

**Jackson Economic Development Authority**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 12:00 p.m., Jackson City Hall**

**Quorum: 5**

**Voting Members:**

**Voting Members:** Kent Bargfrede, Mike Brinkman, Tim Olson, Vice Chair; Rocky Siler, Chair; Marcus Polz, Mayor; Joe Pell, Councilmember; and Michelle Eckert

**Staff:** Wendy Anderson, EDA Interim Director; Matt Skaret, City Administrator; and Shelley Pohlman, EDA Assistant

**Absent:** NA

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**Call to Order**

Rocky Sieler, Chair, called the EDA meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

Chair Sieler welcomed Michelle Eckert, the operations manager of the Jackson Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

**1. Agenda Changes**

**Motion made by Tim Olson, seconded by Mike Brinkman, to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**2. Consent Agenda**

January 9th meeting minutes

**Motion made by Kent Bargfrede, seconded by Mike Brinkman, to approve all consent items. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**3. Financials**

Wendy presented the list of balances of active EDA accounts.

**801 RLF outstanding principal \$1,550,057.36**

**802 outstanding principal \$5,452.86**

**804 outstanding principal \$45,744.17**

**COVID outstanding principal \$124,077.12**

She mentioned that she has been concentrating on the Revolving Loan Fund loan accounts. She updated the insurance information for three business accounts and confirmed that Jackson is listed as a loss payee. She also mentioned that the RLF Committee is working on updating the application form.

#### 4. Other Business

- a. **Michelle Eckert will be replacing Arlene Vee.**  
**Motion made by Mayor Polz, seconded by Councilmember Joe Pell, to appoint Michelle Eckert to the EDA board. The motion was approved unanimously.**

Michelle will represent the HRA.

- b. **A&B update from JBDC (update by Wendy)**  
The JBDC approved the agreement with A&B Laser. Next, the JBDC will present the agreement to the City Council for approval.
- c. **New board members to the JBDC board are Mark Titus (City Council Member) and Mary Brant from Smokin' Java**

Two new board members were approved by the JBDC, and Mark Titus is the City Council liaison

- d. **Little Huskies Learning Center Funding Request was approved.**

The City Administrator, Matt Skaret, said the City Council approved the Little Huskies' request for an additional 40K for operations. He said these funds should cover operations costs by the end of the lease, May 31. The operations at the center have stabilized and are net neutral, except for the expenses incurred for insurance and building maintenance. The center currently has some open slots; filling them would improve the bottom line. The center operates as a non-profit organization and receives subsidies from the City of Jackson.

The council is exploring different options for daycare, including rental pods, and collaborating with Luverne and other communities to find effective solutions, as stated by the Mayor.

- e. **Belmont Heights - Event & Pay Application No. 2 was approved by the Council**  
Matt reported that the City Council of Jackson postponed the approval of the pay application until they could answer additional questions. The concerns have been addressed, and DBS is collaborating with investors to commence construction in spring.

- f. **Econo Lodge Letters**  
During the meeting, Matt provided an update on the Econo Lodge, stating that the process of dealing with the property has been ongoing for five years. In 2019, the hotel was closed due to fire code violations but has since reopened. The Minnesota Health Department representative has been working with the owners regarding breaches. Law enforcement has received numerous calls on domestic violations, drug use, and civil disputes. As a result, the Jackson City Council sent a letter to Choice Hotel informing them of the situation. An investigator from Choice Hotel, based in Las Vegas, was sent to survey the property. After reviewing the situation, Choice Hotels removed the franchise brand from this location. The signage must be removed or covered. The City of Jackson

building inspector has visited the property and will provide a report later. The Mayor has also contacted the Minnesota Department of Labor regarding the homeless people working for the hotel.

Michelle informed the group that two couples had applied for housing with the HRA but were denied due to their criminal records.

Kent inquired about the possibility of the City of Jackson condemning the property. Matt clarified that selling the property would be the best outcome, as the condemnation process is both expensive and time-consuming.

**g. UCAP Housing (update by Wendy)**

UCAP reported that both houses had been sold, with closing dates scheduled for March and January. In light of this news, they have requested two additional lots (numbers 7 and 8, located on North Pond Drive) to begin construction in the spring. Brad Anderson has started the process, and the same contractors (Welp and Temnitz) will be used for the new homes.

**h. Legislative Action Day is March 20**

Matt said he usually attends Legislative Day but won't attend this year. He encouraged members to participate.

Wendy mentioned that she plans to meet with Scott Riemer, Rich Koch, and Senator Bill Weber to identify Jackson's needs.

**i. Alamo Property**

Wendy said she has listed the Alamo property for sale and is developing marketing strategies to sell it.

**j. Demo grant/loan meeting for the Coast to Coast building**

During the meeting, Wendy informed the board that she is working with MN DEED and Brad Anderson to learn about grant funding and compliance with eligibility requirements for blighted and unsafe buildings in the community.

She also mentioned that Mitch Jasper owns the Coast to Coast building and is currently discussing its sale with the City of Jackson. It is essential to mention that the building is situated in the Historic District.

Matt added that the condemnation process is both expensive and time-consuming. The City of Jackson had paid \$500 for the option to buy the building.

**Other**

Tim Olson asked for an update on the status of the Prairie Wind Hotel. The city administrator replied that the property is currently in the appeals court.

Tim mentioned that the property has an AAA-recommended sign located on it. He asked if it would be appropriate to contact AAA about the destination sign.

Chair Sieler asked about the West Ridge lots. Matt informed the group that the Westridge Lots are all sold.

Kent was inquiring about the status of a local business that wants to expand its woodworking cabinetry furniture on Ballard Ave. He intends to build a shed on the property for furniture making. Currently, he operates out of his home and in Mountain Lake. The business wants to purchase the 20-acre TV Tower Ballard Ave. property, which already has utilities. Kent said getting the property back on the tax rolls would be nice.

**5. Adjourn**

**Motion made by Mayor Polz, seconded by Kent Bargfrede, to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.**

**The next meeting is Tuesday, March 12, at 12 p.m.**