CALL TO ORDER
Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT – there was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MARCH 7, 2019 LA CROSSE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND, INC. MEETING
MOTION by Holtze/Giese to approve the minutes of the March 7, 2019 La Crosse County Economic Development Fund, Inc. meeting. One correction was noted: the “next meeting date” listed on the minutes was not correct and will be changed. Motion carried unanimously; Kruse, Balacek and O’Malley excused.

SMRT BUS UPDATE
Charlie Handy distributed a map of the SMRT bus routes. Recently, there was a significant expansion by adding a route to the Tomah area. La Crosse County, as the new administrator of the SMRT bus program, has been awarded both an operating and a capital grant for 2019. A resolution will be going to the Executive Committee and the County Board to accept these grants. The operating grant is a lower percentage than expected, but the capital grant is significantly more than predicted. We were awarded a new electric bus and two new regular 26 passenger buses (only budgeted for one). We will need to find additional local match dollars to provide the level of service planned for 2019, as well as additional local capital match as these are 80/20 grants. Peter Fletcher, Transportation Coordinator, for the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission, was present to discuss details and answer questions.

LAKEVIEW BUSINESS PARK UPDATE
Industrial Drive in the Lakeview Business Park was again flooded in March. We have sustained some erosion and pipe damage as a result, and the tenants of the park are very concerned. This has generated important discussions between the Village of West Salem and the County as to design of repair, financing and responsibilities. There was an Engineering Study done in 2018 with alternatives to help improve the situation. It looks like the Village of West Salem will be taking action to improve the storm water situation in the Village of West Salem. Updates will be provided at future meetings as these continuing discussions take place.

BROADBAND AVAILABILITY DATA
The EDF board had requested some data on broadband availability in the county. The FCC has a website that provides broadband coverage data - https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/#
Brian Fukuda presented some data from Bug Tussel Wireless, who is concerned with the lack of attention that rural areas receive from cellular providers. Bug Tussel’s objective is to provide cellular/broadband service in rural areas where larger carriers chose not to provide service or could not provide service from an economic or company objective standpoint.
Brian also discussed the Governor’s Budget proposal for creating an internet assistance program to aid eligible Wisconsin Works families and by increasing funding for Broadband Expansion Grant Program at the Public Service Commission.

ECONOWATCH
Charlie Handy distributed the Spring 2019 Econowatch. This document is 95% complete; Charlie wanted members to review it and be ready to discuss in greater detail at next month’s meeting. Charlie will distribute electronically as well.

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL INCENTIVE GOALS
As we go through the CDBG-CLOSE process, it is a good time to review our financial incentive programs to see if we are still meeting a community need and filling a market gap, or if there are changes that should be made to better serve the community. Brian Fukuda presented a Powerpoint regarding Financial Incentive Goals. Brian went through the program eligibility for our current programs: Micro Loan Fund, Participation Loan Fund, and the Innovative & Diversification Grant Program. Discussion ensued. A few of the ideas discussed were:

- Establish minimum wage requirements for these loans
- Grants vs. loans
- Set a higher minimum dollar amount for loans
- Leverage other resources – combined with the City, banks, schools

Staff will review and research these suggestions and come back with recommendations on these loan requirements at the May or June EDF meeting, for continued discussions.

REPORT ON MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTIONS INVOICES
During the 2019 budget discussions, the EDF members asked to be made more aware of the payments to partner organizations. We have received the following requests for payment from the $50,000 that was budgeted in “Memberships Other”:

- Chamber of Commerce: $3,275 (changed from amount based on number of employees to an ability to choose your membership level) up 14%
- 7 Rivers Alliance: member renewal request has been received; last year we were at the $5,250 Cornerstone level
- DMI: $3,000 Landmark level
- LADCO: $34,462 paid in quarterly payments, so first payment of $8,615.50 is due

Attached in the packets was a summary of the various membership levels that are offered by the partner organizations. Discussion ensued on whether or not these amounts and levels should continue. Staff will do some more research on the questions brought up. Patti Balacek was not able to attend the meeting but Brian read an email from her stating that, she hopes that the EDF would revisit this matter a year from now, giving the new Executive Director of LADCO, Jorge Beltran, an opportunity to show what LADCO is capable of.

MOTION by O’Malley/Giese to pay the Chamber of Commerce at the Champion level of $1,500 and ask them for an explanation of why we should be at the Leader level; and pay the other organizations as follows: $5,250 to 7 Rivers Alliance; $3,000 to DMI; first quarter dues of $8,615.50 to LADCO. Motion carried unanimously; Balacek and Kruse excused.

AGENCY UPDATES:
- Child Care Summit at AmericInn on April 23 – a day long event regarding child care – challenges identified by the Workforce Development Plan. Karl Green will be releasing the results of the La Crosse County Child Care Survey.
The MRRPC and the La Crosse County Facilities Department are working on an Outdoor Recreation Plan – a draft is on the County website, and should be complete in the next couple of months.

NEXT MEETING: May 2, 2019 at 7:30 A.M.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS
- Financial Incentive Goals (May or June)
- Econowatch

ADJOURN
There being no further business, MOTION by McKenney/Moua to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 a.m. Motion carried unanimously; Kruse and Balacek excused.

APPROVED May 2, 2019 - Terri Pavlic, Recorder