**RUGBY JOB DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**UNAPPROVED MINUTES REGULAR MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY May 13th, 2020 -12:00PM**

**Members Present:** Chairmen Blair Brattvet, Susan Selensky, Terry Hoffert, Gary Kraft, Susan Steinke

**Members Absent**: Rob St. Michel, Jodi Schaan

**Also Present:** Executive Director Liz Heisey, Administrative Assistant Matty Koenig, Sue Sitter Pierce County Tribune

**Call to Order/Roll Call:** Brattvet called the meeting to order at 12:02

**Consideration of Agenda - amendments, additions, deletions to the agenda:** There were no amendments, additions, or deletions to the agenda. Motion by Kraft to approve the agenda. Seconded by Selensky, no further discussion was held, vote was unanimous to approve, motion carried.

**Consider Approval of Minutes for April 8th JDA regular meeting:** Motion by Kraft to approve the minutes for the April 8th, 2020, JDA regular meeting. Seconded by Selensky, vote was unanimous to approve, motion carried.

**Treasurer’s Report:** Bills/finances were reviewed by the board. Heisey stated there was payment made for Jarrett Lovcik’s pace program, as well as quarterly pay role. She stated some of our regular advertising was changed to a more community based focus such as the Census and ND Smart Restart as that was more appropriate at the time. The Career Builders bill will arrive in June. Motion by Steinke to approve the bills and financials. Second by Hoffert, vote was unanimous to approve, motion carried.

**Director’s Report:** As the world around adapts to new normal of operating during a global pandemic, many challenges and barriers have resulted in drastic changes to our daily lives, routines, and how we interact with each other. Corona Virus, COVID-19, social distancing, isolation, quarantine, contact tracing, travel restrictions, essential workforce, and “flattening the curve” are all now steeply embedded in our vocabulary and overwhelm our daily conversations as we adapt to living during a global pandemic. Fear of falling victim to an unseen virus and the looming uncertainty of facing a loss of household income both rise to top of our community’s concerns. We all are affected by the impact of the virus but collectively we are rising to these new challenges and coming up with smart, innovative and creative solutions that reroute and help us get through evolving times. Changing business models to adapt to a more restrictive environment includes heightened use of Social media, smart advertising, ecommerce tools, and the use of technology are a must to operating under the new operating. Providing consumer confidence for health and safety, online orders, curbside, take-out, delivery options, tackling supply chain disruptions, software choices, and accepting online payments are all part these new business operating models for both existing and new businesses.

COVID - 19 Funding and Support Programs

Many small businesses were mandated to shut down. Most small businesses do not have the large amounts of capital need to absorb these shutdowns and were very wary of taking on more debt. Loan options are available but not many grant programs are accessible to these small businesses.

The SBA’s Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) were heavily utilized by eligible businesses in the community.

The PPP loans guaranteed by the SBA and administered by local banks and credit unions ran out of funding very quickly in the first round and is currently still open but the second round is expected to be expended very soon. The PPP Loans do have a portion of the loan that is forgivable if conditions are met to keep people on the payroll which also included the net income sole proprietors with no employees. Final Guidelines are still being developed.

The EIDL program directly administered by SBA also ran out of funding very quickly, new applications for second round is open for ag businesses only at the this time. The SBA is still processing the backlog of applications received in first round of funding and they may open applications to additional businesses when most of these have been processed depending on funding available. $1,000 per employee up to $10,000 may be forgiven for this program.

The Bank of ND has opened COVID-19 PACE Recovery Program (CPRP) assists local financial institutions in providing low interest loans to support North Dakota businesses in their economic recovery due to negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Small Employer Loan Fund (SELF) assists local financial institutions and certified development corporations (CDC’s) in providing loans to assist very small North Dakota businesses in their recovery from the negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many revolving loan and gap financing programs are available as well to assist local business but they do require taking on additional debt.

There are multiple grant programs open for government and nonprofits to assist with technology, distance learning, and removing barriers to access technology during this time of increased dependence on technology for education, commerce, communications, and human interaction.

