

**Northern Maine Development Commission
ZOOM/In-Person Meeting Minutes
of the Executive Board
February 9, 2023**

PLACE: ZOOM/In-Person Meeting
DATE: February 9, 2023 3:15 p.m.

Attendance: Chair Pro-Tem Steve Pelletier, Dave Cyr, Melissa Devoe, Martin Dionne, Luke Dyer, Norm Fournier, Jim Gardner, Diane Hines, Nancy Ketch, Max Lynds, Gary Picard, John Sutherland, Patricia Sutherland and Penny Thompson.

Others Present: Michael Stiggle and Chandler Dixon-Timberwolves, Robert Clark, Judy Dinsmore, Brandon McDonald, Dave Spooner, Jared Tapley, Paul Terrill, Jacob Pelkey and Craig Lincoln.

1. Call to Order and Introductions:

Chair Pro-Tem Pelletier brought the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

2. Presentation by Michael Stiggle and Chandler Dixon-Timberwolves, Mars Hill:

Mr. Stiggle wanted to find out ways they can work with NMDC for the best economic goals for Aroostook County. He is looking to turn the Mars Hill Rexall into a convenience store and a co-packer for his BBQ sauce in the County. At this time, Hannaford stores carry his sauces.

Mr. McDonald indicated we have done grant writing for Timberwolves. Resources are limited but we will help where and when we can, including business development and marketing strategies.

Mr. Dixon asked for a contact at the Maine Manufacturing Extension partnership. Mr. McDonald will provide this to Mr. Dixon.

3. Approval of Executive Board Meeting Minutes of November 10, 2022:

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Cyr, seconded by Mr. Gardner to approve the Executive Board meeting minutes of November 10, 2022 as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

4. Approval of Executive Board and Loan Committee Joint Meeting Minutes of December 8, 2022 as presented:

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Fournier, seconded by Mr. Cyr to approve the Executive Board and Loan Committee joint meeting minutes of December 8, 2022 as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

5. Report of the Finance Audit Committee:

Mr. Clark indicated NMDC has been working with Auditor RHR Smith on June 30, 2022 bank statements which will be done by March. Financial statements will be provided to the Board in April.

We have done interviews for the Finance Directors position. There is one more for tomorrow. Brandon McDonald has been filling in as Interim Finance Director as has several other staff members to get things corrected. There is no money missing, the previous Finance Director was not doing the proper journal accounting.

Mr. McDonald indicated as of January 1, 2020 we wanted to grow our portfolio by \$10,000,000 with the help of SSBCI by the end of 2023. Once all of the loan programs are researched to find out how much should be transferred over from one program to the other, we will have a better understanding of where we are financially. All of our taxes and insurances are paid up.

Mr. Fournier indicated he appreciates how NMDC staff dug in to find the problem and get it rectified quickly. RHR Smith will help NMDC stay as a low risk entity.

Mr. Picard stated he is confident we will find the proper replacement so we can go forward performing the job correctly.

Mr. McDonald stated our Business Finance Department lending will continue through this without falter. We will have the highest amount of loans in NMDC's history by the end of 2023.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Cyr, seconded by Mr. Fournier to accept the Finance Audit Committee's report as presented.

VOTE:

Motion voted on and passed.

6. Ratification of Service Contracts and Agreements:

None noted.

7. Report of Aroostook County Tourism:

Mr. Pelkey provided a video for the Board regarding visiting the County.

He stated events and meetings were on hold during the pandemic which affected the numbers to the County.

He explained ACT has been targeting activity interest, demographics and geographics. ACT will be going out to RFP for the new visitor guide and will be focusing more on media and marketing the area. The Tourism Summit will take place in Houlton in April. He provided the ACT website for the Board to visit. www.visitaroostook.com

8. Renewable Energy Projects in Aroostook County:

Mr. Clark stated RFP's were issued on November 29, 2021 for development of renewable energy generation projects and the development of a 345 KV double circuit transmission line. This will go from southern Aroostook to the Maine Yankee Substation. It will provide 171 miles of double circuit 345 KV line to the Pittsfield substation and 67 miles of single circuit to Coopers Mills and Maine Yankee substations. Aroostook's substation is situated to access large wind projects in northern Maine. Some of the benefits of this project would be tax base increase, increase in construction jobs, increase in indirect jobs, direct on-going project jobs, \$57 million in property taxes and \$4,000/turbine for CBP or \$720,000/year.

For King Pine Wind Farm, construction start will be 2026 with application for permitting from 2023-2025 and testing and commission phases from 2028-2031.

345 KV Transmission Line, environmental permitting from 2023-2026, material procurement from 2025-2027 and construction, testing and commissioning from 2026-2028.

9. Northern Border Regional Commission Application:

Mr. Clark stated the meeting was held last week announcing there will be more funding this year (\$5.8 mil in 2022 to \$40 mil this year). It will focus on outdoor recreation and childcare. Applications for 2023 are due in May. NMDC will continue to provide assistance with the applications.

10. Update on Community Development Financial Institutions Applications:

Mr. Clark announced \$1.75 billion is available (\$350 million annually). There are 696 CDFIs applying for ERP funds. This is 4.4 times the available funds. More than half of the certified CDFIs submitted applications. The final decisions will be made the winter of 2023.

11. Other Business:

None noted.

12. Executive Director's Report:

Mr. Clark announced the employment of Jared Tapley as our new Broadband Navigator and Dan Umphrey as our SBDC Director.

13. Adjournment:

There being no further business to conduct, Chair Pro-Tem Pelletier declared the meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Galen Weibley
Secretary

GW/jd