

NIACOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - MINUTES
NIACOG, 525 6th St. SW, Mason City, Iowa
August 16, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.

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

Members Absent: None

1. Call to Order: Greiman called the meeting to order at 12:05 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 June 21, 2023. Johansen made a motion to approve the agenda and the minutes as printed. Vikturek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
3. Financial Report
 - a. May & June 2023 Financial reports: Nelson reviewed the 'Statement of Net Assets', the 'Statement of Revenue and Expenses', and the 'Monthly Disbursement Detail' (listing of checks) for May & June of 2023. She also noted that two checks were written for capital expenditures that exceeded \$5,000 (check 24806 and 24807) including purchase of:
 - Bus: Davey Coach Sales, Inc., VIN # 1FD4E4FN6PDD14974, \$147,887.50
 - Bus: Davey Coach Sales, Inc., VIN # 1FD4E4FN6PDD14966, \$147,887.50

Stone made a motion to approve the financial report and the two buses purchased as listed above. Vikturek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
 - b. Transit Budget Enhancements – Nelson reviewed the attached list of financial enhancements. The Committee members make recommendations for additional approaches such as Wherry suggesting the use of vans instead of buses for routes with low ridership.
 - c. Dispatch Software Preapproval – Nelson reviewed the need for dispatch software in light of the retirement of the Brunsvolds who had built the current customized software, but are no longer available to support the software. Nelson said that three firms were interviewed and quotes have been requested from them. The three firms included CTS Software/TripMaster, QRyde, and Ecolane. She explained that the software will be more user-friendly than the current software and that will help when new dispatchers are hired. She reviewed prices of software purchases by other transit systems in Iowa and one bid that had been received. Vikturek made a motion to approve the purchase of dispatch software at a price of up to \$55,000. Stone seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

4. Communications and Reports
- a. NIACOG 50th Anniversary – Celebration: Nelson shared that the 50th Anniversary event was attended by between 175 and 200 people. Vikturek noted that people, who were present during the presentation, said that they had no idea that NIACOG performed so many important functions.
 - b. EDA Disaster Funding – NIACC Career Center & 2nd project or RLF: Nelson explained that EDA supplemental disaster funding was available to parts of the NIACOG region due to storms that happened in 2021. She recalled that the board had approved applying for a new revolving loan fund (RLF) pool at their June meeting. She said that she is working with NIACC on a grant for up to \$3 million to create a career center in Franklin County; the programs will help to prepare high school students for a career when they graduate, which will be of great benefit to the region’s businesses. She said that she is also working with Worth County on infrastructure for an industrial development. EDA has set a cap of two projects per region. She believes that the career center and Worth County projects should be a first priority over applying for additional revolving loan fund money; however, she said that if both projects don’t move forward, she would then plan to prepare an application for the revolving loan fund. The board concurred with that prioritization.
 - c. Housing Update
 - i. Housing Conference / Training Sessions: Nelson said that she is assembling people to assist with the Housing Conference.
 - ii. North Iowa Corridor Housing Corp.: Nelson explained that a new housing corporation is forming and asked her to be on the board. She intends to be able to learn more about how a housing corporation works to help others to replicate the approach in other areas of the region.
 - d. Economic Development Summit Sponsored by First Citizens Bank – August 17, 2023, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Nelson noted that an Economic Development Summit at the Mason City Arena in the Mall was put together by First Citizens Bank and that she was interviewed as part of video compilation to be presented at the event. Stone said that he planned to attend the event as well.
 - e. NORISC Safety Training Revamped and Scheduled: Nelson noted that the NoRISC safety training was back up and running with John Robbins coordinating the program. About 75 people are slated for the training, so at least 3 sessions would be scheduled. The session for next year will likely be held in Spring because it works better for employees who plow snow. An additional county has expressed interest in the training for next year and may add 40 more people.
 - f. Forest City Transit Building Not Awarded IDOT Funds: Nelson explained that, as expected, the Forest City Transit Building was not funded by IDOT and that the plan is to pursue the IDOT grant again in the next round. She noted that the amount of funding available had been cut from \$1.5 million to \$1 million. Kramer intends to

apply again and expects the likelihood of funding for the project to be better the second time around.

- g. Housing Trust Fund – Matching Funds: Nelson informed the board about the matching funds provided by counties for the Housing Trust Fund. She said that, based upon population levels, Cerro Gordo County is to provide \$5,000, Floyd and Kossuth are to provide \$3,000, and all other counties to provide \$2,000. She said that Kossuth County is refusing to provide more than \$1,500. She noted that Kossuth County paid \$5,000 per year when they were a member of the Homeward, Inc. Housing Trust Fund. She also noted that the Housing Trust Fund will be spending about \$140,000 on projects in Kossuth County in 2023. She said that, although NIACOG's Housing Trust Fund, is a separate entity with a separate entity with its own board, she would appreciate the Executive Committee's input. Stone recommended talking over the issue with Roger Tjarks, who is Kossuth County's representative on the NIACOG board, and to be sure to let him know about the level of work that is being done in the county this year. Board members felt that the contribution amount was easily justified.

5. New Business

- a. New Hires Including Transit Operations Specialist: Nelson described the difficulties encountered after NIACOG's long time transit operations manager resigned, which included hiring a new manager who failed to grasp reporting instruction, difficulty finding a new replacement, and subsequent hire of a good manager who lacks a background in transit. Due to these issues, the reporting to IDOT fell substantially behind for the transit system to the extent that NIACOG will not be able to collect July or August IDOT payments until the reports are submitted. In order to bring in the expertise to complete the reports, Nelson negotiated with the former transit operations manager to agree to return on a very part-time basis to get the reports caught up and train transit staff. Nelson asked for approval from the board for hiring Teresa Collins as a new transit operations specialist at \$33.75 per hour and no more than 25 hours per pay period. Stone made a motion to approving hiring Teresa Collins as a transit operations specialist at a rate of \$33.75 per hour on a part-time basis, not to exceed 25 hours per pay period. Johansen seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Nelson further noted that two new dispatchers were starting that week.
- b. EDA Revolving Loan Fund – Annual approval of Administrative Plan: Nelson explained that the CARES Act Revolving Loan Fund is required to have annual approval of its Administrative Plan. She had sent out the plan with proposed revisions prior to the meeting. Substantive revisions included updating unemployment levels (on page 3), removing loan accrual and payment delays for Micro Loans (page 9), increasing allowable loan size from \$120,000 to \$125,000 (page 9), and allowing up to 100% of collected loan interest to be used for administrative costs (page 10). Johansen made a motion to approve the CARES Act RLF Administrative Plan as presented. Wherry seconded the motion, and it passed

unanimously.

- c. Auditor Procurement: Nelson said that, since May, fifteen accounting firms have been contacted. Seven had replied that they will not be providing proposals. Seven had not yet replied. One bid was received for about \$45,625 with some potential additional fees, which is vastly higher than the \$13,000 fee that Larry Pump's firm charged for the previous audit. The Committee chose to delay approval for a couple of weeks and for an email to be sent out updating the Committee on the status of the procurement.
6. Old Business: None
7. Other Items from the Board: Nelson noted that the Mason City Transit System increased its driver wage to \$17 per hour, which is higher than NIACOG's part-time wage of \$16.25 per hour. On an unrelated note, she also said that she intends to have the September full board meetings serve as NIACOG's annual meetings.
8. Next Meeting: Greiman noted that the next meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, September 11, 2023 at 5:15 p.m. at Bennigan's.
9. Adjournment: Wherry made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:54 p.m. Vikturek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Myrtle Nelson, AICP
Recording Secretary