

MERAMEC COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT CORPORATION
MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 7, 2023

Members Present: Danny Brown (Crawford), Gary Hicks (Phelps County)

Members Present on Zoom: Darryl Griffin (Osage), Greg Edwards (Phelps), Vic Stratman (Maries)

Members Absent: Gene Newkirk (Pulaski), Dave Sansegraw (Washington), Wayne Langston (Maries), Jerry Lairmore (Gasconade), Gary Larson (Dent), Bruce Cox (Gasconade), Christy Metzger (Maries), Brenda Johnson (Maries), Erin Adamson (Phelps)

Guests:

MRPC Staff Present: Kelly Sink, Bethany Ferrell, Orin Pogue, Caitlin Jones

Call to Order and Introductions: Chair Greg Edwards called the meeting to order at 12:15 pm. Having no guests or new members, introductions were not needed. Kelly Sink did note that Phelps County has replaced John Muesch with Erin Adamson.

Approval of Minutes from the September 20, 2023 meeting: Minutes were sent prior to the meeting and Greg Edwards asked if everyone had a chance to review and approve. Darryl Griffin made a motion to approve the minutes. Vic Stratman seconded the motion. *Motion passed to approve the minutes.*

Naturally Meramec DRA Grant Update: Orin Pogue updated the board on grant funded activities with the Naturally Meramec consortium. Orin took over facilitation of the program due to staff changes. Naturally Meramec participated in the Taste of Washington County and Orin is now working with the Bourbon Economic Development Group to implement a Taste of Crawford County. The Request for Proposals for the website update is underway. Staff continue to develop day trips to add to the website. Staff continue to market and promote members and the region. Engagement has been a challenge as meeting attendance has been low and members are not taking advantage of training opportunities. Orin is seeking ways to encourage more involvement from members. Gary Hicks asked if he was on the contact list for the consortium and if the waguay beef farm in Phelps County was a member. Orin will add Gary to the list and confirmed that he had contact with the beef farm.

Affordable Connectivity Program: Caitlin Jones provided a summary of the MO Department of Economic grant to promote the ACP in our region. Caitlin summarized the

efforts made over the grant period which included attending events to distribute information, distributing brochure racks at libraries, city halls, and health departments and visiting Head Starts. Social media was used significantly to share information. She noted that the very short timeframe hindered efforts to enroll many people so the focus remained on promotion. Another challenge was the federal guidelines on eligibility excluded some of the families in our region. Gary Hicks asked if MRPC had contacted our federal legislators about the program and continuing funding. Staff will follow up.

Business / Reports:

- A. MCEC Project Updates:** Kelly Sink did not have any additional projects to discuss.
- B. MCEC Grant Updates:** Kelly Sink informed the board that the Department of Justice grant to serve children and families of those affected by substance use disorders (SUD) in the region was not funded. It was a grant of \$750,000 for three years. Kelly also informed the board that a grant application submitted to the Clif Family Foundation was not funded. The \$20,000 request was to provide the same services to non-DRA Naturally Meramec counties that are included in the DRA grant. Staff continue to look for resources for both programs.

Approval of financials: Bethany Ferrell reviewed the financials for the period ending October 31, 2023. She noted that the ACP grant is closed and Naturally Meramec DRA is on-going. Vic Statman made a motion to approve, seconded by Gary Hicks. *Motion was approved.*

Items of Interest:

- A. Next Meeting:** March 2024 meeting date will be determined.

Adjournment: Danny Brown made a motion to adjourn, with a second by Gary Hicks. Motion was approved and Greg Edwards adjourned the meeting.

Approved by the Board February 20, 2024



Dr. Greg Edwards, Chairman