

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
February 11, 2021 Meeting Minutes

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Sullivan called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM. Chair Sullivan led the pledge of allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Marty Colburn, Kevin Klein, Jessica Sullivan, Christie Minervini, Keef Morgan, Kevin Endres, Nate Alger

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Betsy Coffia, Gary Howe, Thomas Kern, Dennis Arouca

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES FOR JANUARY 14, 2021:

MOVED by Minervini, seconded by Klein to approve agenda and minutes for January 14, 2021.

YAYS Colburn, Klein, Endres, Minervini, Sullivan

NAYS

ABSENT Alger, Morgan, Arouca, Howe, Kern, Coffia

REPORTS/ACTION ITEMS:

Keef Morgan joined meeting.

- a) GTEDC Budget Update – Chris Forsyth, Summary of EDC 2021 Budget –
There are two designated line items for the County's EDC budget.
- Community Development Fund - operating budget, \$8,000
 - Revolving Loan Fund - \$27,000, expenses such as legal advice, consultants to take care of bad loans. Grand Traverse County is still waiting for a confirmation from MEDC that the bad loans that were addressed last year are off the County's books.

Jessica Sullivan suggested an update from Dennis Arouca regarding the Car Conference, the economic impact it brings to our area and will there be a conference in 2021

Nate Alger joined meeting.

- b) City Update – Marty Colburn
- The City Planning Director is retiring – have hired a new Director
 - Projects are being submitted, housing and parking near BATA, and 109 W Front Street, working with owners and MEDC
 - Safe Harbor discussions, designing housing units for the homeless
 - Budget – infrastructure adjustments
 - Discussions with County DPW – working together to address storm water issues,
 - Fish pass court case today – at 9:30

Christie Minervini – The City is working on Medical Marijuana Rezoning – open up economic opportunities on 8th Street corridor.

Keef Morgan – Where does the City stand with the EPIC GT system? Minervini hopeful by the next EDC meeting there will be an update

c) County Update – Nate Alger

- Economic Developments – Large residential units in Kingsley.
- Regional Authority for our Airport

- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Grand Traverse Economic Development (GTED) did not get the investment with the satellite program for Pugsley, another site fit their needs better.
- EO Tech Sites is looking to move their operation to Pugsley, moving from Ann Arbor, manufacturing gun and large caliber sites for firearms.

Chris Forsyth - National Survey

- Liveability report, Grand Traverse County is doing quite well in most areas compared to national benchmarks. However, GTC marked poorly when it comes to affordable housing and childcare. The survey confirms what we already know and the county needs to improve transparency. The survey will be circulated again in 2 years, online targeted surveys may help us.
The 2020 survey was a representative sample of 1700 people in our county.

Jessica Sullivan – Three years ago the EDC board took a look at the strategic planning cycle. The decision was made that we wanted to create a regional economic development to help support Traverse Connect. We accomplished what we said in our plan. 2020 was a hard year but now that we are hopefully seeing a light at the end of the tunnel, it is time for us to reevaluate our priorities. What ways can we support our region. What tools do we have that we are not utilizing?

Kevin Endres – As a new member has been putting pieces together of past EDC actions and involvement. Has seen these lofty goals we want to bring here to the Grand Traverse Region, but there has got to be focus on what the work force looks like here first. When there's no workforce due to affordable housing it's hard to support those new businesses. "Build your life" program with NMC is helping promote careers in the trades. There is low inventory for businesses to come here, and building costs are so high because there are so few people in the trades available. There has got to be a focus on building the skilled labor force.

Jessica Sullivan – Referred to a 4th Economy Steering Committee that met in 2019 that focused on the labor force. (She will pass on a copy of the report to Kevin)

Christie Minervini – Agreed with Kevin's comments, and would like EDC to focus on housing and child care.

Kevin Endres – Regarding Child Care, zoning has to allow for child care, there are very small zoning pockets in Grand Traverse County, then there is the issue of finding a piece of property in that pocket, and then all the licensing and permits. It is very costly.

Jessica Sullivan – Agreed, the liability to put all that effort and the requirements to make it happen, is not financially feasible.

Keef Morgan – There needs to be a public/private partnerships connect the dollars to the private persons

Chris Forsyth– Suggested it would be good for the County EDC to understand the working of the State EDC. It would be good to set something up with MEDC to have the Bond council explain when and how and what purposes those state bonds could be used for.

Nate Alger would like Dennis Arouca to provide an update on the car conference, with information on the benefits we believed we received for hosting this conference what the actual benefits have been.

d) Airport update – Kevin Klein

American Airlines has added daily flights to Philadelphia and Charlotte through the summer. There are only 2 hubs we don't have service to, Phoenix and Miami.

Other good news, the new Transportation Secretary mentioned TVC airport as 1 of the top 3 airports in a recent article.

Hopes of using grant funds to acquire Jet Blue Airlines.

Concerns – potential changes of acquiring a negative COVID test to fly, questions on logistics. Airline CEO's have spoken against it as well as airports.

COVID Relief funds may be available in the next relieve package. If there is not, there is talk of potential layoffs.

There is a private vendor helping the Health Department with COVID testing and asking to use the airport as a testing location.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

8. OLD BUSINESS:

9. SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT (Refer to Rules under Public Comment/Input above)

10. NOTICES

11. CLOSED SESSION: (IF NEEDED)

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Minervini, seconded by Alger to adjourn at 9:01 am

YAYS Alger, Minervini, Endres, Klein, Morgan, Sullivan

NAYS

ABSENT, Arouca, Howe, Kern, Coffia