

MICHIGAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND BOARD MEETING

March 15, 2019

Village of Mackinaw City

102 Huron Street

Mackinaw City, Michigan

Board Members Present:

Laura Braun, RD Fund Board Member

Justin Horvath, RD Fund Board Member

Fred Taccolini, RD Fund Board Member

Gary McDowell, RD Chair and MDARD Director

Board Members Absent:

Margaret Minerick, RD Fund Board Member

Other Attendees:

Peter Anastor, MDARD

Heather Throne, MDARD

Wes Kerr, Connected Nation

The meeting was called to order by Director McDowell at 1:07 p.m.

The Director welcomed the Board to the meeting and gave an introduction. All present gave introductions.

MOTION: Fred Taccolini, moved to approve the September 6, 2018 meeting minutes as is. Seconded by Laura Braun. Motion carried.

An informational presentation was given by **Wes Kerr, Director of Community Solutions at Connected Nation**, discussing the grant project awarded to Connect Michigan. The grant helped fund a broadband feasibility study in the NEMCOG region to assess broadband capacity and barriers in northeast Michigan. The presentation also provided an overview of next steps for broadband in Michigan and gave an update on the Michigan Broadband Roadmap, one-time funding for grants, as well as federal subsidies for broadband in underserved communities.

Heather Throne gave an update on the 17 projects awarded in 2017, 11 projects awarded in 2018, and newly announced 16 awarded Rural Development grants for 2019. The 2019 grants were announced on February 28, 2019.

- **County of Marquette** - \$100,000 (Marquette). Replacement of 37-year-old influent pumps at the KI Sawyer Wastewater Treatment Facility.
- **Michigan Asparagus Industry Research Farm** - \$100,000 (Hart). Purchase of an automated sorting machine to help asparagus growers with the selection of more suitable varieties for the current marketplace.
- **City of Negaunee** - \$100,000. Replacement of the sewer main along Brown Avenue.

- **Powell Township** - \$43,500 (Big Bay). Implementation of Phase 1 of a multi-phased project plan to convert the nine miles of Big Bay Pathway to year-round use.
- **Clare-Gladwin RESD** - \$99,100 (Clare). Secure equipment and technology to expand curriculum to grow the land-based industries and workforce in Clare and Gladwin counties.
- **Central UP Planning and Development Regional** - \$83,000 (Marquette). Coordinate, develop and implement a strategic plan for workforce loss mitigation within Marquette County.
- **Austin Brothers' Beer Company LLC** - \$34,300 (Alpena). Purchase equipment to increase efficiency and productivity with a long-term goal of increasing tourism to the area.
- **Republic Township** - \$100,000. Creation of the Iron Ore Heritage Trail Head building to serve tourism taking place in Marquette County.
- **Bee Well Meadery LLC** – \$89,800 (Bellaire). Purchase new equipment to increase hard cider production.
- **Village of Central Lake** - \$14,750. Feasibility study of a wastewater treatment facility for the Village.
- **Coldwater Board of Public Utilities** - \$100,000. Conduct a preliminary evaluation and needed improvements for the Water Resource Recovery Facility.
- **City of Hillsdale** - \$100,000. Storm sewer and road improvements to Hallett Street.
- **Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)** - \$10,100 (Gaylord). Installation of video conferencing capacity for Northeast Michigan communities.
- **Paddle Antrim** - \$70,500 (Bellaire). Promotion of tourism and marketing materials for the Chain of Lakes Water Trail.
- **Jones Farm Market** - \$100,000 (Saranac). Expansion of the facility to increase processing capacity.
- **Michigamme River Basin Tax Increment Financing and Water Improvement Authority** - \$100,000 (Republic). Support modifications of Republic Dam to a fixed spillway dam.

Heather Throne mentioned the department would be issuing a press release in May of 2019 requesting public comment on the grant process, guidelines and application. All public comment should be received by June 28, 2019.

It was discussed and decided the next meeting will be scheduled in August 2019 in Marquette. The Board requested MDARD to schedule the meeting with potential rural development grantee site visits.

There was no public comment.

MOTION: Laura Braun moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:37 p.m. Seconded by Fred Taccolini.