

NEON Minutes
August 9, 2018, BioTechnology Advancement Center

Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and Nobles County Administrator, Tom Johnson, presided over the meeting.

Around the Table:

Rod Sankey/Citizen: Rod reported he has filed for City Council and is volunteering for Pioneer Village, which is celebrating their 50th Anniversary next year.

Gary Ewert/Heron Lake Watershed District: Gary reported on an upcoming drainage workshop on the 16th. Details are on their website.

Don Linsen/Nobles County: Don reported he has been attending various committee meetings.

Doug Knuth/City of Round Lake: Doug reported New Fashion Pork construction starting September 17th. The slip form construction will be running 24 hours/day for 7 or 8 days, averaging 2 trucks an hour in and out. Doug advised there is a camera where you can watch construction on one of the NFP websites. The fertilizer building construction is going well.

Bob Demuth Jr. /Nobles County: Commissioner Demuth reported he and Commissioner Widboom are on the budget committee meeting with department heads on initial budget proposals. At the Southwestern Mental Health Center Board meeting, Scott Johnson gave positive report on possibility of outstate mental health facility right here in old Kids Peace area at Prairie Justice Center. Right now there are 2 others. Legislation passed for 5 outstate mental health facilities and the criteria will be established in September by the Department of Human Services. Avera has offered architectural services for free as they manage SWMHC. This short term facility would be critical to those being housed in jails. It is expected to have 16 beds or less for adults which would help with the waiting list SWMHC has now.

Darlene Macklin/Chamber of Commerce: Darlene reported Cruisin Downtown is on August 14th in conjunction with Lakeside Church's anniversary celebration. Darlene inquired when the landscaping at Government Center will be complete. Tom Johnson advised the contractor is working on irrigation now and planting should occur next week. There is still the 10th Street concrete to be done and limited work on 9th Street, 3rd Avenue and 4th Avenue, which entrances are currently open.

Representative Joe Schomacker/MN House of Representatives: Representative Schomacker reported on attending FarmFest, waiting for primaries next week to see general direction of the election and economic reports. The Governor sent a \$21 million request to White House for disaster relief. Representative Schomacker also commented he was glad to hear about the Mental Health Center piece.

Larry Janssen/City of Worthington: Larry reported he had filed for Ward 1 on City Council and that City budgets start next week.

Karen DeBoer/SMOC: Karen reported on Region 8 Child Care Aware of Minnesota and Area 8 Early Childhood Learning.

Tom Johnson/Nobles County: Tom reported about Avera's offer to provide architectural design for the old Kids Peace space and believes the facility improvements would be half the cost of a new facility. In regard to the 2019 budget, the paper stated a 2% increase was the starting point but that is just the County's starting point with salaries. The County is getting out to Cities for County Assessing Service Agreements since the County is losing short term Assessors. The County will probably be down to 2 soon and we may have to consider going "True County" this budget session. Training involves many hours of education and travel. The AMA is like a Master's program. There are Counties around us that are already working towards "True County."

Child Care: Karen DeBoer advised Child Care Aware is an agency that schedules a lot of the trainings statewide and a location is needed for September 15th and September 22nd as the Nobles County Government Center is available on the 22nd but not the 15th due to Turkey Day festivities. It was suggested that Karen check with Abraham at WREDC for the use of the BAC. Karen advised Child Care Aware has trouble finding places to hold trainings but has seen innovative ideas over the last few weeks for child care. Detroit Lakes has established a pod system which entails four independent child care programs in 1 facility. Locally, the Round Lake School has been considered, but we need to remember how you have a building set up that could cause issues (security to lock the facility, location of the bathrooms or kitchen area to main spaces). Space doesn't have to be huge or a private home, there are alternatives. Supervision and child safety is the number 1 priority.

In Harmony MN, a company took a warehouse next to their commercial business and opened a daycare and they have kept a majority of their staff due to this. Lynd MN has Little Diggers, a café that was renovated by an excavating company. There is help to get through rules and regulations. We, as the community, need to do something. We can't get caught in the cycle of setting sights too high. It is better to do something than nothing but we need to establish infrastructure, space, funding and resources.

Should regulations be reviewed for Family Child Care (Rule 2) and Child Care Center (Rule 3)? Centers have more regulations and are subject to interpretation. Interpretive guidelines provided would be very important. The biggest complaint about Family Child Care is the training. Karen advised she believes 16 hours of training per year is not too much to ask. Another issue is finger printing. In 2019, to meet requirements, child care programs and all staff will have to be finger printed. DHS is allowing Child Care Aware to be a location for finger printing but costs of the finger printing, time spent and location will be an issue. Assisted living facilities are already doing this. Law Enforcement finger printing may not be the same as FBI so there is a liability of the security. Commissioner Linssen stated as a volunteer at school, he had to get finger printed and pay for it himself.

Karen DeBoer advised the Head Start Building used now is owned by SMOC but they are excited for a new building. She met with Child Care Center Directors to consider opening another location as Head Start's function is preschool, serving kids ages 3 to 5. Child Care is economic development, an industry.

Karen advised there will be a special recognition night for Child Care Aware highlighted in the August 11th newspaper.

Other: Tom Johnson advised Bree Maki, Office of Senator Tina Smith, is looking for a champion in health care to assist in setting up a local listening session. The group inquired if it was a one-time event or reoccurring. Administration staff will confirm with Ms. Maki so any volunteers should contact the Nobles County Administration office.

Next Meeting:

September 13, 2018 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm
BioTechnology Advancement Center
1527 Prairie Drive, Worthington, MN 56187

The meeting adjourned.