13. Other Business:

None noted.

14. Executive Director's Report:

- Mr. Clark reported the SSBCI program helped us get to \$30.5 million in loans.
- For every \$500,000 in RMAP and SBA, NMDC will receive \$125,000 in TA assistance.
- Audit is near complete and will be presented to the Executive Board.

15. Adjournment:

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Pelletier, seconded by Mr. Dionne to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

Meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Bernier
Secretary

MB/jd