



MINUTES
COHASSET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
305 NW FIRST AVENUE, COHASSET, MN 55721
TUESDAY JANUARY 7, 2025 – 5:00 P.M.

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Andy MacDonell, Councilor Andy Haarklau, EDA members Rod Heller, Shannon Benolken, Larry Gemmill, Conrad Feldt, and Mitch Kellin.

Absent with notice: New Mayor Josh Casper

3. Resident Input

None

4. Review and Approve the Agenda

A motion was made by EDA Member Mitch Kellin to approve the Agenda with the changes to remove item 5B.. EDA member Andy Haarklau seconded the motion. Voting in favor: EDA Members, Rod Heller, Larry Gemmill, Shannon Benolken, Mitch Kellin, Conrad Feldt, and Andy MacDonell. Voting against: None; Motion carried.

5. Administration

A. 2025 EDA Meeting Schedule

The meeting schedule was discussed, with a decision to cancel the July meeting and reschedule the November meeting from the 4th to the 18th due to an election on the 4th. All other meetings will be held at 5 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month.

A motion was made by EDA Member Conrad Feldt to approve the 2025 EDA meeting schedule with the changes of the 4th changing to the 18th in November and July meeting will be cancelled. EDA member Rod Heller seconded the motion. Voting in favor: EDA Members, Rod Heller, Larry Gemmill, Shannon Benolken, Mitch Kellin, Conrad Feldt, and Andy MacDonell. Voting against: None; Motion carried.

C. Discuss Hiring of Economic Director Position

The discussion focused on hiring an Economic Development Director, with two interviews scheduled. The importance of understanding the community and having relevant skills was emphasized. The county is also hiring an economic director, which may impact the IEDC.

There were concerns raised regarding the job description for the economic director, as it was noted to include tasks unrelated to economic development. It was emphasized that the director's need to chair the EDA meetings was a key point of discussion. The discussion was centered on the challenges of hiring a new Director of Economic Development, with a focus on the importance of networking, communication skills, and local knowledge. The committee debated the advantages and disadvantages of hiring someone local versus someone from outside the area. A review of the existing job description for the Economic Development Director was conducted by the committee, during which it was noted that the job description requires updating and customization to align with the specific requirements of the position. The committee engaged in a discussion regarding the variety of tasks and responsibilities associated with the role. The committee also considered the terms of employment for the new hire, including whether to offer a contract or keep the position at-will, with concerns raised about commitment and flexibility.

6. Consent Agenda

- A. EDA December Financials: \$492,346.26 – Unreconciled number; does not include accrued interest
- B. EDA November Financials: \$492,213.04
- C. EDA October Financials: \$492,114.75
- D. Loan Recap – December
- E. Approve the revised November 19th, 2024, EDA Minutes

A motion was made by EDA Member Larry Gemmill to approve the Consent Agenda as changed with corrections to the November 19th, 2024, Minutes. EDA member Shannon Benolken seconded the motion. Voting in favor: EDA Members, Conrad Feldt, Rod Heller, Larry Gemmill, Shannon Benolken, and Andy MacDonell; Voting against: None; Motion carried.

The November meeting minutes were included in the December meeting Agenda packet. The revised November meeting minutes were included in the January agenda packet. Item C on November 19th was added to the agenda during the November meeting. November 19th, minutes have been approved and amended with additions and changes.

7. Miscellaneous Business and FYI's:

There was a brief mention of a potential Amazon distribution center being developed in the area, which could impact local economic development and land use planning.

Discussion on joining organizations like EDAM and APEX for networking and economic development, including costs and benefits of membership and board seats.

ADJOURNMENT: Andy MacDonell Adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Abby Majewski