

**Eastern U.P. Regional Planning & Development Commission
Executive Committee Meeting**

Friday, June 12, 2020 – 10:30 a.m.

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Video: <https://eupschools.zoom.us/j/2796102468>

Telephone: 1 (312) 626-6799; Meeting ID 2796102468#

Attendance

Dean Reid Jim Moore Jeff Holt Richard Timmer

Staff:

Jeff Hagan Kim Wilcox

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m. by J. Holt.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Prior to the approval of the agenda, CEO J. Hagan requested that an item be included under New Business regarding the Remote Working of Staff. The revised agenda was approved following a motion by D. Reid with support by R. Timmer.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment addressed at this meeting.

Program Updates

CEO J. Hagan updated the Committee regarding ongoing discussions with MDOT related to the Asset Management PASER program for 2020. There are various requirements that must be followed in accordance with MDOT, State and Local response to the COVID19 pandemic. Other issues exist surrounding the availability of eligible raters, and the timeline for completing the program prior to the end of the fiscal year on September 30. EUP staff will continue to work with MDOT and the TAMC on potential pathways forward in order to either complete the PASER for 2020 or collecting data the non-federal aid system, which is needed for our local agencies to complete their Asset Management Plans. Another potential option would be to collect data on other road assets such as sidewalks, signs or culverts, for example. R. Timmer indicated that he will follow up on these concerns as he recently attended a road association meeting and there was nothing mentioned at that time.

The Integrated Asset Management Program is currently on hold until a plan is in place to determine the most effective way to provide technical assistance for the completion of the assessments. Staff was originally planning to meet individually with the required asset holders to assist with the assessment tool; but in order to properly social distance, other options are being considered.

CEO Hagan indicated that staff have been working remotely on other programs with little or no issues. He anticipates that staff will continue to work remotely until July 6 and then staff will return to the office on a rotating schedule. The office building will not be open to the public except by appointment.

New Business—EDA CARES Act—Staffing

The EDA CARES Act grant was briefly described. Regional Planning has applied for this two-year non-competitive grant to be used to assist in economic recovery, technical assistance, and technology for pandemic response activities. It also allows funding to support a disaster recovery coordinator position.

CEO Hagan would like to move forward with posting an Associate Planner position to fill a current vacancy created when Rebecca Bolen departed in mid-April. R. Timmer moved to authorize this job posting. J. Holt supported. Motion passed.

He also indicated that the agency is considering a contract position for the Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the EDA CARES Act. This position would be a temporary position as this is a two-year grant.

CEO Hagan spoke with MERS regarding retirement options for contract employees. MERS suggested that the agency may want to consider opening a separate division for a 457 account rather than a defined benefit. The 457 account can be available to all staff. The defined benefit division will only be available to permanent staff members. Committee members requested that this option be pursued further and present recommendations at the next EUPRPDC Board meeting.

New Business—Office Space Lease Agreement with UP Michigan Works!

It was noted that the lease for office space with UP Michigan Works! ends June 30 and will be renewed for the upcoming year at \$1000/month. This is a reasonable monthly increase of \$25/month which is within the terms of the current lease.

New Business—Remote Working

As staff have been working remotely from their homes since the beginning of the Stay Home Order, CEO Hagan requested that staff be reimbursed for their internet fees. J. Holt indicated that this is a fair request and moved to approve the reimbursement of staff internet costs. J. Moore supported. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

There was no old business discussed at this meeting.

Member Updates

R. Timmer described a recent Road Association meeting he attended which provided highlights as to how road commissions will be reopening and the economic impacts of the COVID19 pandemic. He mentioned that the budget does not appear to be that severe, but that could change.

D. Reid indicated that the Mackinac Economic Alliance will be reopening. The new director, Chris Byrnes, is currently in the process of meeting the requirements to become an Opportunity Zone.

J. Holt indicated that the city's budget has been cut by 30% and city employees have been furloughed one day a week during the summer months to offset costs.

He also indicated that the Soo Locks project is moving forward with dredging of the lock. The next phase will require general contractors which local contractors may wish to apply.

There has been interest in the K-Mart building which would be an Opportunity Zone Project.

J. Moore described the recent upgrade to the water/sewer plant. Phase 3 of the upgrade will include using food waste to create methane gas to operate generators.

He also described trailers to be used by workers of the Soo Locks project and Line 5. Norpro has been assisting with this project.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m. following a motion by D. Reid and support by R. Timmer.