



SIREPA

SOUTHEAST IOWA REGIONAL
ECONOMIC & PORT AUTHORITY

Minutes of the SIREPA Board of Directors
Tuesday, March 12, 2024, 8:30 a.m.
In-Person at KL Megla Building or via Zoom
2495 280th St, Montrose, IA

I. **Call to Order** at 8:30 a.m. by Mike Hickey, Chair

Roll Call:

Members Present: Director Mike Hickey (Chair); Director Bob Dodds (Vice-Chair); Director Bruce Hardy (Secretary/Treasurer); Director Michael Dunn via Zoom; Director Denise Boyer; Director Jack Smith; Ex-Officio, Garry Seyb, Lee County Supervisor; Ex-Officio, Matt Larson, State Treasurer's Office via Zoom

Members Absent: Ex-Officio, Tom Schultz, Lee County Supervisor

SEIRPC Staff Present: Mike Norris; Zach James and Sherri Jones via Zoom

Guest(s) Present: Chuck Vandenberg, Pen City Current; Tim Fencl, Danville Mutual Telephone Company; Dennis Fraise, Lee County Economic Development Group

II. **Consider Approval of Agenda (Board Action):**

Hardy made a motion to approve the March 12, 2024, meeting agenda, second by Smith. Motion carried.

III. **Consider Approval of November 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Board Action):**

Smith made a motion to approve the November 1, 2023 meeting minutes, second by Hardy. Motion carried.

IV. Consider Acceptance of Financial Report (Board Action):

Norris said the financial statements are published each month with SEIRPC financials and can be viewed at www.seirpc.com. There were no significant changes and Norris said he would send the current statement to board members. No action necessary.

V. Approve Making Application to Rep. Miller-Meeks Community Project Funding for Lee County Career Center (Board Action):

Norris gave a brief background on the former KL Megla building's transition to the Lee County Career Center. He said the career center requires additional buildout to fully realize the vision. This includes classroom and industrial technology space, parking area, and training equipment for industrial technology and healthcare careers. Rep. Miller-Meeks office has created an opportunity to apply by March 15th for Community Project Funding through the Representative's office for FY2025 federal budget (October 2024 – September 2025). The project application total is \$2,201,943. Fraise said SCC, Keokuk, and Fort Madison school districts have been great partners. Fraise said a 501c3 has been formed to run the center. Norris said SIREPA's role will be to apply for the funding and if awarded SIREPA will also be the contracting entity. Dunn added that it would be appropriate for SIREPA to establish a resolution to thank the Fort Madison Building and Trade Class and Iowa Fertilizer for their contributions to the center. Fraise added we need to include Great River Health and ConAgra as well. Smith made a motion to amend "Chamber 28J" to "Chapter 28J" and approve Resolution No. 1-2024: To apply for Community Project Funding to Build Out and Equip Lee County Career Center at 2495 280th Street, Montrose, IA, second by Dodds. Motion carried.

VI. Broadband Update (Board Information):

Fencil updated the board on the current status of the broadband project: Fiber backbone construction is complete; Fiber has been spliced and the redundant ring is complete; Electronics are installed, powered up and lit at the Keokuk location; Migration of current customers to the ring will be complete by March 31; Wever permissions to install fiber received by 63 properties so far; Interest expressed by 14 additional locations outside the target area; and Fiber to the home construction will begin once permits are received from the county engineer. Future updates include: Fiber construction is estimated to be complete before September; Fiber lease payment to SIREPA will begin December 2024; Future funding for the remainder of Lee County possible by BEAD; DOM-DOIT and NTIA should release BEAD opportunities late 2024; and Any future funding discussion is unlikely until BEAD is awarded. No action necessary.

VII. Receive 2023 Annual Report (Board Action):

Norris highlighted the SIREPA 2023 Annual Report by giving a brief background and reviewing 2023 results which include: Successful ownership of Lee County Career Center (LCC) in partnership with Lee County Economic Development Group; Every 8th and 9th grader at Central

Lee, Fort Madison, and Keokuk school districts visited the center to interact with area industries and their career possibilities; The LCC is incubating a startup solar panel pallet manufacturer that has secured Dept of Energy grants, venture capital, and large orders from solar panel companies; and Lee County Broadband Expansion Program - \$1.9 million investment into Lee County for new rural services and a 14-mile fiber backbone providing redundant fiber loop for Lee County and expanded data capacity. He also discussed the 2024 plan of work which includes: Monitor construction of Lee County Broadband Expansion Project; Plan the future of Lee County Career Center and 12-acre property with LCEDG; Involvement with natural gas expansion and investment process; Plan for future broadband investments with private partners; Grow SIREPA into the most effective port authority in the Midwest; and Communicate with county stakeholders to complement development projects. Norris said FY2024 Budget includes revenues total \$36,206 and expenses total \$36,206. Hardy made a motion to accept the 2023 Annual Report, second by Smith. Motion carried.

VIII Adjourn (Board Action):

Hardy made a motion to adjourn at 9:30 a.m., second by Smith. Motion carried.

Bruce Hardy, Secretary/Treasurer

Date: _____