Surveys – Economic Injury and Recovery

Many new surveys are open seeking your input, concerns, ideas, solutions, greatest needs, and how you or your business are or expected to be impacted by COVID-19. Please fill out the surveys, this is your opportunity to be heard and to shape policies and to ensure funding programs are designed effectively. Your voice does matter in the development of policies. Identifying needs and shaping effective programs through the data collected from these surveys, can only be accomplished through your participation. If you do not provide your input now, policies and funding programs may not adequately be addressed or they be missing the vital elements needed to aid our community in recovery efforts. The significance of the economic injury we are experiencing may be grossly underestimated if information from our community is missed, this lack of conveyed information can have long lasting impacts through decreased funding opportunities. Thank you in advance for your participation.

2020 Census

Did you know that one missed resident costs North Dakota $19,100 in federal funding and one missed household is $44,312. Federal funding awarded to state programs is based upon population estimates. These programs include: Medicaid, highway construction, Head Start, Foster Care, SNAP, Low Income Energy Assistance, Special Education and other programs. Please encourage everyone to take the Census. Everyone’s count matters.

**Old Business**

**Renaissance Zone:** Heisey stated that she and Matty have been helping the city with the application for the renewal of the Renaissance Zone. This will renew the zone for five years. Heisey stated that is has not been heavily advertised or utilized in the past, but that she believes it should still remain in place. There are a few properties in the downtown area that could be targeted for revitalization. For residential, at least 20% of improvement must be done. For commercial, at least 50% of improvement must be done. Anything over that 20% or 50% of the improvement would not be taxable. The property taxes would be frozen for the five year period. Land is not included in the property tax exemption. This is a city application. Kraft stated that he is glad that this is something we are helping with. The next city council meeting is on June 1st.

**New Business:**

1. **Business Resiliency - Consider JDA Grant Program for Restaurants/Shops**

Heisey discussed various forgiveness and refund programs that have been happening around the state. She is looking into different ideas for a business resilience program in Rugby. She stated that the businesses who may be in most need of a program like this are the ones who had mandatory closures due to COVID-19. Heisey explained some cities are using their sales tax for programs such as this. The board discussed how the various businesses in town have been affected by COVID-19 and what the future of these businesses may look like. Bratvett stated he feels there will be a very different view of restaurants in six months because even though businesses have reopened, it will take time before they get back to normal. Hoffert stated it would be hard to decide who would receive any sort of funding. Heisey stated the retail businesses are hurting as well because they do not have access to their regular inventory that they used to carry. There are many issues within these supply chains currently. Kraft stated that if funding from the state were to trickle down to the Rugby community that we would want to be ready with a plan in place. Brattvet stated he feels as though we should let people know that we are looking into grant opportunities so that they know it is being looked at. Steinke suggested conducting a survey of our own to gage the level of need in each of the businesses. Heisey suggested also including in the survey the preexisting relief and assistance programs.

1. **American Wind Energy Association Support**

Heisey stated that in the past, the JDA has worked with American Wind Energy Association to complete studies to bring wind energy to the area. The wind farm north of Rugby was the result of this. They are currently seeking public support from the JDA. Heisey told them that she does not feel we would be in a position to support one industry over another. The board discussed several viewpoints of the various energy industries. Kraft stated Heisey could respond to this matter however she felt appropriate. Heisey responded that she will take the approach to support all energy industries.

1. **2021 Budget - Begin Planning**

Heisey explained she would like to freeze the current budget. She stated she would request that her wages be frozen as well. The budget has to be completed before August. Heisey plans to have the budget drafted for the June meeting. The board also discussed that online sales tax will likely remain stable during this time, but that retail sales tax will likely be affected. Heisey reiterated the importance of shopping local and encouraging other to shop local as well. Hoffert explained how difficult it will likely be for businesses to recover after the effects of COVID.

**Correspondence Received, Special Meetings and Reminders**

**2020 Regular Meeting – June 10th, 2020**

**Adjournment: 1:02 pm**