

**SECRETARIAL NOTES  
PROSPERITY EASTERN IOWA (PEI)**

**DATE:** March 23, 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)
- Maggie Sommers, 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, Clinton County
- 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)
- Robert Wick, IEDA
- Shirley Horstman, Community Foundation of Greater.Dubuque
- Josie Manternach, Community Foundation of Greater.Dubuque

**STAFF PRESENT:**

- Mae Hingtgen, Executive Director
- Katie Steffensmeier, Community Outreach & ED Coordinator
- Dawn Danielson, Brownfield Coordinator

**Call to Order/Introductions**

Meeting called to order at 9:31 a.m.

**Review/Approval of Agenda for Meeting** - Motion made by Nic Hockenberry, Seconded by Derek Lumsden. All approved.

**Review/Approval of Secretarial Notes** – Motion made by Kelley Brown, Seconded by Derek Lumsden. All approved.

### **CDBG Presentation**

Robert Wick discussed 10 funding programs also found on the IEDA website with awards are awarded annually. Community development fund, downtown revitalization, housing, opportunities and threats, planning grants, public services and water/sewer/storm water and planning grants funding. Robert highlighted the newer programs, and he sent a handout with more detailed information. The Water, Sewer and Stormwater program has a max award of \$500,000 per project. Grant agreements are limited to a 3-year period of performance. Planning grants are designed to provide funding to produce and adopt plans to aid in maintaining infrastructure in its first year with a max of \$15,000 allocated. Must have dollar for dollar match. A pocket parks program is for a max of \$150,000 to make a ADA accessible component near a main street or city center. Streetscapes is for curb/gutters, streetlights, benches, sidewalks, street trees or signs. Max award is \$250,000. No specific match requirement- local support is critical for this grant. Roof rehab/replacement is \$30,000 per unit, max of 6 (\$180,000). No specific match requirement. A Public Service- homeless providers and food pantry operators grant has a max award of \$100,000 for staffing utilities, maintenance, insurance, purchases of supplies/materials for operation of programs. For CDBG-disaster Requirements- Eligible communities are not located in our region (the closest is Scott county). Robert discussed that as part of grant, you must take a CDBG basics course. Nic asked if a project had a streetscapes or facades and they want to see success with other projects- if you have applied previously- as long as its been 5 years or so they can apply (and if they have continued community engagement). For historic district surveys- grant performance is 2 years, not a hard-set timeframe, but 2-3 outward for a project.

**Rural Teacher Corps and GRAD Partnership** – Shirley Horstman focuses on school attendance and is the college access coordinator and Josie Manterncah is a Program Officer for Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. They serve Dubuque, Delaware, Jones, Allamakee, Clayton, Jones, Jackson and Clinton counties. They also have a Dyersville Community Foundation aside from their Dubuque office. They also do small town dreams and heart and soul programs. Josie shared the Rural School collaborative is a national initiative build rural communities through education and philanthropy. Community foundation is a hub for the region. In Wisconsin, UWP is another hub. They partner with different colleges, including UNI and NICC for example. They host a summit for teachers- with the goal being to listen and ask what they need around a theme. They bring teachers to a professional conference, free of cost to collaborate with others and network and get inspired for the school year. Provide renewal credits for them. They also do an annual classroom grant \$5,000 for activities, get out to vote grant as part of their civic life activities for voter registration drives, grants in place for rural teachers and focusing on rural retention.

Grad partnership is started through John Hopking University. Created a school success system that is based on a school being the center of a community. The focus is on strong relationships, real-time, actionable, holistic data, strategic improvement actions, shaped by student centered mindsets. Qualitative like A Attendance, B Behavior, C Core Course and they also have qualitative data The coaches have three schools districts they are working with currently, Clayton Ridge, East Dubuque schools, and alternative learning campus of Dubuque Community schools and just got started in

January. January was gathering data, February they are working on this year and hope to have more down the road. including listen and learn sessions with students, teachers and parents, college and career readiness and supportive leadership. Asked why they come to school, what do they really like, They have coaches who are helping them through the process- IJAG- encouraging college and career readiness. They also have a UD professor in Education working with the schools. They work on student engagement, and developing new outcomes for the school/students. The program is three years long. In process of getting more coaches and to grow this program slowly in the region and eventually take this program state-wide.

