

# MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE STAPLES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

May 27, 2025

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Staples Economic Development Authority was called to order by Chairman Murray at 5:01 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and was held in-person at the Staples City Hall council chamber. Present were Commissioners Bjerga, Case, Gertken, and Murray. With Bendson, Gerard, and Tappe marked as absent. Also present were SEDA Executive Director Lucas Wakefield and the Staples City Administrator, Jerel Nelsen.

The meeting agenda was reviewed and Case moved to approve the agenda as written. Bjerga seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous in favor. Carried.

Minutes of the March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025, meeting were reviewed. It was moved by Case and seconded by Gertken to approve the minutes as submitted. Vote was unanimous in favor. Carried.

SEDA board reviewed an application from Colleen Frost, owner of 418 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE, Staples, MN 56479 commonly called the Batcher Opera House, for both SEDA loan fund programs – requesting the maximum amounts (\$5,000 amortized for 3years at 0% interest and \$15,000 amortized for 7 years at 3% interest) in order to make updates and repairs to the exterior of her building. This request was deemed appropriate and within the scope and purpose of the funds. Ms. Frost requested that in lieu of a business plan and/or proof of cash flow that the real estate itself be used as collateral to secure the loans. The SEDA board considered the request as well as the recommendation of the Executive Director to approve the loan on a contingent basis to ensure that the real estate title was found to be clear of encumbrance.

Gertken moved that the loan applications be approved contingent upon proof of free and clear title, that the name on the warranty deed match the applicant's name (Colleen Frost) and that title insurance be obtained from Elite Title in Staples, MN. Bjerga seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous in favor. Carried.

Discussion was had regarding SEDA owned property #38-4012800 about potentially interested buyers and whether the SEDA board would like to set minimum pricing. After discussion, the board rejected the idea of setting any pricing and directed the SEDA Executive Director and the Staples City Administrator to negotiate any offer in the interests of SEDA and the community.

The SEDA board was presented with a 2025-2026 lease agreement for SEDA owned vacant parcels which have been rented to Central Lakes College for many years with terms unchanged from previous years. Gertken moved to approve signing the lease. Bjerga seconded. Vote was unanimous in favor. Carried.

Wakefield gave updates on new businesses seeking to enter the community, local business ownership transfers, and business retention efforts. Updates were given on the progress of the meat processing facility, relocation plans of Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union, and on the Valley View Subdivision development plan. Wakefield advised the board of successful completion of the terms of repayment on a previously existing contract for deed sale of parcel #38-0013200 to SEDA. Wakefield also gave updates on Small Cities and the Blandin Grant. Wakefield requested that the board approve an invoice for Discover Staples-branded light pole banners from Holiday Outdoor Décor for \$7,345.00 out of the Blandin Grant funds.

Case moved to approve payment of the invoice. Gertken seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous in favor. Carried.

A motion was made by Case seconded by Gertken to adjourn the meeting at 5:43 p.m. Vote in favor was unanimous. Carried.

---

Lucas Wakefield, Secretary