SECRETARIAL NOTES
PROSPERITY EASTERN IOWA (PEI)

DATE: July 27, 2026

TIME: 9:31 a.m.

PLACE: ECIA In-Person/Zoom Meeting
7600 Commerce Park, Dubuque, Iowa

VOTING PRESENT (8): MEMBERS
☒=Present

☒ Donna Boss, Delaware County Economic Development (DCED)
☐ Morgan Henze, Delaware County Tourism (alternate for Donna Boss)
☐ Angela Rheingans, DeWitt Chamber & Development Company (DCDC)
☒ Jacque Rahe-VC, Dyersville Economic Development Corporation (DEDC)
☒ Cindy Oberbroeckling, Dyersville Workforce Development (alternate for Jacque Rahe)
☒ Derek Lumsden, Jones Co. Economic Development Corp. (JCEDC)
☒ Kelley Brown, Jackson County Economic Alliance (JCEA)
☒ Holly McPherson, ECIA/Cascade Economic Dev Corp (CEDC)
☐ Jill Connors, City of Dubuque Economic Development
☐ Linda Beck, Tipton Economic Development
☐ Brian Wagner, City of Tipton
☒ Nic Hockenberry, Greater Dubuque Development (GDDC)
☐ Andy Solkovich, Grow Clinton
☒ Jason White, Greater Dubuque Development (GDDC)

OTHERS PRESENT:

☒ Victor Ochoa, IowaWORKS
☒ Amy Lasack, Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC)
☐ Mike Steines, Jackson County BOS
☒ Jeff Beneke – Iowa STEM Council
☐ Michelle Turner, Limestone Bluff RC&D
☐ Kiley Miller, Alliant Energy
☐ Amy Green Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC)
☒ Greg Willging, Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC)
☒ Rebecca Kauten, Iowa Waste Exchange
☒ Lindsey Given Egli, Iowa Waste Exchange
☒ Alex Wilcox, Enterprise Van Pool
☒ Tom Doermann, Tipton City Manager

STAFF PRESENT:

☒ Mae Hingtgen, Executive Director
☒ Katie Steffensmeier, Community Outreach & ED Coordinator
☒ Dawn Danielson, Brownfield Coordinator
☒ Marla Quinn, Grants & Municipal Coordinator
☒ Chandra Ravada, Transportation

Call to Order/Introductions
Meeting called to order at 9:31 a.m. by Kelley Brown.

Review/Approval of Agenda for Meeting - Motion made by Nic Hockenberry, Seconded by Holly McPherson. All approved.

Review/Approval of Secretarial Notes – Motion made by Holly McPherson, Seconded by Derek Lumsden. All approved.

Iowa Waste Exchange
Rebecca Kauten and Lindsey Give Egli presented on the Iowa Waste Exchange. There goal is to help reduce landfill disposal, connect business, non-profits and communities, turn waste into resources and strengthen Iowa's circular economy. Over 70% of Iowa's resources could be diverted from landfills which is especially important with so many landfills filling up in the next few years. Companies can make great products, but we forget to think where should all of the leftovers/scrap material go and how can it be re-purposed? They provide, free, confidential, non-regulatory material matchmaking service, technical assistance and education, and grant writing assistance for Iowa DNR grants. They also shared grant opportunities for 1. Food Storage Capacity, 2. Solid Waste Alternatives program 3. Close the Loop grant to help remove barriers for diversion of waste and 4. the Derelict Building program.

Enterprise VanPool
Abigail Wilcox, Commute with Enterprise presented on the vanpool partnerships they offer through their partnership with RTA with Dan Fox, Chandra Ravada and Nic Hockenberry. Commute with Enterprise has 10,000 commuter vehicles on the road nationwide. The program is offered to business to help retain and attract top talent, reduce infrastructure costs, improve sustainability. They have a 1) Vanpool (meet in a general spot to commute together with a regular schedule), 2) Shuttle, where the business provide driver and insurance and enterprise provides the vehicle or 3. Flex carpool- which is a hybrid model (buying a subscription for certain days of the week). They can do up to 12-15 passenger vehicle. In the past they have partnered with University of Dubuque students that transported themselves to the airport for flight school. Driver just has to be 25 or older to be a driver and RTA contributed money each month towards the program. In the Shuttle driver situation, riders can be as young as 18. Savings can be huge for businesses because they hold the physical and liability insurance, offer 24/7 roadside assistance and preventative maintenance, recent model of vehicle. If something happens, they can arrange an emergency ride home for riders. Abigail provided handouts detailing the programs. Anyone interested in offering this in their community or to a business, please reach out- they are expanding their offerings all the time and partner with other transportation authorities as well. Abbey is happy to meet and discuss one on one. Chandra mentioned (for example) if outside our ECIA region (Jones county) were interested, they could reach out to ECICOG to partner as well. Transportation authorities typically have $500- $800 a month in the majority of counties in Iowa to help with this. Typically need 4-5 people to start the program. Enterprise is working to cover all 99 counties.