### **Legislative Discussion/ PDI Updates**

Nic Hockenberry discussed the continual advocacy for TIF and property tax legislation. The majority of the discussion focused on proposed Iowa property tax legislation and its impact on Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and urban renewal districts. The Governor's original proposal would significantly limit TIF usage; 1) Would largely eliminate performance-based TIF incentives for employer expansion or recruitment. 2) Would restrict TIF spending mostly to infrastructure like roads and utilities. PDI opposed these proposals early due to concerns about economic development impacts. A newer House proposal includes several major TIF-related changes: Would eliminate perpetual TIF districts entire, a new maximum duration of **23 years** would apply, existing bonded debt would be grandfathered in and protected until paid off and older districts would gradually lose access to full increment revenue. Some positives would be: Housing TIF duration could increase up to **20 years**, required housing set-asides would decrease to **20%** statewide, communities under 5,000 population would no longer require a set-aside. The downfalls with this proposal includes - The proposal removes the school foundation levy from eligible TIF revenue, it would reduce the total available increment by roughly 20% in many communities. Rural communities rely heavily on long-term TIF districts because growth occurs more slowly. Perpetual districts help smaller communities accumulate enough increment to support facade grants, housing incentives and downtown redevelopment. PDI is advocating for allowing school districts to voluntarily opt into participating in TIF projects rather than eliminating the school levy portion completely.

There was a discussion around proposed caps on local government revenue growth, and cities and counties are already struggling with rising costs for insurance, payroll, public safety. Discussion argued local elected officials should maintain budget flexibility. There may be support- linking allowable revenue growth to inflation/CPI instead of a strict 2% cap.

Workforce training bills- have had many discussion regarding **260F** – incumbent worker training and **260G** – funding for career and technical education facilities/labs such as the lab NICC just added and upgrades to their Healthcare lab in Dubuque. It would affect Manufacturing training, healthcare workforce training and Community college infrastructure improvements. Unfortunately, feel that legislators are only hearing that this is an outdated program, we need to continue to reach out and have your employers advocate for the importance of the funding for all of the training and positive impacts. PDI is encouragin legislation to: remove the elimination language from the bill for now., continue broader discussions later on modernization or sustainability reforms instead. Potential improvements included: Expanding eligibility beyond manufacturing, Better support for healthcare training, and increased flexibility for incumbent worker training.

With Angela Rheingans as past president of PDI and Nic Hockenberry as current president we are well represented for our region! PDI- Spring conference- get registered and it is a partnership with Iowa Associations of Chambers spring conference and legislative event Tuesday night also in Des Moines. Also teasing that they have some opportunities for sophomore economic developers also coming!

### **Brownfield update**

Dawn updated PEI on the status of the Brownfield Program. There are three planning activities underway in Clinton, Cedar, and Jackson County. ECIA is waiting for site approval and working on assessments in Dubuque as well as reviewing a few applications in Clinton, Tipton, and Manchester. ECIA applied for \$400,000 in additional Supplemental Funds. EPA will announce recipients in May. At the recommendation of auditors, the approval process for RLF loans was modified by the ECIA council at the March council meeting. Loans will no longer go to ECIA Business Growth for approval but will be recommended by ECIA staff and go to ECIA council for approval. At the March meeting the council approved four loans. One for property located in Clinton, two for properties in Dubuque and one for a property in Anamosa. The Anamosa site is the Arts Court Visual and Performance Building. This loan is the first loan to be approved under Post Closeout Program Income of the FY18 RLF and this fund will be 100% committed for 2026. The supplemental RLF is also 100% committed.

**Grant Wood Loop/Field of Opportunities** – Katie Steffensmeier provided an update that Grant Wood Loop has met and officially voted to dissolve. The additional funds were distributed to ECIA (Katie/Steve) are managing the dissolution wrap-up with ECIA’s lawyer to do taxes and other items. Field of Opportunities grants that we is also slowly starting to wrap-up- the selfie stations are being ordered and should be installed when the weather warms up. Currently there is a selfie- stand at the field of dreams. Crowdriff is the content creator have been taking video/social media content for communities to use in their digital marketing. If you have any other upcoming regional project ideas, please let Katie know.

### **Idea sharing, Other Business, Events, Past Events –**

#### **Event reminders-**

PDI Spring Conference -Legislative event March 23.

Dubuque night in Des Moines is March 25.

Rural Summit –\_April 9 – 10 in Dubuque at the Grand River Center. Hotel block offered as well.

TIF Workshop coming up June/ July at EICC - Presenter is John Daniels from Dorsey & Whitney - likely mid-day session. Open to county supervisors, economic development staff and general public. Additional Details and RSVP information will follow.

#### **Other Business/ Events-**

Next meeting will be held May 18, 2026.

**Adjourn**

Rahe adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Steffensmeier  
Economic Development and Community Outreach Coordinator