

Lanesboro Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 8, 2026 – 10:45 a.m.
City Council Meeting Room

Present Members:

Mindy Albrecht-Benson Michael Boho Tom Pursell Linda Tacke (remote) Kathryn Wade

Staff:

Mitchell Walbridge Darla Taylor Michelle Marotzke

Guests: Sarah Peterson (remote), Joe Goetzke, Brooke Pfeffer (remote)

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

A. **Agenda Approval:** Director Marotzke requested two additions to the New Business section of the agenda: add item D to consider sharing the cost of the Visitor260 Report with the Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce and item E to consider the EDA’s annual contribution of \$750 to the Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce. Member Benson entered a motion to approve the agenda with that addition; Member Boho seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.

B. **Public Comments:**

C. **Consent Agenda:**

- a. Minutes of the Regular Meeting, December 4, 2025
- b. Minutes of the L.E.A.N. Sub-Committee, October 23, 2025
- c. December Financials

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

D. **EDA By-Laws Review and Member Terms:** Marotzke shared information about the current EDA By-laws and stated that Administrator Walbridge plans to update policies in the coming year. There are some deviations with officers in the By-Laws and what has been done in the past. Staff proposes continuing with past practice. A motion was made by Member Albrecht-Benson to approve the following slate of officers for the 2026 EDA Board:

- a. Board Chairperson: Kathryn Wade
- b. Board Vice-Chairperson: Tom Pursell
- c. Appointment of City Clerk/Treasurer as Treasurer
- d. Appointment of EDA Director as Secretary

Member Tacke seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.

Department Reports

A. EDA Director Report:

- a. Director Marotzke shared highlights of her report, including:
 - i. The Paid Leave Outreach grant was not awarded, and staff is comfortable with that decision. They will share resources with business owners as needed.
 - ii. A grant application was submitted to the MN Department of Commerce as a follow-up of the CERTs Seed Grant. There was additional conversation about how bicyclists are charging their e-bikes now and what future opportunities might be, including cost of installation and location. There is interest in pursuing a potential e-bike charging station project, and Chamber Director Joe Goetzke shared his thoughts in support of this. Member Tacke also supported looking into opportunities.
 - iii. Marotzke shared that the City of Preston was awarded the grant from SMIF to create Bluff Country Business Academy. The anticipated start date is March 9th and Rochester Technical and Community College will provide the primary instructors. Marotzke will coordinate two of the sessions and include local resources.

- iv. Marotzke will present to the Economic Development Association of Minnesota at its Winter Conference on January 22nd. She will share a copy of the presentation in the February meeting packet.

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

- a. Reviewed Amendments to City Fee Schedule and Public Utility Fee Schedule.
- b. Read the City Council's Statement of Position on the Rural Health Innovation Initiative, including the complimentary documentary project. The City has declined to serve as a fiscal agency for the project and stated that the Mayor's use of her title in communications and promotional materials does not represent an official position or endorsement by the City Council or the City of Lanesboro. Prior use of the City logo on project materials was unauthorized and has been removed.
- c. The Minnesota Trout Unlimited Root River Habitat Improvement Project is moving forward. This will improve the fish habitat, restore floodplain access, and restore native vegetation. A public informational meeting will be held on January 21st at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall.
- d. The Lanesboro Public Library is hosting local author Nicole Howard and her son, Mason, who wrote and illustrated "The Ice Cream Adventure". The event, including an ice cream social, is on Saturday, February 28th and the collection is available for purchase.
- e. Provided a TH250 Project update:
 - i. Zoning changes and an updated overlay area to accommodate construction and property needs along Ashburn Street have been created.
 - ii. Property owners are getting their early notice letters for property acquisition.
 - iii. The following meetings are scheduled:
 1. Informational meeting is 2/18/26 from 4:30-6:00 p.m.
 2. Municipal Consent Public Hearing is 2/18/26 at 6:00 p.m.
 3. At the conclusion of the public hearing, the City Council will consider a Municipal Consent Resolution on 2/18/26.
 - iv. We will be pursuing the Public Facilities Authority funding including a low interest loan and WIF grant funding. There will be a lot of work done to keep Lanesboro visible for the next bonding bill at the State level.

C. Chamber of Commerce: Executive Director Joe Goetzke provided an update to the board.

- The Visitor's Guide production is in the final stages.
- The Chamber's annual meeting is on February 11th at 5:00 p.m. at Cedar Valley Resort.
- The Rochester Economic Summit is on February 3rd. Marotzke will attend with Goetzke.
- Granny's Liquor has a ribbon cutting this afternoon for new owner Stephen Rogers.
- LoveBirds in Lanesboro is the next signature event for the community and is being planned now.
- The Visitor's Guide contribution helps with matching funds for a grant through Dairyland Power.

