

ECIA COUNCIL - Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 18, 2026 – 5:30 PM
7600 Commerce Park, Dubuque and by Zoom

Members Present:
* = *Alternate* = *Present*

Cedar County: Vacant B. Gaul Laughlin
 Vacant Kaufmann*
 Wagner Oberbreckling

Clinton County: Sander-Welzien D. Srp* Wiese
 Thiltgen* Kelly Hasenmiller
 George Maddasion Lindner*

Delaware County: Bergan L. Gaul Helmrichs
 Behnken Maurer Madlom

Dubuque County: Neises Bonz (chair) Pothoff
 Vacant Cavanagh Kenniker*
 Niehaus Burbach*

Jackson County: Willey (v-chair) Steines Messerli*
 Tranel Schwenker* Weinschenk
 Ganzer Boldt

Others Present: None

Staff Present: McPherson Specht
 Berning Schnier
 Ravada Fox
 Stoffel Danielson
 Hingtgen Klootwyk

*A quorum was present

Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Bonz called the meeting to order at 5:43 p.m. Introductions were made at this time.

Review/Action on the Agenda for Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Recommendation from Hingtgen to amend agenda item c. Contracts i. EIRHA FY26 Supplemental Funding Request should be Brownfield Revolving Loan.

Motion by Steines, second by Helmrichs to approve the agenda with amendment for Wednesday, March 18, 2026, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment – None.

Review/Action on Consent Agenda Items as Recommended by the Executive Committee

- a. Minutes for January 21, 2026
- b. Financial Status Reports
- c. Contracts
 - i. Home Production Referral Program - \$500/per project
 - ii. City of Goose Lake/Addendum – Required Federal Language
 - iii. City of La Motte/Addendum – Required Federal Language
 - iv. Environmental Review 2026/2030 - \$1,500
 - v. City of Manchester - \$10,000
 - vi. Brownfield Revolving Loan FY26 Supplemental Funding Request - \$400,000
 - vii. HOME – American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) Grant/Amendment – Terms
 - viii. Infrastructure Technology Solutions, LLC - \$15,633.75
 - ix. Miscellaneous Contracts

Motion by Madlom, second Pothoff by to approve all consent agenda items as recommended by the Executive Committee. Motion passed unanimously.

Review/Action on the FY25 ECIA Audit

Ryan Engelstad with Bergan KDV presented the FY25 ECIA Audit, this being the first year they were hired to complete the audit. The audit review and findings are being provided a little later in the year and the audit firm aims to return to a November reporting timeline.

The main findings were that the FY25 audit received an unmodified (clean) opinion, with no scope limitations of GAAP departures. There were two restatements required; approximately \$400,000 for a reclassification on the Brownfields loans receivable were moved from expenditure to asset and about \$250,000 for a correction related to compensated absences. No compliance issues were found for three major federal programs; Lead Reduction, SMART, and Emergency Rental Assistance.

Motion by Willey, second by Madlom to approve the FY25 ECIA Audit. Motion passed unanimously.

Review/Action on the Brownfield RLF Loan Requests

Hingtgen shared background on the Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund previously approving loans through the Business Growth Board. During the ECIA audit process it was noted that ECIA is the beneficiary of the loan. As the core agency ECIA ultimately has responsibility and liability, therefore these loans are presented to the council today due to the timelines of these loans.

A process for approving the loans should be established for future requests, however four loans need to be considered today. Hingtgen noted staff will develop a process based on council feedback to be approved at a future meeting. A default on one of these loans would not require ECIA to pay the money back, instead the amount of the loan is decreased.

Motion by Steines and Weinschenk to have ECIA provide full approval of the Brownfield RLF loans with staff to begin revising the loan administration process in response to the audit findings. Motion passed unanimously.

- i. Arts Court Visual and Performance - \$100,000/asbestos cleanup, 107 N Garnavillo, Anamosa
- ii. Greater Dubuque Impact Investment Fund - \$1,500,000 for site remediation, 1550 Elm St, Dubuque

- iii. Greater Dubuque Impact Investment Fund - \$1,500,000 for site remediation, 455 E 15th St, Dubuque
- iv. City of Clinton - \$1,100,000 for site remediation, 306 5th Ave. S, Clinton

Motion by Pothoff, second by Willey to approve the loan requests. Motion passed unanimously.

Review/Action on the ECIA Organizational Chart

Hingtgen provided an overview of the current ECIA organizational chart. The Strategic Plan identified a goal to review and make changes based on the employment study. With the retirement of Jennifer Walker, Special Programs Director, the goal provided an opportunity to evaluate the current structure.

Feedback was provided by staff in developing the new structure to closely align departments and the mission of work. In addition, Hingtgen supervised the Special Programs Department during the director’s retirement transition to assess the needs and future direction.

The proposed structure will be effective July 1st, 2026, bringing more alignment for many of the Special Program’s staff and proving value with other services in alignment with other departments.

Motion by Burbach, second by Pothoff to approve the ECIA Organizational Chart. Motion passed unanimously.

Informational

The FY27 Budget Assumptions are provided in March of each year to project the next year’s budget. Membership fees were approved in FY22 – FY27 .02 per year and this will need to be evaluated for subsequent years. Hingtgen provided an overview of upcoming considerations for each department. An update on the rebranding will be provided at the May meeting, and the affiliate branding will begin in July. Hingtgen continues to work on legislative outreach and engagement including legislation affecting COG assistance funds. The cost-of-living recommendation will be 3.0%, which is in line with the average of other Council of Governments. Proposed billable hourly rate increase in FY27 2.0%. Estimated total revenues are \$2, 293,313, less estimated expenses of \$7,285,328, leaving an excess amount of \$7,985.

Other Business

None

Adjournment

The chair announced adjournment at 7:47 p.m., there being no objection.

Respectfully submitted,

Mae Hingtgen
Executive Director