

Lanesboro Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 7, 2025 – 10:45 a.m.
City Council Meeting Room & Zoom

Present Members:

☒ Mindy Albrecht-Benson (*Via Zoom*) ☒ Michael Boho ☒ Tom Pursell ☐ Linda Tacke
☒ Kathryn Wade

Staff:

☒ Mitchell Walbridge ☒ Darla Taylor (*Via Zoom*) ☒ Michelle Marotzke

Guests: Bonita Underbakke, Joe Goetzke; Aiden Opatz, University of MN Extension; Gary Wade, Lanesboro Golf Club

Call to Order: Member Pursell called the regular meeting to order at 10:45 a.m. Member Benson joined via Zoom. *Member Pursell, as Vice Chair of the Lanesboro EDA Board led the meeting based on the revolving loan fund request and potential conflict of interest with Chair Wade's involvement with the applicant.*

A. Agenda Approval: Director Marotzke requested adjustments to the agenda as follows:

- a. Move item C.a regarding RLF request to after the guest presentation
- b. Add a New Business item for child care update
- c. Add to the end of the meeting a community update, time permitting

Member Wade entered a motion to approve the amended Agenda; Member Boho seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken, and motion carried with all in favor.

B. Public Comments: No public comments were shared.

C. Consent Agenda:

- a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting, July 3, 2025
- b. July Financials

Member Wade entered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Member Boho seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken, and motion carried with all in favor.

Department Reports

A. Guest Presenter: Aiden Opatz, an educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Community Economics department, gave a presentation titled “What’s the Big Idea?”. He shared that his research of Lanesboro shows that the city is doing many of the things his department recommends. He asked two questions: what is happening in the community and what can I do, if anything, about others? Aiden shared the four main approaches to economic development: industrial recruitment, grow your own people, cooperation, and resident attraction. Extension is able to assist with data collection, facilitation of community discussion, and economic impact analysis. They are not able to help with feasibility studies. The Board asked about his view on Lanesboro’s strengths. Aiden shared the natural environment, location, and proximity to Rochester. He is available to explore more ideas to build citizen groups or enhance the sense of community.

B. Lanesboro Golf Club RLF Application: Director Marotzke provided an overview of the application for a loan from the USDA Revolving loan Fund. The Lanesboro Golf Club (LGC) is requesting \$40,000 to assist with funding for its irrigation system. The organization is a non-profit and has existed for 100 years (1925-2025). They are working with a primary lender for full financing and they have raised a significant amount of cash to put toward the project. Terms would be 2% for 7 years with quarterly payments. Collateral would include a second mortgage on the property, behind the primary lender, a blanket UCC-1 filing, and a corporate guarantee. Marotzke explained the purpose of the debt service ratio and the projections for this project show 1.27 for 2026, which is a good ratio. The LGC President, Gary Wade, was in attendance and shared additional information about the age of the system and what has been done to keep it together over the years. Member Benson asked about the current status of funds

available. Marotzke shared that there will be approximately \$31-32,000 in each of the loan funds if this loan is approved. The approval would be conditional based on approval by Lanesboro City Council and USDA. Chair Pursell entered into the record that Member Wade abstained from discussion and the vote based on her role with LGC as its bookkeeper. Member Benson entered a motion to approve the loan application; Member Boho seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken, and motion carried with all in favor.

C. EDA Director Report: Marotzke shared that she attended FarmFest the day before and it was a good day for connecting with people. She referenced her report and was open to questions. None were offered.

D. City Council/City Administration: City Administrator Mitchell Walbridge provided an update to the EDA Board.

- Walbridge and Public Works completed a walk-through with members of Trout Unlimited and the DNR. The river restoration project will be bid out this fall for work from the dam down to the softball field in spring or summer 2026. This will help with installing rip rap and new vegetation on the riverbank, with funding assistance from a State grant. There will also be some pathways for fishing platforms.
- Buffalo Bill Days was successful. Member Wade commended the committee for all of their hard work.
- The Highway 250 project is moving along and there will be an informational meeting on August 28th at City Hall at 6:00 p.m. This will be more formal than the last one and include MnDOT and the engineering firm. The public hearing will be scheduled and based off of the informational meeting on August 28th. The Council will then have to give their municipal consent, which formalizes the order for the project to be done in 2027.

