

**Lanesboro Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 4, 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 (Via Zoom) ☒ Michelle Marotzke

Guests: Bonita Underbakke, Joe Goetzke

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

A. Agenda Approval: Member Pursell entered a motion to approve the Agenda as presented; Member Benson 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, August 7, 2025
- b. August Financials

Member Boho asked about interest earnings for the RLF interest. Administrator Walbridge shared that the interest earned from payments goes back into the USDA Flexible Fund account. It was clarified that it does not get separated out on a different line. Member 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:

- a. Director Marotzke shared the new rack card for the EDA. These were also shared with the Lanesboro Business Promotion Group.
- b. Marotzke also shared that the City Council approved the Lanesboro Golf Club revolving loan fund application, and she is waiting for the legal opinion related to conflict of concerns. The attorney providing the opinion is different from the City Attorney due to additional potential conflict of interest as the City Attorney was asked to complete the title work for the project. Attorney Greg Schieber from Harmony has agreed to review and help on this application. Member Benson asked what the costs might be, Marotzke shared that Attorney Schieber has been given our cost structure and is trying to work within that.

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

- a. The prior Tuesday evening, City Council passed a Resolution for the Highway 250 project. Member Pursell asked for a potential start date. Walbridge shared that it is anticipated to be late March 2027.
- b. On Tuesday, August 26th, the City Council held a budget workshop to review the 2026 Preliminary Budget. It went well and they homed in on what they could to make sure estimates were “best guess”. A Resolution was passed establishing the proposed tax levy for 2026.

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

- Director Goetzke shared that a ribbon cutting was done at Driftless Fiber Arts, a retail shop and non-profit group that offers social connections and art.
- A ribbon cutting will be held this afternoon at the History Museum for the Talking Trail. This was launched earlier in the summer, but they waited for it to officially launch so any kinks could be worked out.
- It is Membership renewal season and time to update the Visitor Guide for the next year.

- The John McGillivray episode is expected to launch in Spring 2026, and they are thinking about a fun way to promote that.
- Note that there is bridge work on the trail between here and Fountain, so it is closed.
- More Visitor Guides have been ordered, they ran out earlier than expected.
- The website, lanesboro.com, has 67,000 users and 215,000 page views compared to 60,000/203,000 last year (for the same time period).
- The Chamber is seriously considering a booth at the Chicago Travel and Adventure Show in February 2026 to expand our footprint in that area for weekend getaway travelers.
- They approach the EDA for matching funds each year for a grant with Dairyland Power.
- Member Benson asked about the use of data that they got. Goetzke shared that it has been used for grant writing and business information and will be used more in the future. Data was also used in a Post Bulletin article recently written about lodging in Lanesboro and it was a great story.

D. 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. There are two new loans that may be coming soon.
- B. **Loans in Repayment:** Marotzke reviewed the status of loan payments. There are two loans showing past due, one has been made current. One loan is in collections. Member Wade asked how the collection process gets resolved. Administrator Walbridge stated that we will likely write it off at the end of the year. Marotzke shared that it becomes a cost-benefit decision.
- C. **Pending Applications:** One application has been received and is being worked on. A second is expected.
- D. **Revolving Loan Fund Committee Draft for Review and Approval.** Marotzke has received approval from USDA to make a Plan Update to re-establish the RLF Committee. She is working with two people to be on the committee, which will also include one EDA Board member.

Continued Business

- A. **Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant Program Update:** No update at this time.
- B. **DEED Paid Leave Outreach Grant Update:** Award notices have been moved to September. Marotzke shared that there are ways to have education sessions without the award and she is working with Joe Goetzke for a partnership with the Chamber.
- C. **Housing Study Update:** An RFP/work plan was created and sent to a variety of sources, including Bolton & Menk and others. To get assistance from organizations such as Extension, we would be about a year out. Marotzke and Walbridge discussed waiting until later 2026 to discuss again, especially with the Highway 250 project being more in focus at that time.
- C. **Downtown Commercial District Business Vacancies:** Darla took Marotzke on a downtown tour and was full of great information. Marotzke has some specific ideas and will work on reaching out to the building owners for conversations. Overall, the downtown looks good and doesn't have a lot of vacant buildings. Member Boho shared his thoughts on doing something to get people downtown, especially during the winter holiday season. Member Benson talked about pairing something with Legion Lights. Administrator Walbridge suggested that the EDA could run a best holiday window display contest. A motion was made by Chair Wade, seconded by Boho, for a Best Storefront Holiday Design Contest. Motion carried with all in favor.

New Business

- A. **Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation – Small Towns Grant application:** Marotzke provided an overview of the Small Towns Grant application. It was applied for by the City of Preston to bring Deb Brown of Building Possibility to Preston and Lanesboro. Ms. Brown walks around town, talks to business owners, and provides ideas for improving downtowns and business districts. The grant required a 25% cash match for \$10,000 (making the total project \$12,500) so Marotzke is requesting a \$1,250

contribution for matching funds from each of the EDAs in Preston and Lanesboro. Member Pursell made the motion to contribute \$1,250 toward this project and Member Benson seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

- B. Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation – Economic Development Grant application:** Marotzke shared that this is the program she plans to apply for funding to assist with creating a business development program for Preston and Lanesboro businesses. She has been working with Rochester Technical College's Customized Training Program to develop the program. There may be a funding request at the October meeting. Marotzke shared more about the design of the program, including what funding would be used for and how the program would be structured.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 6, 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 11:19 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Marotzke
City of Lanesboro
Economic Development Director