

**BRAINERD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**Thursday, January 5th, 2022, 7:30 a.m.**  
**City Hall Council Chambers**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, President Johnson called the meeting of the Brainerd Economic Development Authority to order at 7:30 a.m.

Upon roll call Commissioners Kelly Bevans, Marie Kirsch, Mike O'Day, Kevin Yeager, and Gabe Johnson were noted as present. Commissioner Bieser was noted as absent. Also, present were Executive Director Bergman, Community Development Director Kramvik, Finance Director Hillman, HRA Director Charpentier, Jennifer Haskamp, Swanson-Haskamp Consulting, Brenda Billman-Arndt, DDBC, Mary Devine-Johnson, Visit Brainerd, and Tyler Glynn, BLAEDC.

**Approval/Amendment of the Agenda- Approved**

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS BEVANS AND O'DAY, DULY CARRIED, TO APPROVE THE AGENDA.

**Approval of Consent Calendar**

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS BEVANS AND O'DAY TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR.

Upon roll call Commissioners Bevans, Kirsch, O'Day, Yeager, and Johnson voted "aye". No Commissioner voted "nay". The Chair declared the motion carried.

**New Business**

**Presentations by Consultants on 2022 Deliverables**

Tyler Glynn, BLAEDC, gave an overview of the goals in the service agreement by BLAEDC for 2022 including Unified Fund management, business planning services, recruitment, marketing and promotion, and the business retention surveys.

Chair Johnson clarified with Mr. Glynn that BLAEDC was asking to be compensated at the same rate in 2023 as they were in 2022 and proposing to perform the same services.

Brenda Billman-Arndt, DDBC, gave an overview of the goals in the service agreement by Destination Downtown Brainerd Coalition for 2022. Unfortunately, the DDBC was not able to produce promotional videos for local businesses, provide classes for business owners as it was cost prohibitive, or coordinate a main street job fair as the downtown businesses did not see a need. The podcast, business owner events, and many community events held in 2022 were successful and they want to continue to build their events.

Commissioner O'Day clarified whether the membership fees would be a future option. He also commented that fundraising at events held downtown would be one way for the DDBC to become more self-sustaining.

Ms. Billman-Arndt stated that membership fees and buy in from businesses is something that they are looking at pursuing in 2023.

Chair Johnson clarified whether the DDBC is a member of Main Street America as the monthly reports and statements at the meeting are conflicting. He also clarified that all payments from the City were made as well as why there was an increase in the request for funds in 2023.

Ms. Billman-Arndt stated that the DDBC has been a member of Main Street America through RETHOS in June of 2022 but are exploring the affiliate status of Main Street America. She stated that all checks cleared and clarified that she believed resources were the main reason the goals were not achieved in 2022.

Jennifer Haskamp, Swanson-Haskamp Consulting (SHC), gave an overview of the goals in the service agreement by Swanson-Haskamp Consulting for 2022. She stated that many of the goals are the same in 2023 as they were in 2022 with refining the goals with the findings in 2022.

Chair Johnson requested that for the properties that are to be marketed that Swanson-Haskamp develop a one-page document that would be posted to a website so that those looking for properties would have information readily available to them.

Ms. Haskamp stated that the report shared previously in a meeting is created, but the City needs to determine where it would be hosted. SHC is requesting more funding in 2023 to be able to provide more services that was established with the goals and strategy session that was held in the fall.

Mary Devine-Johnson, Visit Brainerd, gave an overview of the goals in the service agreement by Visit Brainerd in 2022. She stated that the development of goals in 2022 for Visit Brainerd was that there was no one place to send entrepreneurs, business owners, residents, and visitors. She has proposed developing a website for 2023 and assisting with a marketing strategy.

Commission discussion took place on the how the Commission could proceed with hosting information.

### **Consider the 2023 Shared Services Agreements**

Finance Director Hillman stated that if the EDA fully funds all of the agreements the EDA would have to use \$4,295 of the projected fund balance of approximately \$67,000.

Commissioner O'Day stated that BLAEDC, Visit Brainerd, and SHC have all worked toward their goals. He would like to see the DDBC become more independent rather than receiving more funding. The fund balance could be used for façade improvements.

Chair Johnson asked for clarification on whose funds the revolving loan funds are whether they were the City of Brainerd's or the EDA's.

Finance Director Hillman stated that the façade improvements could come from our revolving loan funds. Historically, the EDA makes the recommendations to the City Council for the use of the revolving loan funds. She stated that they are the City's funds.

Executive Director Bergman stated that in the first quarter the City would like to meet with BLAEDC to develop programs proposing to use the revolving loan funds.

Commissioner O'Day stated that taking a step back to review the agreement with DDBC would make him more comfortable.

Commissioner Bevans stated that he would be comfortable with entering into the agreement with the DDBC without the increase in funds.

Commissioner Yeager stated that in general he believes all of the consultants have presented to the EDA in the same tenor that they didn't accomplish everything they would have liked to in 2022 with the understanding that everything takes time. If the same conversations happen in 2023, he will review agreements with all of the consultants differently for 2024.

Commissioner Kirsch would be in favor of funding the DDBC at the reduced amount so that they could continue to expand on their proposal.

**MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS O'DAY AND BEVANS, DULY CARRIED, TO AUTHORIZE THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO THE SHARED SERVICES AGREEMENTS WITH BLAEDC, SWANSON-HASKAMP, AND VISIT BRAINERD AT THE PROPOSED AMOUNTS FOR 2023.**

Commissioner Bevans stated that the DDBC need an amount to start out 2023, he requested that the DDBC work on a stronger proposal and return to another meeting for more funding.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he will support the motion, he would like to see a more concrete proposal to fund fully.

**MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS BEVANS AND O'DAY, DULY CARRIED, TO AUTHORIZE DDBC AT \$10,000 IN 2023.**

### **Staff Reports**

Executive Director Bergman stated that at the last quarterly meeting of the EDA consultants the consultants requested that the EDA appoint a liaison for the group. She outlined items for the next meeting.

Chair Johnson appointed Commissioner Bieser as the Liaison to the Consultant group.

Eric Charpentier, HRA Executive Director, stated that the City Council approved the pre-application for the Small Cities Development Program in Southeast Brainerd. The HRA put out a survey to the area owners and have received seven back so far. The HRA continues to work with the developer at the Thrifty White site.

**Adjourn**

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONERS BEVANS AND O'DAY, DULY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The Authority adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

  
Secretary/Treasurer