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

PUBLIC COMMENT – there was no public comment.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 5, 2019 LA CROSSE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND, INC. MEETING

MOTION by Hampson/Weidenbach to approve the minutes of the December 5, 2019 La Crosse County Economic Development Fund, Inc. meeting. Motion carried unanimously; McKenney and O’Malley excused.

CONSIDERATION OF INNOVATION & DIVERSIFICATION GRANT APPLICATION – TEASE SALON & BARBERSHOP

Included in the packets was a staff summary and grant application from Tease Salon & Barbershop for an Innovation & Diversification Grant in the amount of $10,000. We have budgeted $20,000 for this program in 2020. April Benson, owner of Tease was in attendance to discuss and answer questions. Tease has been operating successfully in downtown La Crosse since 2011 and provides space for independent small business owners to come together and deliver salon services by renting stylist chairs on a monthly basis. Tease is in the process of expanding into a new, larger space at 511 Main Street, and diversifying the offerings to include a wider variety of salon services. Tease has offered to pay back 50% of the grant amount if they are able to meet the goal of leasing all stylist chairs within one year of opening. MOTION by Balacek/Giese to approve the grant amount of $10,000. Motion carried unanimously; McKenney and O’Malley excused.

CONSIDERATION OF ARTS PROJECTS FUNDING FOR LA CROSES SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The La Crosse Symphony Orchestra (LSO) is requesting $5,500 from our Arts & Cultural Projects Grant line item in the Economic Development Budget. This line item was funded at $20,000 in the 2020 budget. Included in the packets is a project description for this request as well as the benefits of the project. LSO currently runs a program called Symphony for Youth, which invites classes of students from around the region to experience the symphony. Each year they bring in around 2,000 children through this program. Teachers have had problems with wayfinding to get the students into and out of the Performing Arts Center on Viterbo’s campus, as many groups are coming in and out for performances. Also, preparing the students to get the most out of their symphony experience requires extra time and effort for the teachers. Students learn best and are more engaged when they have a base of knowledge of what they are experiencing. LSO is hoping to solve both of the above challenges with an educational and wayfinding video. LSO has estimated the cost of this project at $5,500 between hiring a videographer to film...
and edit the video, and adjusting the video for use in emails, promotional ads, websites, and news channels. **MOTION** by Weidenbach/Kruse to approve the grant request in the amount of $5,500. **Motion carried unanimously**; McKenney and O’Malley excused.

**CDBG – CLOSE UPDATE**
Staff is the process of doing the final paperwork for closing the CDBG Revolving Loan Fund. This month we will be cutting a check and sending it to the State to go into the dedicated funds for future grants to La Crosse County. Staff is also working with the Village of Bangor on the County Hwy B project, which was the CDBG eligible project that was identified for the use of these funds. Finance Director Sharon Davidson has put together a Completion Report that the State requires. We have $676,831.09 in our account as of the end of January and will probably receive a couple of more loan payments. The County has budgeted for the cash to buy out these loans, so we will own these loans without any state or federal strings attached to them.

**CITY VISION 2040 PLAN UPDATE**
Andrea Schnick from the City of La Crosse Planning Department was in attendance to provide details. The City Vision 2040 Steering Committee has started meeting and has finalized and released an RFP for a planning consultant to assist with the process. Responses are due February 14th, with hopes to have hired a consultant by early April. Charlie Handy has been appointed to the Steering Committee, as a representative for the County. The County budgeted for a $20,000 contribution toward this $200,000 planning project. The Steering Committee will be meeting the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 9:00 a.m. at the City Hall; anyone is welcome to attend.

**CONSIDERATION OF PARTNER INVOICES**
In his Staff Report, Brian Fukuda listed the following invoices for memberships/contributions from our economic partners:

- Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission - $53,710
- Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. $3,000 (plus a suggested $300 contribution toward cleaning/beautification)
- Mississippi River Parkway Commission $3,000
- 7 Rivers Alliance $5,250

If approved, these would be paid from our “Memberships” line item in the economic development budget, which was funded at $50,000 for 2020, with the exception of the MRRPC, which is separately budgeted at $53,710.

The committee had questions on the MRRPC invoice (which is mandated by the State) for $53,710 and what benefits there are for the County being a member. Dave Bonifas, new Executive Director of the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission was present to discuss the accomplishments and services to La Crosse County by the Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission for the years 2019-2020:

- Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plans completed for all nine counties
- La Crosse EconoWatch assistance
- Assisted City of La Crosse in obtaining successful $3.67 million federal EDA grant award for public infrastructure improvements
- Wisconsin Mississippi River Parkway Commission Strategic Management Plan adopted
- Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update
- Administration services and fund raising for the SMRT Bus
- Regional Disaster Recovery Microloan Fund created
- Provide Revolving Loan Fund administrative services
- La Crosse County Hazard Mitigation Plan research and writing assistance
• Update of the La Crosse County Outdoor Recreation Plan
• Other services, and a list of requests for 2020

The committee requested some type of summary of “cliff notes” to explain what the benefits are from each partner agency for our dues/memberships paid. The MRRPC invoice will be postponed to March/April, and Dave will provide a more extensive list of projects and benefits of MRRPC accomplishments and services to La Crosse County.

**MOTION** by Weidenbach/Moua to pay DMI $3,000 plus a $300 contribution toward cleaning/beautification; $5,250 to the 7 Rivers Alliance, and $3,000 to the Mississippi River Parkway Commission. **Motion carried unanimously;** McKenney and O’Malley excused.

**AGENCY UPDATES:**

• 7 Rivers Alliance: Chris Hardie reported that they held a Housing Summit in La Crosse. Housing, transportation and childcare are the 3 biggest issues that are a part of the Workforce Development Plan. They have completed a revised Strategic Plan; part of this is a refresh of the Workforce Development Plan (WISE Plan). There will be a Refresh Session on March 4th at the La Crescent Event Center to review what needs to be adjusted. They continue to work on child care issues and getting businesses involved; they are working on Midwest Workforce Summit on April 29 and 30; continue to work with Inspire, the program that allows businesses to get in contact with students while in high school to discuss career development; There is a Transportation Summit later this year; Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation is working on an initiative for business startups and entrepreneurs called “Start in Wisconsin” that will be launching in our region.

• Charlie Handy: spending a lot of time on SMRT Bus budget and reporting; working on a Build Grant, which is a federal transportation grant (potentially a $25 million grant for projects); working on CDBG housing

• Andrea Schnick: working with Skinnell Properties on acquisition of a portion of Lot 27 in the International Business Park. This is a 24-acre lot, and FedEx Distribution Center is looking at 13 acres on the site. The City of La Crosse is also working with a consultant from North Carolina on a Public Market Place for the La Crosse area. They have settled on the Riverside Festival Site.

**NEXT MEETING:** March 5, 2020 at 7:30 a.m.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

• Invoice from MRRPC

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, **MOTION** by Davidson/Augustine to adjourn the meeting at 8:49 a.m. **Motion carried unanimously;** McKenney, O’Malley, DeVore, Miller excused.

**APPROVED March 5, 2020 - Terri Pavlic, Recorder**