CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order at 7:31 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT
There was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND MINUTES FROM MARCH 6, 2014
MOTION by Gasterland/McKenney to approve the La Crosse County Economic Development Fund minutes of March 6, 2014. Motion carried unanimously (Ebert, K. Johnson, Richards & Veenstra excused)

PURPOSE, STRUCTURE AND REVIEW OF BUSINESS ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM
Included in the packets was a red line version of program materials with changes suggested by staff. Staff has met with the Small Business Development Center, as they were the non-profit entity working with two applicants that were turned down last month. Based on their feedback, staff is making the following suggested edits:

- Change name of the grant program from Business Assistance Grant Program to Innovation & Diversification Grant Program.
- In the Program Description, add “to complete innovative projects”.
- In the Grant Funding Requirements: reduce minimum to $1,000 instead of $2,500 and in the Non-profit match: change from 25% to 10%.
- Add the word “Project” before “Outcomes and Evaluation”
- Under Project Outcomes & Evaluation add: “the amount of a grant request should be consistent with the anticipated outcomes of the project”. Steve O’Malley suggested also adding, “this project will assist businesses with the goal of expanding their product lines and/or markets and achieving greater diversification and job growth.” This will also be clarified in the Evaluation Criteria.
- Under Project Budget: “Please also provide a brief explanation of the financial need for the grant and explain why the business is unable to fund this project without the grant”.
- Under Evaluation Criteria Funding, add: “company has demonstrated a need for the funding”.

Brian Fukuda noted that it is a part of the reporting requirements in the Grant Contract that the receiver of the grant come back to the EDF within a certain period of time to report on the success of the program. They need to meet their program’s sustainability goal, and if the project is successful, they are required to pay back a portion of the grant.
Staff will do some research regarding micro lending, as well as work on these refinements. **MOTION** by Lange/Wehrs to approve application as presented by staff with the refinements that staff has suggested. **Motion carried unanimously** (Ebert, Johnson & Richards excused).

**UPDATE ON BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION INTERVIEWS**
The 7 Rivers Region organized a Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) process. Staff and others were scheduled to complete 27 interviews with businesses in December and January. They completed 22 businesses; talked with four who were not interested in an interview, and one who they are still trying to connect with. Of the 22 interviews that were conducted, 15 of them have been entered into the 7 Rivers Region database. Staff assumes that there will be a comprehensive regional report on these interviews this spring. There are a number of committee members that assisted in these interviews and the plan is to do this on some level on a yearly basis. Staff felt that this was a very successful worthwhile project.

**LAKEVIEW BUSINESS PARK BACKGROUND/UPDATE**
One of the interviews in the BRE project was with Select Trusses. Chris Wakefield, the manager at Select Trusses discussed the poor internet service in the Lakeview Business Park; River Steel also confirmed this. Previously, attempts at getting Charter to install cable and internet services in the Lakeview Business Park were unsuccessful, but this is once again being pursued.

CP Rail is spending a significant amount of their time on oil and sand delivery and the number of trains has increased significantly. This has reduced their service quality to some of the lower needs users. Both of the users in the park of CP have lumber needs, so staff has made contact with businesses that the County has contracts with to provide rail service to the park.

Charlie Handy showed pictures of the Lakeview Business Park. The Economic Development Fund still owns about 16 acres in the business park. The EDF originally bought 80 acres from the County. There are covenants and deed restrictions in the Lakeview Business Park that were adopted on these 80 acres. As we move forward, these vacant properties should be sold and also the covenants and deed restrictions should be reviewed.

**UPDATE ON LOT C ADVISORY COMMITTEE WORK**
The final meeting of the Loc C Advisory Committee is scheduled for this afternoon. This is an adhoc committee that was formed to do a visioning process on Lot C as the County is considering offering Lot C to the market for development. The committee was led by Stantec, which is our development consultant. A lot of the data has been collected that a developer would need to get something started on this lot. Stantec took the information from the market study and put it into massing analysis, including a parking structure, hotel, housing, Associated Bank, office space, public open space, etc. for a high density, high tax base development.

The next steps will be for final recommendations made to the County. There has been an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) released to the development community which are due back April 30th. There is a Proposer Conference today. The RFQ will narrow down the pool
of developers, who will then be asked to respond to an RFP. The goal is to have a sale of Lot C by September.

**UPDATE & DISCUSSION ON COUNTY PROPERTIES**
- RFP for Realtor – updates in staff report.
- Park Plaza – updates in staff report.
- Administrative Center/Downtown Campus – updates in staff report.
- Lakeview Health Care Center – updates in staff report.

**NEXT MEETING: MAY 1, 2014**

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**
- BRE interviews
- Begin discussion on Lakeview covenants
- Synergy Conversation leaders invited (June)

**ADJOURN**
There being no further business, **MOTION** by Hampson/Veenstra to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 a.m. **Motion carried unanimously** (Ebert, K. Johnson, McKenney & Richards excused).

The above minutes may be approved, amended or corrected at the next Committee meeting.

**Approved June 5, 2014 - Terri Pavlic, Recorder**