E. Chamber of Commerce: Executive Director Joe Goetzke presented an update to the EDA Board.

- Director Goetzke shared his excitement for the river restoration project and referenced Steve Soviniak as a proponent for the project before his passing.
- Congratulations and kudos to the committee and City for a successful Buffalo Bill Days. All of the events in the park have done a good job making sure the downtown businesses feel included in those activities.
- There were ribbon cuttings for Driftless Treasures and Hammerama. They have some more coming up for Stone Mill, Driftless Fiber Collective, and Raging River Arcade.
- The membership renewal drive is going on now and ads are being sold for the new visitor guides and maps.
- The Chamber is trying to raise money to attend the Chicago Travel and Adventure Show, which takes place in February. This is a very highly attended event and provides many opportunities for networking and featuring the community.
- John McGivern's Main Street had a successful weekend of filming in July. It is planned to air next spring. Goetzke is working on a local viewing before it is fully released.
- The African Rural Arts Initiative visited Lanesboro in July, they were sponsored by the US State Department. There were almost two dozen people from different countries in Africa, all who are in positions of esteem in the arts and cultures of their countries. Their Keynote Day was in Lanesboro and they also visited Washington DC, New Orleans, Minneapolis, and Cincinnati. John Davis, former executive director of Lanesboro Arts, was the Keynote presenter. There was a panel discussion as well.
- The Visitor's Guide has been very popular this year and 7,500 more are needed. 20,000 were initially ordered. There are over 1,000 locations throughout the region that the guides are displayed at.
- There will be bridge work done by the DNR that affects the bike trail, starting on September 1st. Riders can still get to Preston and Harmony but not west past the Old Barn.
- Member Pursell commented about the new candy store and Goetzke shared that it is nice to see Coffee Street awakening.

F. School Board: There was not a representative available for an update.

Revolving Loan Fund

- A. Available Funds:** Director Marotzke shared that the original RLF has about \$32,000 available and the new USDA fund also has about \$32,000 available. The new fund includes the required match from the EDA/City.
- B. Loans in Repayment:** Marotzke reviewed the status of loan payments. There is one loan that has missed three payments so Administrator Walbridge is working with the City Attorney to begin the collection process. Another loan is one month behind and working to get caught up. The last loan on the financials has a balance of about \$1,800 so may be a write-off. There was discussion about the property, Walbridge shared that it will go to tax forfeiture in March 2026.
- C. Pending Applications:** Moved to beginning of agenda.
- D. Revolving Loan Fund Committee Draft for Review and Approval.** Marotzke presented the Revolving Loan Fund Committee draft. This will create the loan committee that was originally included in the USDA Guidelines, but was removed earlier in 2025. The loan committee would consist of three members, one being an EDA Board member. This is an advisory committee rather than a voting committee and provides a recommendation to the EDA Board. Once it is approved by USDA, including the updated Guidelines, then we can move forward with creating that committee. Member Boho expressed interest in serving on this committee and has experience in reading financial documents. Member Boho entered a motion to approve the RLF Committee Guidelines and USDA RLF Plan update; Member Wade seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken, and motion carried with all in favor.
- E. New rack card for RLF promotion:** Marotzke provided an update on the new rack card, they are ready at Kelly Printing. These will be a good marketing tool for the RLF program.

Continued Business

- A. Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant Program Update:** No update at this time.
- B. Housing Study Update:**
 - Marotzke shared that they received one bid for a housing study, but have some additional requests waiting for responses. Member Pursell asked about affordable housing, Marotzke shared that would be an aspect of the study.
 - Member Benson asked what we would want to accomplish in the housing. Marotzke shared that the County's last study was in 2019 and included Whalan with Lanesboro. This would provide an updated needs assessment.
- C. Downtown Commercial District Business Vacancies:** Walbridge and Marotzke have not done an inventory of buildings yet. They will plan to get that done soon.

New Business

- A. Child Care Update:** Marotzke was contacted by Allison Whalen, the economic development director for Fillmore County, about an application to First Children's Finance for a Rural Child Care Innovation Program (RCCIP) application. Whalen is building a core team of 10-20 people so Marotzke will participate in that on behalf of Preston and Lanesboro. Marotzke shared the 2024 data from First Children's Finance that showed Preston was short 45 slots, Lanesboro was ahead 14 slots and Fillmore County as a whole is short 380 slots with Spring Valley needing 126 slots.

The meeting concluded with each member sharing their latest news, including storm damage clean up, a new sign at Hero Insurance, new employees and businesses, and work with legislators for funding. The City is working on a new reservation system for the campground, which will help manage who is coming and provide guarantees for those who want to plan ahead. It was also noted that Darla and Mitchell have become professional goat wranglers. They are unsure where they are coming from, but it is quite the Facebook saga to watch.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 4, 2025, at 10:45 a.m.

A motion was made by Member Benson and seconded by Member Wade to adjourn the meeting. Member Pursell adjourned the meeting at 11: 51 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Marotzke
City of Lanesboro
Economic Development Director