

Green County Development Corporation Board Notes
Thursday, April 16, 2020
Via Zoom Call

1. **Attendance:** Nikki Matley (Thrivent Financial), Matt Urban (Blackhawk Technical College - BTC), John McNeil (Big Radio), Richard Thoman (Monroe City Council/County Board/AmericInn), Jane Curran-Meuli (Monroe Clinic), Joe Hunter (Colony Brands), Jesse Duff (Fehr Graham), Joan Rufenacht (County Board), Ron Schaaf (Bank of New Glarus/Sugar River Bank), April Fuhr (Village of Monticello/Bug Tussel), Mike Sanders (1100 Partners), Doug Sutter (Keller), Beth Luchsinger (County Board), Brian Wilson (Village of Belleville), Rick Waski (Monroe School District), Kristi Smith (Small Business Development Center), Cara Carper (Green County Development Corporation - SBDC), Calvin Boldebuck (Congressman Mark Pocan's office), Kat Cisar (Monroe Times).
2. **Call to Order:** President Nikki Matley called the meeting to order at 7:32 am.
3. **Introduction of all on the call**
4. **Approval of Agenda, Minutes (January 16, 2020) and Financials (February/March):** Motion by Ron Schaaf; second by John McNeil. Motion carried.
5. **Events Update/Staff Update:** Cara provided a written report and a brief update.
 - a. COVID-19 Crisis Response: Kristi Smith (SBDC) provided a brief overview of the federal programs. The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program is no longer taking applications because the funding is exhausted. Most who applied have not received their funding yet, but Kristi did know of one business that did get funding. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is expected to close shortly due to funding running out. Kristi mentioned that businesses must now start adapting to a new tomorrow. She urged board members to encourage businesses to contact her for help.
 - b. Driftless Homes Project: The Next Steps meeting will be held Tuesday, April 21 at 2:30 pm. If you did not receive an invitation, let Cara know. This is a great opportunity for single family housing in Green County.
 - c. Revolving Loan Fund Update: No loans have yet been made out of the Growth Opportunity Fund. GCDC is seeking changes to allow us to make loans to businesses that have been in business more than 5 years. Cara is meeting with Associated Bank to potentially get some Community Reinvestment Act funding to fully fund the program.
 - d. Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) Update: Cara attended training in February in Washington DC. The May training has been postponed. Due to the COVID crisis, TPM work with healthcare organizations is on hold until fall. We will restart the program and get additional businesses to join.
 - e. Annual Meeting Update: Board members felt there was a good turnout, the food was good, and the speaker was good. It was short and to the point. If anyone knows of a good speaker for 2021, please let us know.
 - f. Conflict of Interest Disclosures (saved for a future in-person meeting)
 - g. Career Pathways Letter of Support: We are working on an application with Prosperity Southwest and CESA 3 to work with businesses and schools to bring additional career

pathway opportunities to students. Rick Waski added to the conversation that not all school districts are “all in” for helping students determine their career pathways. Monroe has an excellent program and doesn’t want to compromise that. Funding is being provided by diverted Perkins Grant funding. If you can provide a letter from your business or community, it is appreciated.

- h. Channel 27 spot on Earth Day re: UniverCity Program: It is possible Cara will be on TV on Wednesday, April 22 at 6:30 pm.

6. **Community Roundtable/Partner Reports/Board member Business for the Good of the Order:**

Mike Sanders (1100 Partners) – Mikes is the Public Information Officer for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) committee that meets three times per week regarding the COVID crisis. He said social distancing is working and the numbers of COVID cases in Green County are staying small. The EOC meetings are heartening and he is so proud of everyone working together to maximize resources in Green County. He thanked the media partners, specifically Big Radio and the Monroe Times, for getting the word out.

Ron Schaaf (Bank of New Glarus/Sugar River Bank) – The bank processed 80 Paycheck Protection Program applications for \$11 million. They partnered with a third party to help with the load. The process changed daily, so it was frustrating. They have also been very busy making modifications to loans for bars and restaurants. Most of the lenders are working from home. The new New Glarus facility is delayed because only one subcontractor is allowed in at a time.

Matt Urban (BTC) – BTC has cancelled face-to-face classes through the end of the semester. There will be no summer school. Classes end May 11, but students can continue to finish their projects until June 15. Labs will continue into the summer. BTC has been adapting their model to meet social distancing and student needs. There have been statewide discussions of how COVID might affect enrollments, and there are concerns that enrollment may decline in the fall. Yet the DWD has indicated that others might consider retraining.

