

of \$834, with one loan paid off and 5 loans left, again with most of them being deferred. Outstanding Principal of \$31,497. Housing Programs, 804 Fund, balance of \$31,006, YTD Income of \$4,843, one loan paid off. We shouldn't see any expenditures as we don't have any active programs right now as there isn't any active SCDP grant program. Outstanding Principal is \$65,658. It was asked about a prior meeting when it was discussed partnering with the JEDC for an infrastructure project and what the status is on that. Nelson shared that the JEDC had several meetings and expressed interest in supporting the Council to apply for a grant. The Council did vote to apply for the LRIP Grant but at this point no agreement has been drawn up as we do not know yet if we will receive that grant money and what the remaining amount will be. Nelson has also found another grant to apply for that can be used for this project as well. It is on hold for now until we get more details. They do know that the EDA Revolving Loan Funds can be used as a low-cost way to pay for assessments.

c.

5. Other Business

- a. County Housing Abatement Proposal - We brought this up last year, right before Covid hit and things spiraled. Nelson provided a copy of Cottonwood's program but he does know that Nobles and Rock counties are looking at it as well. In short, it would be looking to partner with the County and other cities in Jackson County to have a 5 year abatement on new houses built. It could be used as an incentive to get more houses built in the community. Before bringing it to the Council Nelson wanted to bring it to our group to see if this would be a tool that we would want to support and ask the Council to consider. Once we have talked to all of the cities then the intent would be to talk to the County to see if they would be interested in something like this. Cottonwood did a 3 year window which Nelson would also recommend, it can then be assessed to determine if it helped to increase the number of homes built and can be extended if desired at that point. Their program does have a cap valuation at \$290,000, with the intent that if a really sizeable house going up out there that it is one that will happen anyways and not need it. So they added a cap so that anything over that amount would still be captured. So, if a \$500k house is built only the first \$290k is abated. They had used the school district also. Nelson is looking to the County and cities involved and would include Lakefield and Heron Lake also to make it a true county-wide program. We can talk to the school district but could move forward without them as that tends to be a bit more controversial when utilizing programs. They included in this revision the option to use the program for refurbishing existing buildings into housing, such as what Burmeister did at Sacred Heart clinic. This could be used at the Presbyterian building, depending on the potential sale in the works and if that does not move forward, they are currently talking with the Baptist Church but Olson has requested to be notified if that falls through. Vee shared that she has friends that have built in Worthington due to a 5 year abatement on their taxes and she feels this was a great incentive for them. It was pointed out that with the lots at half price and a 5 year abatement, why wouldn't you build? Unfortunately we were not aware of the deal with the Presbyterian church as that would have been a great opportunity to retrofit the education center into 12 apartments, it's a beautiful building. There is such a demand for housing that the time it would take to build new is a negative compared to a retrofit of an existing space. It was asked how we have talked with Burmeister and how his doing with his converted space. Nelson has talked with him and he really is a victim of the circumstances and we are trying to get him connected with potential renters as the MN West in-person attendance is very low. The employees in Windom tried being there but they don't really want the dormitory space, they want full apartments. AGCO is committed to some units this upcoming summer for their interns. He only has a couple brother-in-laws there so he is not making much for rent. Nelson asked the group if they would want this as a tool to use and want staff to continue to look at and go to the

Council with? It was agreed that this would be good to utilize. Skaret and the Mayor thought that the Council would be willing to consider it as it's only a 5 year abatement on taxes and there is a 3 year window to take advantage of it. Skaret also suggested doing a staggered rate with 100% abatement for one year, with 80% the next, then 60%, 40% and on. Then when they do have to start paying taxes it's not such a shock. It was asked what Windom is getting for their lots, but they don't have any. Drew Hage is talking to the City of Heron Lake to help them get housing, outside his jurisdiction. Nelson has heard that Prime Pork in Windom is at 900 employees with the intention of going up to 1,200. Plus AGCO and other local businesses are hiring so the housing need is great. It was brought up that we might want to have a higher cap valuation if we stagger the abatement as the costs to build over the last year has skyrocketed. Nelson will look into how they came up with the \$290k and report back. A simple, basic house could be built for about \$275k but we don't want to limit the home scale.

- b. Telecommuter Forward! Community Application - Nelson explained that there are 14 cities in the State that have this designation. All this will take is about an hour for Nelson to fill this out and put his name as the contact and that would put us on the list. We have great broadband and this would be a way for us to highlight the fact that we have great broadband. They haven't done a lot in the past but with Covid it is anticipated that these types of things are going to be more important for people to look up to see where they can go that can handle them working from home. Nelson is looking for support from the group to take it to the Council to get us on the list. The Council would need to approve it and pass the Resolution that Nelson has a copy of. Olson pointed out that there are a lot of people working from home and it doesn't matter if they live in Phoenix or Jackson, so between this and the abatement these are great tools to get people to move to Jackson.

Vee moved to approve Nelson moving forward with the Telecommuter Forward! Application and taking it before the Council; seconded by Olson. Motion passed.

6. Adjourn

Chair Sieler adjourned the meeting at 12:45 pm