

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

Friday, September 11, 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 Jeff Holt Mike Patrick Richard Timmer

Excused: Jim Moore

Staff:

Jeff Hagan Kim Wilcox

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:35 a.m. by Vice Chair M. Patrick.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted following a motion by J. Holt with support by D. Reid.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment addressed at this meeting.

Financial Report/Program Updates

Upon review of the financial report, CEO J. Hagan provided a brief overview of current program updates. He noted that there will be some carry forward Asset Management funds to complete 2020 PASER Fed-Aid ratings which could not be completed by the end of the fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of availability of eligible raters. The planned 2020 Fed-Aid rating will be completed the Spring of 2021 and then 2021 Fed-Aid rating will commence in the Summer of 2021. In the meantime, staff is currently completing Non-Fed Aid ratings. Following the overview, J. Holt moved to approve the Financial Report/Program Updates as presented. D. Reid supported. Motion passed.

New Business—FY 2021 Budget

CEO J. Hagan provided a summary of the anticipated program budgets for FY 2021. There are not any foreseeable issues with the FY 2021 budget. There may be a need for additional staff to complete projects.

New Business—EDA Cares Act Budget Approval

Members reviewed the FY 2021 EDA CARES Act budget which was approved by the EDA. This 2-year award totals \$400,000. J. Holt moved to approve the EDA CARES Act budget with support by R. Timmer. Motion passed.

New Business—Staff Internet Reimbursement

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. It was noted that the Executive Committee previously approved the reimbursement of staff internet fees for March, April, and May and would like the Committee to consider approving internet reimbursement fees for another three months. It is the hope that staff will be able to transition working in the office in the near future. During the discussion of this consideration, R. Timmer asked if there was also a reimbursement for their cell phones. CEO Hagan indicated that staff is currently reimbursed \$40/month for their cell phone use. He would recommend the committee increase this amount to \$50/month as the usage of staff cell phones has increased especially while working remotely. R. Timmer indicated that these are fair requests and moved to approve the reimbursement of three months of the staff internet costs and also to increase the cell phone reimbursement rate to \$50/month. D. Reid supported. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business—BCBS Update

CEO Hagan noted that there was a \$1,571.88 credit to the Group BC/BS benefit statement because of the pandemic. It is anticipated that there will be a minimal increase or even a slight decrease in the group health insurance rates for upcoming year which should be available for review by October.

New Business—Staffing Update

As a result of an increase in projects, there is a need and funding available to hire additional staff. CEO Hagan would like approval to post a job posting for a temporary, full-time planner. It was suggested that Regional Planning may wish to consider hiring a part-time position along with the additional temporary, full-time position. R. Timmer moved to increase staff and post the job orders for one full-time and one part-time employee. D. Reid supported. Motion passed.

New Business—Proposed Bylaws Revision

The following proposed bylaw revisions were reviewed:

1. Membership Definition—City Representative: Councilperson or representative designated by the elected official such as city manager or department head.
2. Alternate Representation: Each County Commissioner Representative shall have an alternate to attend meetings and vote in place of member. Only one vote per representative is allowed.
3. Travel Reimbursement: Any private sector appointee is eligible for travel reimbursement of \$30 per meeting if requested. This is an increase from \$25/meeting.
4. Executive Committee: The committee shall consist of five members: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Minority Representative and one “at large” member. Staff will serve as the Secretary in a non-voting capacity.
5. Nominating Committee: A nominating committee will be elected not less than two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting.
6. Officers: Removal of sentence indicating that the Vice Chair shall automatically become the Chair the following year.
7. Removal of Board Members: An addition to commission rules—Although there are currently no issues, there should be a process in place if deemed necessary.

R. Timmer moved to accept the proposed bylaws revisions and submit to the full Board for consideration at the October quarterly meeting. D. Reid supported. Motion passed.

The revisions to the bylaws will not become official until the EUPRPDC Board votes and concurs with the Executive Committee’s recommendation at their next scheduled meeting.

Old Business

CEO Hagan provided an overview of projects included in the EDA CARES Act Administrative Grant including:

- Creation of a Resiliency Plan
- Additional Staff
- Continuation of Economic Development Assistance
- Marketing Strategies for economic resiliency
- Contracting with Taste the Local Difference to provide support to local farmers with post crisis marketing

- Upgrades to technology
- Subscribing to an economic data model
- Support of the GIS Response Hub
- Partner with other organizations for strategy and best practices for pandemic preparedness
- Professional Development

Member Updates

D. Reid expressed concerns of the high-water levels especially with erosion along US-2. This erosion could cause serious issues to the road infrastructure.

He also noted that has been an increase in the tourism, real estate, and timber markets. There is an overall need for employees in the region.

R. Timmer described a resolution to support a bill to allow for a hotel tax in small villages and cities of rural areas. As a result of an increase in local tourism, it has been noted that there has been an increase in public safety needs as well as usage of the area infrastructure. This type of tax could be used to offset additional costs.

J. Holt noted that Phase 2 (Widening of the Lock) of the Soo Locks project is out for bid and should begin in 2021.

He also indicated that the brownfield cleanup is almost complete at the CFRE site and construction on the walls are scheduled to begin soon.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. following a motion by R. Timmer and support by D. Reid.