

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE
RICE COUNTY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Commissioner's Room / Government Services Building
Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at 8:30 AM**

I. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(At the beginning of each Committee of the Whole Work Session meeting, the floor will be open to solicit public comments on items on the Agenda. Public comments will be limited to two (2) minutes for each person, subject to the discretion of the County Board Chairperson)

II. OUTSIDE AGENCY:

- A.** Mark Thein, Regional Director of SE Minnesota Small Business Development Center provided a presentation.

SBDC specializes in providing business plan assistance, preparation of documentation to access capital including both commercial and SBA debt financing, and business management support, including financial analysis, social media, logo development, marketing, and operations. Providing this service assures that entrepreneurs are prepared for the loan process and starting their business. This past year, they helped 463 individuals with their business questions. This leads to helping business owners' access over \$28,000,000. Services are provided at no cost through a Small Business Administration (SBA) grant. The SBA grant is a matching grant and as a notable community partner who has benefited from SBDC services, we request your support in meeting the local match required of \$225,000. This allows us to leverage over \$450,000 for our SBDC to provide technical assistance. SBDC offers confidential counseling, at no cost, to help businesses in southeast Minnesota identify, understand, and overcome the challenges of starting a business. In 2021, we provided 101.25 consulting hours to 20 clients in Rice County. Also, in 2022, SBDC was awarded \$225,658 from the SBA. This award came with a 1 to 1 matching requirement allowing SBDC to only spend what is raised. Last year, Rice County benefited and used 3.2 percent of the grant funds. SBDC is requesting Rice County's support in meeting the local match required. Based on 2021 metrics, SBDC used \$7,243 of our grant funds in Rice County. The goal is to continue to leverage the SBA funding and to provide SBDC services to small businesses in your county. By reason of Rice County's SBDC activity, we respectfully ask for a \$5,000 donation. If this request requires my presence at a future government meeting, it would be my pleasure to attend.

- B.** Susan Garwood spoke on behalf of the Historical Society.

The Rice County Historical Society (RCHS) Board of Directors formally requests permission from the Rice County Commissioners to use the property at 1900 2nd Ave NW, which is north of the museum at 1814 2nd Ave NW, for current and future needs. In evaluating our current needs and spaces, they have identified several ways they could use that property in 2023. For example, they would like to use the land for outdoor programs and presentation space for events such as Larry Richie's Tipi and Dugout Canoe workshops that he conducts at the local schools, which would allow the entire county to participate in the experience. There could also be space for additional vendor stalls at our bi-annual Flea Markets. The land would be ideal for school tour groups that need a place to gather, have lunch, or play while waiting for the bus. Additionally, we have long wanted a place to host a Tractor Show during the Rice County Fair. We already have a group of volunteers willing to bring historic tractors and farm equipment to the fair in 2023, if the County Commissioners support our use of the land. We would also like the Rice County Commissioners' permission to use that land for future building expansion to the RCHS main museum. History is ongoing, new people and events add to the stories and artifacts we collect every day. We have been able to put a significant portion of our collection on display, but there are several key themes and stories we simply don't have the space to share. Our agricultural collection stops in the 1920s and we are unable to continue to collect this critically important area of Rice County history and culture due to lack of space in our current structures. This is the same for many other areas of Rice County history, from the immigrant stories of the past and present, to crafts and trades that built Rice County, and to the future of space exploration in our own backyard. All of these, and many more, remain limited by our current facilities. Critically, we would want this addition to be connected to the main museum. Our unattached facilities are only open seasonally, and connecting to the main museum will allow this new facility to be open to the public year-round.

- III. PARKS & FACILITIES DEPARTMENT: Matthew Verdick**
- A.** Matthew Verdick discussed the Final Draft for the upcoming Park Plan.
- The Board of Commissioners on Oct. 5, 2021, approved hiring HKGI to create a park plan that included an inventory of the county's 12 parks, a guide to short-term and long-term development of each of the sites, and recommendations for parks system branding and plan implementation. Over the past year, HKGI staff worked with the Parks & Facilities subcommittee and staff to develop the plan, which included visits to each park site, online community engagement and a draft application to the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission requesting an initial screening for regional significance status for the 850-acre Cannon River Wilderness Area that sits just off Hwy. 3 between Faribault and Dundas. The request, which is in process, will be brought to the board for approval before it's submitted to the commission. The application will include a resolution of support from the board, along with resolutions and letters of support from local governments and other interested organizations. If designated as having regional significance and a high ranking, a master plan would be needed to help qualify the park for formal recognition and qualify it for potential GMRPTC grant funding.
- IV. PUBLIC HEALTH/NURSING: Deb Purfeerst**
- A.** Josh Ramaker-Ship Coordinator and Sara Coulter-Clinic and Community Supervisor provided a presentation to provide an overview of the 2022 Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP).
- V. ADMINISTRATION: Sara Folsted**
- A.** Rice County Commissioners discussed the changes to the Assignments and Meeting Calendar for the 2023 year.
- VI. ADJOURNMENT**
- Motion by Dave Miller, seconded by Steve Underdahl, to adjourn the meeting.**
- RESULT: Approved, AYES: Jeff Docken, Dave Miller, Steve Underdahl, Galen Malecha, Jim Purfeerst, NAYS: None