

NIACOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - MINUTES
NIACOG, 525 6th St. SW, Mason City, Iowa
December 20, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.

Members in Attendance: Sis Greiman, A.J. Stone, Mark Johansen, Jim Wherry, and Executive Director Myrtle Nelson

Members Absent: David Vikturek

1. Call to Order: Greiman called the meeting to order at 12:23 p.m.
2. Approval of Agenda and Minutes of Previous Meeting: The members reviewed the current agenda, as well as, the minutes for the Executive Committee meeting held on November 13, 2023. Johansen made a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes as printed. Stone seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
3. Financial Report - October 2023: Nelson reviewed the 'Statement of Net Assets', the 'Statement of Revenue and Expenses', and the 'Monthly Disbursement Detail' (listing of checks) for October 2023. Nelson explained that six buses were purchased in FY 2023, and the revenues did not arrive until FY 2024, which is making the net income for FY 2024 appear \$649,000 higher without the accompanying expense. Nelson noted that no checks were written for capital expenses exceeding \$5,000. Stone made a motion to approve the financial report. Wherry seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
4. Communications and Reports
 - a. Shifting 5 Accounts from Wells Fargo to First Citizens: Nelson stated that five accounts currently held at Wells Fargo will be transferred to First Citizens Bank. She noted that two accounts and the credit card would remain at Wells Fargo.
 - b. Nominating Committee Report: Nelson informed the board that the Nominating Committee assembled a slate of officers including: AJ Stone as Chair, Sis Greiman as Vice-Chair, Jim Wherry as Secretary, and David Vikturek as Treasurer.
 - c. Transit Budget Enhancement Progress: Nelson explained that progress made on transit budget enhancement has included: completion of the NEMT training for a Clear Lake dispatcher, significant progress (halfway) with the Trip Master Software training, installation of tablets underway in buses, consultation with Mason City and agreement to increase their operations contribution and shop rate, undertaking consideration of adding NIACOG employees to Mason City's health insurance plan, calculation of options for increasing transit assessments, advertisement of transit services in newsletter, and recruitment of a veteran dispatcher.

5. New Business

- a. Assistant Transit Operations Manager: Nelson described the limited amount of tenure among the dispatchers and the recent frustration of the drivers with trip redundancy. She said that the Trip Master software will help with some of this, but that additional capacity is needed. She went on to say that she was able to recruit Jessica Anderson, who was previously a quality dispatcher with NIACOG for 10 years. Nelson noted that the current full time dispatcher recently gave 2 weeks' notice. Due to her years of experience and need to increase capacity, Nelson recommended hiring Ms. Anderson as an Assistant Transit Operations Manager at a rate of \$20 per hour. Stone made a motion to approve hiring Jessica Anderson as an Assistant Operations Manager at a rate of \$20 per hour. Johansen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
- b. Resolution for EDA Economic Development District Match: Nelson stated that the attached resolution relates to the ongoing funding received quarterly from EDA to cover wages and travel expenses for employees completing work that supports preparing communities for economic development and participating in training. She said that the program offers \$70,000 per year and requires an equal local match that NIACOG funds out of member dues and contracts for work. Wherry made a motion to approve the 'Resolution Authorizing the Filing of an Application for an Economic Development Administration EDD Planning Grant and Authorizing NIACOG's Executive Director to Sign Application Documents for Submittal'. Stone seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
- c. 2024 Meeting Schedule: Nelson presented a 2024 meeting schedule for the NIACOG board using the current formats of 2nd Monday of the month for full board meetings (odd numbered months) and 3rd Wednesday of the month for the Executive Committee meetings in even numbered months. She asked for input regarding whether the board would prefer to change any of the meeting dates. The consensus of the board members was to continue the same meeting format and to delay the November meeting by one week to avoid Veteran's Day.
- d. FY 2025 Assessments – NIACOG Dues & Transit Assessments: Nelson presented the calculation of the FY 2025 Member Dues and Transit Assessments using the board approved method, which would raise member dues to \$0.99/capita and transit assessments to \$2.01. She also discussed the need for the transit assessment to keep pace with the rising cost of labor. She stated that the driver and dispatcher base wages were \$10 per hour just 6 years ago and now they are more than 60-70% higher (starting at \$16 to \$17/hour). She noted that, even at these rates, recruiting and keeping drivers is a challenge. She asked the board for input on adding a supplemental transit assessment increase for the gap between the 3% increase in transit assessments of 2021 to 2023 and the 10% increase in operating cost during that same period. This \$0.13/capita increase would increase the assessment to \$2.14. Nelson reviewed the attached spreadsheet of calculated assessments for each county at the current rate, current rate plus inflation, and proposed rate to close the gap of the past 3 years. The committee input was to

propose to the full board what is needed to keep the transit program viable (\$2.14) and provide good detail to the board about the need for the increase and the value of the program to the counties.

6. Old Business:

- a. Resolution for EDA Revolving Loan Fund Application: Nelson discussed funding available through the EDA made available due to the storms in our region in December of 2021. A \$3 million grant to fund a new NIACC Career Center in Hampton was submitted in December. The region can apply for one more grant. A second project in Worth County that had been previously discussed at the Executive Committee meeting will not be able to meet the timeline for the grant. In place of this project, Nelson said that capitalizing a new revolving loan fund is an option for the region. She noted that loans from the RLF grant would initially be limited to the following counties: Floyd, Franklin, Hancock, Mitchell, and Worth. After the initial round, loans could be made anywhere in the region. The proposed loan pool would be capitalized by a \$520,000 grant from EDA and \$154,000 from NIACOG's existing loan pool that has been defederalized; however, commitments must be received from at least four (4) businesses to reach \$650,000 in loans to be eligible to submit the grant application. Nelson also reviewed the proposed loan terms for the RLF in the Administrative Plan, including a maximum loan of \$162,500, maximum of \$25,000 per job, loan types (working capital, real estate, equipment), interest rate, etc. Stone made a motion to approve the resolution, Wherry seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

7. Other Items from the Board: None

8. Next Meeting: Greiman noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, January 8, 2024 at noon in the NIACOG office.

9. Adjournment: Vikturek made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 p.m. Johansen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Myrtle Nelson, AICP
Recording Secretary