D. School Board: School board member Sarah Peterson provided an update.

- The Hiawatha Valley Education District (HVED) recently opened their new location in the Winona mall. This is a centralized option for students with special needs, including autism and high-level emotional behaviors.
- The district is always looking for bus drivers.
- The next school board meeting is January 14th at 7:00 p.m. in the Forum.

Revolving Loan Fund

A. Available Funds: No change from the last meeting.

B. Loans in Repayment: Administrator Walbridge shared that the Driftless Trading Post loan had a payment of \$1,000 to catch up on four months but have not made their January 2026 payment. There is one other loan that has not made their January payment (Paxton), and Marotzke has reached out via email to the borrower with a reminder.

C. **Pending Applications:** There are no new applications pending.

Continued Business

- A. **Holiday Storefront Decorating Contest Recap:** Marotzke thanked the judges for taking time in the freezing cold. The winners were Lanesboro Arts (Best Theme Execution), Root Rod Co. (Most Creative Display), Amish Experience (Most Festive Display), and Driftless Treasures (Best Holiday Display). Red Ribbons were given to the other participants: Merchants Bank, Junipers, High Court Pub, and Granny's Liquor. We look forward to doing this again in 2026!
- B. **L.E.A.N. By-law Update:** Marotzke shared the updated By-laws for the L.E.A.N. Sub-committee. The updated document was approved at its December 11, 2025, meeting. Marotzke recommended approval with two edits that clarify there will be no more than 7 voting members to the Sub-committee. Member Benson entered a motion to approve the L.E.A.N. Sub-committee by-laws with the proposed edit; Chair Wade seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.
- C. **Bluff Country Business Academy:** Marotzke reviewed the SMIF grant and provided an update on activities being completed for the launch of this program. She noted that this project will be included in Continued Business until complete.
- D. **REV Program:** Marotzke shared that Val Lockhart with Ignite MN will facilitate a workshop on January 28th from 9:00 until 11:00 a.m. at Paddle on Coffee. This is the first in a series of workshops that have come out of the REV surveys. She has been working with Goetzke to develop workshops. This project will also stay on the Continued Business agenda until complete.

New Business

- A. **Set 2026 Regular Meeting - Date, Time, Location:** Marotzke offered the recommendation to set an official meeting date, time and location for the EDA Board meeting. Member Albrecht-Benson asked if the time could be adjusted to the afternoon. After discussion, it was agreed to keep the meetings as the first Thursday of each month at 10:45 a.m. at City Council Chambers. Member Benson entered a motion to set the regular meeting date, time and location as discussed; Member Tacke seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.
- B. **L.E.A.N. Annual Appointment of Subcommittee Members and 2026 Officers:** The membership list of the L.E.A.N. Sub-committee and 2026 officers was presented for consideration. Members include:
 - 1. EDA Chairperson – *As determined at the January 8 EDA Board of Directors meeting*
 - 2. Joe Goetzke – *As Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director*
 - 3. Kara Maloney – *As representative from Lanesboro's Arts Community*
 - 4. Mitchell Walbridge – *As city administrator*
 - 5. Michael Seiler – *As representative of the local business community*
 - 6. Lori Bakke – *As representative of the local business community*
 - 7. Allie Palmer – *As representative of the local business community*
 - 8. Steve Harris – *As ad-hoc member of the local business community*

Member Benson entered a motion to approve the agenda with that addition; Member Boho seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.

- C. **Letter of Support to Remove Housing District TIF Limits to Representative Greg Davids and Senator Jeremy Miller:** Marotzke presented a letter of support modeled after one that the Preston EDA approved. Member Tacke offered strong support for this letter and how important TIF can be in redevelopment projects, but income restrictions get in the way of these opportunities. Member Tacke entered a motion to approve the EDA's support of the letter; Member Albrecht-Benson seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.
- D. **Split cost of Visitor360 Report from Cobalt Community Research with Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce:** Marotzke shared that the cost of the report is \$1,195, which would be shared 50/50 with the Chamber. Member Benson entered a motion to approve sharing that cost; Member Tacke seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.

E. **EDA contribution to LACC for Visitor's Guide - \$750:** Marotzke requested approval to contribute \$750 toward the Lanesboro Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Guide. Member Benson entered a motion to approve this contribution; Member Boho seconded the motion. Roll Call was taken with four ayes and zero nos.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 5, 2025, at 10:45 a.m. Members Albrecht-Benson and Tacke will join via Zoom.

Chair Wade adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Marotzke
City of Lanesboro
Economic Development Director