

## Winnebago County Industrial Development Board

### January 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Room 119 County Administrative Building, 112 Otter Avenue, Oshkosh, WI

Board Members Present: Rob Keller, Shiloh Ramos, Mark Harris, Jim Wise, Elizabeth Hartman, George Dearborn, Mary Krueger

Board Members Excused: Linda Kutchenriter, Mary Anne Mueller, Joel Rasmussen

Others Present: Jerry Bougie, Dan Kesselmayer, Rob Kleman, Art Rathjen, Joseph Schulz

Meeting called to order at 2:30 pm by Chairman Rob Keller.

1. Approval of Minutes from October 16, 2019 meeting. Motion by Shiloh Ramos to approve the meeting minutes from the October 16, 2019 meeting. Motion seconded by Mary Krueger. Jim Wise had a brief question relative to the amount of money indicated in the minutes for 2020 per capita funding and how we would address the issue if the requested funds were greater than what was budgeted. Jerry Bougie mentioned that we would resolve it at the next meeting when the Board addresses the funding applications. Motion passed 7-0.
2. Board discussion and potential action on a financial commitment and match not to exceed \$25,000 for US Internet's Fiber to the Home broadband grant application with the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSCW). Jerry Bougie summarized the purpose and intent of the funding request – which is to demonstrate public financial support for US Internet's broadband grant application with the PSCW. The project is a multimillion-dollar initiative to implement high speed fiber optic internet service to unserved and underserved areas of Winnebago County which will benefit rural homes, businesses and public services. Jerry indicated that the PSCW broadband application was prepared by Dan Kesselmayer of Broadband Technology Group who is working with US Internet to deploy high speed broadband internet services to rural areas of Wisconsin. Mark Harris indicated that Mr. Kesselmayer requested financial support from the County in a meeting shortly before the due date for the application in December and Mark agreed to provide a letter of financial support from the IDB that would provide financial support contingent upon approval by the IDB at a meeting in January and awarding of the PSCW grant to US Internet for this project. Mr. Kesselmayer was introduced to the Board, and he proceeded to provide the Board with a more detailed summary of the application and project scope. He indicated that the project is proposed to see investment exceeding \$10.1 million, which includes \$6.4 million from US Internet, \$3.736 million from the PSCW broadband grant application and smaller supportive funding from local governments benefitting from the project. He further indicated that if the grant application is successful, the project would begin right away this Spring and would be completed within 2 years. Mr. Kesselmayer mentioned that he has seen significant interest

from potential customers in the project area for the new high-speed service and if this initial project effort proves successful, there would likely be further expansion of the service to additional underserved areas of the County as part of future phase(s). Discussion pursued by the Board and those present. Overall the Board felt that serving these unserved and underserved areas of the County with high speed internet would be an important economic development benefit to the rural areas of the County, and with a relatively small financial commitment from the IDB it would demonstrate to the PSCW that the County is supportive of the initiative. Mr. Kesselmayer indicated that he expected to hear from the PSCW on the outcome of the grant application sometime in March.

A motion was made by Elizabeth Hartman to pledge a \$25,000 matching grant from the Winnebago County IDB's reserve fund toward US Internet's PSCW broadband grant application and payable contingent upon successful awarding of the PSCW grant to US Internet for this project. Motion seconded by Mark Harris. Motion passed 7-0.

3. Preliminary discussion on IDB creation of a proposed economic development loan funding program to replace the former CDBG-ED loan program.

Jerry Bougie indicated the Board approved a motion at its last meeting to discuss an alternative funding program to potentially replace the IDB's CDBG Revolving Loan Fund program. Jerry summarized previous problems with the CDBG loan fund eligibility criteria and the criteria for the Board's primary Industrial Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The LMI and reporting requirements of the previous CDBG program made it difficult for projects to be eligible - and for the Board's primary RLF, the requirement to secure loans with the local community's taxing authority created a significant disincentive to borrow from the fund. Jerry indicated that in establishing a new funding program it will require the Board to evaluate what needs/gaps currently exist for economic development funding for businesses and communities in the Winnebago County area. Discussion pursued on various ideas and potential needs. The Board was in consensus to have Jerry Bougie contact the local economic development entities in the County to request their involvement in this discussion and to work with them and the IDB to come up with a new funding program that can work to everyone's benefit.

4. Next Meeting. The next meeting will be set up for the latter part of February and Jerry Bougie will contact the Board on a date and time.

5. Adjournment: Shiloh Ramos made a motion to adjourn. Jim Wise seconded the motion. Motion passed 7-0. Meeting adjourned at 3:25 pm.

Submitted by,

Jerry Bougie, Recording Secretary