

**BELLE PLAINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
MAY 11, 2020**

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Chair Krant led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. CALL TO ORDER. 1.1 ROLL CALL.

The Belle Plaine Economic Development Authority met in Regular Session at 5:02 PM on Monday, May 11, 2020 at City Hall, 218 North Meridian Street, Belle Plaine, MN. President Krant called the meeting to order with Commissioners Coop, Meyer, Doyle, Coleman and Fahey present. Commissioner Pankonin was not present.

Also present were Community Development Director Smith Strack and City Administrator Meyer

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA.

MOTION by Commissioner Coop, second by Commissioner Fahey, to approve the agenda as presented. ALL VOTED AYE. MOTION CARRIED.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

3.1. Regular Session Minutes of March 9, 2020.

MOTION by Commissioner Meyer, second by Commissioner Coop, to approve the Regular Session Minutes of March 9, 2020. ALL VOTED AYE. MOTION CARRIED.

4. TREASURERS REPORT.

4.1. Approval of Bills.

MOTION by Commissioner Coleman, second by Commissioner Coop, to approve the Treasurer's Report. ALL VOTED AYE. MOTION CARRIED.

5. BUSINESS.

5.1. EDA/City Business Assistance COVID.

Community Development Director Smith Strack explained the current pandemic health crisis is also an economic crisis, especially for small businesses closed by executive order. Smith Strack explained staff are hearing from local businesses, especially in Downtown that are struggling with expenses and sales. Smith Strack presented a slideshow to review the potential tools for businesses. Smith Strack reviewed the Emergency Micro Loan, Business Counseling, Marketing Consultation – Online Presence, Website Updates and Recruitment of Entrepreneurs. Smith Strack explained the Program Budget of \$20,000.00, noting \$15,000.00 would be a direct spend down of from the revolving loan funds. Smith Strack explained staff has reached out to Angie Craig's Office for approval and if the Revolving Loan fund money is unable to be used the HRA fund can be utilized. Smith Strack requested questions on the concept of the programs.

Commissioner Coleman inquired if staff have received any inquires on the programs and if so would any of them qualify for these programs. Community Development Director Smith Strack confirmed she has fielded four inquires in the last two weeks and noted three of the four inquires would be eligible. Coleman questioned if that amount of money is enough to keep the business going one to two months or if the funds would be better spent in another benefit. Smith Strack explained the EDA currently has under \$200,000.00 revolving loan funds and noted St. Peter just approved no interest loans for businesses. Commissioner Meyer expressed concern over not being able to help all those in need and potential backlash from businesses who are ineligible or not approved due to lack of money. Smith Strack

explained the proposed criteria has been kept vague intentionally and will rely heavily on a four person review team.

Smith Strack explained the Emergency Loan Program funded by the Revolving Loan Fund would consist of a forgivable zero interest loan with a security note. Total funds used would be \$15,000.00 with max loans of \$1,000.00 and one loan per business for certain types of businesses including retail, bars, restaurants ect. Smith Strack noted additionally the business must have store front, and loans will be distributed on need and not credit worthiness. Smith Strack explained funds will be disturbed directly to the service provider. Smith Strack requested questions on the Emergency Loan Program.

Commissioner Meyer inquired if a brick and mortar building holds multiple companies will each company be eligible for the loan. Community Development Director Smith Strack confirmed each company would be eligible but for only one loan each. City Administrator Meyer inquired if Smith Strack's goal is to focus on the Central Business District. Smith Strack confirmed and noted over 15 businesses in the Downtown area not including out skirt businesses like Cindy's Kitchen, Emmas and the Bowling Alley. Smith Strack explained she is optimistic the City will receive the small cities funding which would aid the Central Business District in the future as well. Councilmember Coop voiced concern over the amount of money not being enough to help long term. Commissioner Meyer inquired if the money could be used in a different way citing payment for rent or leases only thus helping not only the tenant but potentially the building owner as well. Coop also offered up payments for water/sewer bills or liquor licenses to help keep money in house. Commissioner Fahey explained she favors the payments for leases/rentals, as owners still have to pay property taxes and if rental money is not coming in that puts an added strain on them. Commissioner Doyle inquired what the web presence entails. Smith Strack explained a free consultation of the business website and a combination depending on need of upgrades/widgets up to \$1500.00. Fahey noted an interest in the online presence program explaining the world is changing and becoming online based. Smith Strack explained consumer presence online for businesses could be the difference from continuing to struggle or no longer struggling. Commissioner Meyer suggested narrowing the emergency loan program down to mortgage/ rent noting one check to a building owner could potentially benefit multiple businesses. Coleman suggested increasing funds to \$2,000.00 to help stretch the rent out a little longer and noted the lack of requests for the revolving loan due to circumstances, citing the potential to spend down the budget for potential more issues this fall.

MOTION by Commissioner Meyer, second by Commissioner Fahey, for a rental/mortgage assistance program. Clarification by Commissioner Krant on one-time loans of \$1,000.00. ALL VOTED AYE. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION by Commissioner Meyer, second by Commissioner Fahey, to approve the web presence initiative. ALL VOTED AYE. MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Fahey volunteered to be an applicant reviewer.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS.

6.1. Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Meyer explained he's received many calls and emails regarding the Lakefield decision to not abide by the Governors order. Meyer explained the potential for loss of funding and insurance if the City would adopt such an order. City Administrator Meyer explained staff have reached out to the League of MN Cities for guidance. Meyer explained the City relies on State aid and if held by the State the tax burden would fall to the Citizens. Meyer noted all reports for violating the order should be reported to the State as the City is not making the directives. Meyer explained the Mayor and Acting Police Chief will be hosting a Facebook Live Question and Answer on Thursday with the Herald.

6.2. Directors Update.

Community Development Director Smith Strack highlighted her report.

6.3. Upcoming Meetings.

1. Regular Session, 5:00 PM, Monday, June 8, 2020.

Commissioners were reminded of the next schedule meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR SESSION.

MOTION by Commissioner Coop, second by Commissioner Meyer, to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 PM.
ALL VOTED AYE. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Renee Eyrich
Recording Secretary