Data Center Consultant Presentation

Jason White talked about the difference between Data centers and Hyperscale Data centers. Edge Data centers ~10–20 MW, used for backups (banks, medical records, typical cloud functions) and Hyperscale data centers are up to 500+ MW, multi-billion-dollar campuses for AI, social media and big tech. These large hyperscale projects have existed in Iowa since 2007, but only in the last 3-6 months has their been intense and organized public outrage about them. A data center developer had land under option in Dubuque County (near a 345 kV line, gas line, and substation) as recently as Dec 2025, but let it expire and left quietly. Separately, three landowners proposed a 425-acre data center site to the county zoning commission, triggering a zoning meeting intended to discuss data center ordinances and a crowd of 400–600 residents, leading to demands for a data center moratorium. Resulting actions: Dubuque County: 1-year moratorium, City of Peosta: 6-month moratorium. City of Cascade: 1-year moratorium (different local situation) and City of Asbury: also passed a moratorium. There are now multiple town-hall-style meetings each week devoted to hyperscale data centers.

Economic Impact Study and Key Findings

An independent industry study (by Boyette out of Little Rock, Arkansas) modeled a $12B hyperscale data center: Total economic impact: about $6.2B. Gross regional product added: $2.2B. Direct jobs: High wage positions$100k/year). Additional indirect induced jobs: ~430–470. State & local taxes: about $202M per year across the region. Hyperscalers often start at $3–4B and expand to $10B+ as campuses build out. Job counts vary depending on whether it's a co-locator (like QTS, leasing to others) vs. a hyperscaler (Microsoft, Meta) that brings in more on-site technical/engineering roles.

Political and Public Process Issues (NDAs, Trust, Role of Practitioners)

Public criticism includes opposition to NDAs around data center projects. Jason said NDAs are rare in practice; most work is done under professional norms, not secrecy. Emphasizes their organization's role: resource, advocate for good process, and evaluator of conditions, not a pro-data-center lobby by default. There is significant distrust of government and utilities. Media (e.g., TH newspaper) is pushing local candidates to comment on the economic study, sometimes in front of angry constituents.

Environmental, Infrastructure, and Waste Management Concerns

Community concerns go beyond economics, Stormwater management. Water usage (discussed via examples from Altoona, West Des Moines, and Google-related projects).

- Electric grid impacts (ITC, Alliant/"Lion Energy" perspectives; they claim negligible impact to consumers, but trust is low).
- Construction & operational waste: Rebecca and Lindsey said there is massive C&D waste (metal, cardboard, wood) from data center construction. They mentioned Linn County's landfill already near end-of-life seeing truck after truck of easily recyclable material going straight to landfill. Even with cardboard bans and doubled tipping fees, data center contractors simply pay the fees, accelerating landfill closure.
- Concern extends to server life cycles (e.g., 5- to 20-year hardware turnover) and what happens to crates, wooden boxes, and outdated equipment.

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) and Local Leverage

Ensuring environmental responsibility (e.g., green roofs, better design to offset land use). Directing funding to schools and local priorities. Contractually addressing waste management, end-of-life server handling, and other community impacts. Katie mentioned

a mining project where nonprofits hired a lawyer to negotiate a better CBA that reflected community needs.
In summary, **w**e have to balance tension between economic opportunity and community risk: High-value, high-wage projects vs. concerns about environment, waste, water, and local character. There needs to be a clear process and cultivation of trust with a strong emphasis on open, informed processes rather than bans alone. There is a need for better communication about what economic development organizations actually do. Ordinances, Community Benefit Agreements and early-stage planning are critical to managing long-term impacts of hyperscale data centers.

Brownfield update

Dawn Danielson, Brownfields Manager informed the committee that Dubuque was selected for an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant and ECIA received an additional $500,000 for its RLF Supplemental. The next Brownfield grant NOFO will be in the fall, and Dawn is looking for sites to include in the application. She informed the group that the next EPA Brownfields National Conference will be May 2027 in Salt Lake City, Utah. EPA will be touring Dyersville Brownfield sites on August 11 and in Dubuque on August 12th.

Idea sharing, Other Business, Events, Past Events –

USDA trainings- dates getting finalized for upcoming for Grant Writing 101 and ChatGPT & AI tools for Administrative Professionals. Holly working on John Danos training possibly this fall (he is presenting at Iowa League of Cities).

Iowa League of Cities (Bettendorf) and PDI Fall Conference are overlapping a bit- Sept. 23-25 in Burlington.

Housing Iowa Conference Sept. 9-10 in Des Moines- includes Opportunity Dubuque/CSEI partnership Homeless Innovation Pitch at the conference and a session on the WILMAC housing project.

NICC has a new electrical program at Peosta campus Amy Lasack mentioned.

STEM- Jeff Beneke shared Oct. 8th in Monticello and Stem Best grant is coming out Sept. 1st for K-12.

Other Business/ Events-

Next meeting will be held September 28, 2026 at Brain Health Now/Dubuque Forward's Office in the Millwork District with a tour of the millwork district projects with Gronen Restoration.

Adjourn

Rahe adjourned the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Steffensmeier
Economic Development and Community Outreach Coordinator