

**Lanesboro Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 3, 2025 – 10:45 a.m.
City Council Meeting Room & Zoom**

Present Members:

☒ Mindy Albrecht-Benson ☒ Michael Boho ☒ Tom Pursell ☐ Linda Tacke ☒ Kathryn Wade

Staff:

☒ Mitchell Walbridge ☒ Darla Taylor ☒ Michelle Marotzke

Guests: Bonita Underbakke, Alicia Peterson; *Via Zoom:* Sarah Peterson,

Call to Order: Chair Wade called the regular meeting to order at 10:45 a.m.

- A. **Agenda Approval:** Member Boho entered a motion to approve the agenda as presented; Member Pursell seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- B. **Public Comments:** No public comments were shared.
- C. **Consent Agenda:**
 - a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting, June 5, 2025
 - b. June Financials

Member Albrecht-Benson entered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Member Pursell seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

Department Reports

- A. **EDA Director Report:** EDA Director Marotzke shared her report and opened it up to questions. No questions were asked about the report. Chair Wade asked about the Paxton property and where that is for finishing the loan process. Marotzke shared that it is in the final stages.
- B. **City Council/City Administration:** City Administrator Mitchell Walbridge provided an update to the EDA Board.
 - Highway 250 project – Bolton & Menk’s principal engineer is scheduling 1:1 meetings with business owners. 16 of the 30 time slots are filled. Topics will include the individual concerns, business hours, and delivery schedules and access.
 - Feasibility Study – will be presented at the next Council meeting. The September Council meeting will determine the next steps.
 - Buffalo Bill Days is held August 1-3, before the next EDA meeting. Staff will be busy preparing and cleaning up. Feel free to stop by and help.
 - Congratulations to the Legion Lights committee for the League of Minnesota City of Excellence award.
- C. **Chamber of Commerce:** Executive Director Joe Goetzke was unable to attend in person but shared an update to the EDA Board.
 - The chamber had a great time at our booth at Rhubarb Fest. The festival was very well done and based on my observation was very well attended. Congrats to all involved in putting it on!
 - Our visitor guides have been very popular this year, and our board is talking about the potential necessity of doing another print run soon (despite us printing 3,000 more this year than in 2024)
 - John McGivern's Main Streets will be here July 18-21 to film their episode about Lanesboro!
 - We had 12,000 users and 40,000 views on our website in June (compared to 10,000 users and 36,000 views in June 2024)
 - We had 700 in-person visits at the visitor center in June (similar to June 2024)

- There is an arts delegation (led by former Lanesboro Arts director John Davis) coming to Lanesboro made up of people from different countries in Africa. They will be visiting and learning about rural arts communities and how the arts impact local economies and tourism. Mitchell and I, among others, will likely be involved in a panel discussion about this topic that afternoon. I don't believe this is a public event, but I've been told more details will follow soon.
- We still start our membership renewal drive this month, alongside early bird ad sales for the 2026 visitor guide.
- The chamber wants to extend our congratulations to the City of Lanesboro, the Lanesboro American Legion, Kathy Wade, and all the folks involved with Legion Lights for the awesome 2025 City of Excellence award from the League of Minnesota Cities! Check our social media tomorrow for our shout out about that well-deserved recognition.
- Some recent blog posts we've put out include:
 - [Rain or Shine: Why Lanesboro, MN is the Perfect Getaway—Even When it Rains](#)
 - [7 Ways to Satisfy Your Summer Sweet Tooth in Lanesboro and Whalan](#)
 - [Small Towns, Big Sounds: Tuning into the Live Music Scene in Lanesboro and Whalan, MN](#)
 - [What's the Connection Between William "Buffalo Bill" Cody and Lanesboro, MN?](#)
- We did a ribbon cutting for Hammarama on June 27th
- We have an upcoming ribbon cutting for Driftless Treasures on July 10th at 3:30pm

D. **School Board:** Sarah Peterson, Lanesboro School Board member, presented an update to the EDA Board.

- School will be meeting regarding the Highway 250 project on July 9th.
- Searching for a special education teacher; it is a high-level need and a difficult position to fill. It is a required position to fill, let us know if you know someone.
- The next school board meeting is July 9th at 7:00 p.m. at the school.

Revolving Loan Fund

- EDA Director Marotzke shared that there is approximately \$60,000 available to lend from the USDA program. USDA also approved an extension to July 31, 2026, to expend these funds. Chair Weber asked if we could apply for another fund; Marotzke shared that we could, but it may not be a competitive application as we still have funds available for lending. She is also working on a new RLF/EDA rack card that can be shared with businesses in the community.
- One loan is currently past due.
- The Paxton loan is in the final stages and there may be one more application to work on.
- Marotzke requested that a Revolving Loan Fund Committee be established to assist with recommendations to the EDA Board for the applications that come in. This committee would not be a decision-making body and would need to come to consensus before it is brought to the EDA Board for further consideration. It would also allow for deeper conversation about financials and personal information that does not necessarily need to be shared in a public meeting. Administrator Walbridge added that the committee would provide further vetting about the proposal. A motion was made by Member Boho to explore having a subcommittee with no voting power to review loan applications for the EDA. Member Albrecht-Benson seconded. Motion carried with all in favor.

Continued Business

- Review of EDA Work Plan - 2025-2027.** Marotzke explained that the original document has been revised to consolidate some sections and includes goals and strategies only. Implementation is staff-based so it is not included in the new document. Marotzke reviewed the goals and strategies for further input. Member Albrecht-Benson asked how this connects with the Comprehensive Plan. Marotzke shared that it will be included in the Comprehensive Plan and may be adjusted a little as that document comes to completion.

The new document also puts the goals into short-, mid- and long-term.

- B. **Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant Program Update.** Marotzke shared that the grant application was submitted on time for \$500,000. It will assist with the development of the Valley Vista project. There were 14 lots included in the application. Infrastructure includes water, wastewater, and streets.
- C. **Housing Study Information.** Marotzke has spoken with a firm who would charge \$10,000-\$15,000 to complete a full housing study. She also spoke with the University of Minnesota Extension department to complete a Housing Needs Assessment which is a student-led assessment. Preston used this model in 2018. The last study done for Lanesboro is in a box and is very old. Fillmore County completed one in 2019 and included Lanesboro and Whalen together. More to come about the status of this.

New Business

- A. **Downtown Commercial District Building Vacancies.** Chair Wade shared that Chamber Director Goetzke has asked for consideration of establishing an ordinance discouraging downtown commercial district vacancies. The purpose of this is to keep storefronts looking active and lively versus using them for storage or non-retail purposes. Joe sent a sample draft of an ordinance and Administrator Walbridge will do some additional research for other ordinances. The goal will be to remain friendly with property owners while establishing standards for downtown buildings. A survey may be considered to evaluate what property owners are looking for and to develop good relationships with them. It was agreed that city staff will take an inventory of the downtown properties that might be affected by a potential ordinance.

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 10:45 a.m. Member Boho will be absent from this meeting.

A motion was made by Member Pursell and seconded by Member Boho to adjourn the meeting. Chair Wade adjourned the meeting at 11:38 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Marotzke
City of Lanesboro
Economic Development Director