

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
MEETING MINUTES
KINCHELOE ROOM, CASS COUNTY BUILDING**

Date March 28, 2018

Time: 8:00 am

Board Members present: Troy Clay __, Kevin Anderson X, Roseann Marchetti X, Rick Russwurm X, Eugene Wagner __, Junior Oliver X, James Finan X, Les McClelland __, Eileen Toney X, Dawn Bolock __, Harry Shaffer X and Karen Folks X.

Also present: Emilie Sarratore, Leonard Kanczuzewski, Kay Oliver, Tom Rose and Mark VanDusen.

Vice-Chair Kevin Anderson called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

Vice-Chair asked for any additions to the agenda, there were none, the agenda stood approved.

There was no public comment.

Harry Shaffer moved to approve the February 2018 minutes, seconded by Rick Russwurm, motion carried.

Eileen Toney moved to approve the financial report, seconded by Karen Folks, motion carried.

Operations Report: Barkley Garrett, Karen Folks and Emilie Sarratore toured different sites for the May visioning and settled on the cafeteria at Sam Adams School. Paper invites go out later this week. The same procedure used last time will be followed. Phone calls were very helpful last time and will be needed again. Karen stressed that sponsors are needed. Emilie provided a breakdown of the budget. Discussion followed on seeking sponsors. The 501© 6 and © 3 are moving forward. Discussion ensued on the search for grants. Eileen asked to keep grants and grant foundations on the agenda. Roseann asked how the Partnership would benefit Cass County. Barkley explained the South Bend-Elkhart Regional Partnership, and they are in the implementation stage. It includes St. Joseph, Elkhart and Marshall counties in Indiana, Berrien and Cass counties in Michigan. A goal is to make the Michiana area more conducive to business. A lengthy discussion followed with Kevin Anderson and Leonard Kanczuzewski contributing. Jim Finan stressed the regions importance. Barkley Garrett was contacted by a company looking for eight to ten acres for a logging operation. It needs to be near rail between Niles and Three Rivers. From the Governor's office, the County is part of a new program called Opportunity Zone. An opportunity zone has been designated from the south side of Dowagiac to Cassopolis almost to Edwardsburg. Funding may be provided for low income census tracts.

Old Business: Strategic plan was covered in Barkley's report.

New Business

1. Website

We met with Laurel Ward and she explained her target audience. Karen Folks explained Discover Cass County is a tourism piece to fit into what we are developing. We could have a link on the Discover website. Imagine Cass-Embrace the Vision is our branding. We would have a link and it is a sub set of our timeline. Eileen Toney and Kevin Anderson asked for a timeline to be added to the agenda. Troy Clay and Karen Folks will add it to the agenda.

Public Comment:

Tom Rose asked to speak and commented that Cass County EDC should market to high school and college students. Further there is no signage indicating Cassopolis and no indication of the corridor to get to the interstate.

Karen Folks introduced Mark VanDusen of the Southwest Michigan Realtors Association who is attending on behalf of the Association. Mark hopes to bring his boss to the next meeting.

Eileen Toney moved to adjourn, seconded by Rick Russwurm, meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

We attest the Board of Directors of the Cass County EDC has approved these minutes as the official minutes of the meeting recorded herein.

Troy Clay, Chair_____

Roseann Marchetti, Secretary_____