Richard Thoman (AmericInn, City of Monroe, County Board) – Business has been slow at the hotel. He had heard three restaurants are going out of business, but it may only be a rumor. Cheese Days is considering cancelling, but Richard thought that was premature. He had some questions about social distancing and compassionate care when someone is in the hospital. Jane Curran-Meuli share her insights on Monroe Clinic policies. There were two excellent candidates for the City Administrator position. An offer was made, but he hasn’t heard whether it was accepted yet. They hope to have someone on board by June 1.

Jane Curran-Meuli (Monroe Clinic) – Monroe Clinic is ready for a surge of COVID patients, if it comes. No patients at Monroe Clinic are currently under investigation. Only limited testing is available. Monroe Clinic is getting the availability for rapid testing if it is needed for example, for a patient to go into surgery. Jane expressed her thanks to Pleasant View, Blackhawk Technical College and local EMS for their great community effort to help Monroe Clinic. Monroe Clinic has offered to sterilize N95 masks for any organization. The masks can be sterilized up to ten times.

Rick Waski (Monroe School District) – COVID has had a significant impact on schools and he thanked community donations and time from his staff. The district delivers 1,100 meals a day to students – every meal to every household. From his work with the EOC, he pointed out that the mobility report shows that Green County is among the most compliant about staying safe at home - [https://www.gstatic.com/covid19/mobility/2020-04-05 US Wisconsin Mobility Report en.pdf](https://www.gstatic.com/covid19/mobility/2020-04-05_US_Wisconsin_Mobility_Report_en.pdf)

He said it was not clear whether schools would open by May. (Update: the Governor's office has extended Safer at Home until May 26.) He felt June or July summer school was unlikely, but perhaps August. Monroe School District has donated a lot of Personal Protection Equipment and sterilizers to those who need them. They are helping as they can. The school board has tabled the discussion of a school referendum on the buildings until they have a better sense of the economic recovery.

Beth Luchsinger (County Board) – The Human Services meeting was cancelled. The Health Committee received an update on the EOC. Beth's friend sewed face masks for the county health nurses. The New Glarus Chamber postponed Beer, Bacon and Cheese Fest and Polka Fest. They will be held in October instead. New Glarus continues to gear up for their 175th Anniversary in the fall. Home of Our Own apartments are coming along nicely ahead of schedule. Beth hopes to provide a tour of the facility for the GCDC Board.

Brian Wilson (Village of Belleville) – Their public offices have been closed since March 16. For the election, most voted absentee. Projects in Belleville are progressing. There was a groundbreaking for the library on Tuesday. There has not been an impact on new home construction yet, and still plans for a new chiropractic clinic in Bell West. Kyle Knott is working from home on social media and helping businesses. They hope to fill their economic development and marketing position and is has been advertised. Liquor license renewal dates may change under new legislation.

Joan Rufenacht (County Board) – Green County has 9 positive COVID cases. Of those nine, 4 are female/5 male; one aged 20-29; one aged 30-39; 3 aged 40-49; one aged 70-79 and 3 aged 80-89. Only two cases were due to travel outside of the county. None were from family members.

Doug Sutter (Keller) – Construction projects are continuing, but slow because of distancing. The number of new projects has slowed considerably. Doug has a customer in northern Wisconsin who manufactures anti-bacterial mist machines for \$900. They are effective and cost efficient to fog a small business. Doug is happy to forward contact information. Rick Waski mentioned the school district has a similar unit that works well and has been donated to local law enforcement.

John McNeil (Big Radio) – The Shop Local FM site has been updated to help small businesses through the pandemic. <https://www.shoplocal.fm/> Hundreds of businesses are listed. Some businesses did try curbside pickup, but some have stopped that service. Others are taking this time to remodel so they are ready when they can open. After Big Radio purchased Bliss Communications, they have taken over the 5th floor of Parker Pen Plaza. John will let us know when they hold an open house. Badger State Ethanol and Minhas are producing hand sanitizer for front line people. If you need some, give them a call. Also let John know if you have ideas for Spotlight on Green County.

Joe Hunter (Colony Brands) – Colony Brands is focused on keeping the community going, employees safe and customers happy. They have seen an increase in food deliveries, but everything else is down. He is looking forward to getting together to work.

Jesse Duff (Fehr Graham) – They are making adjustments to working at home. The Monroe office is the Field Office for construction, but they are social distancing. The highway 11 project has started back up and will be complete mid-May. Then another project of continuation of 11 to 59, including in front of the highway department and Pleasant View. They will be replacing the pavement on highway 81 from Monroe to Argyle. The road will stay open the whole time. There is a potential for EDA to federally fund projects, so be thinking of potential projects. Jesse also has contacts for anyone looking for help to clean their businesses.

Kristi Smith (SBDC) – Kristi added that applications for unemployment for self-employed people in Wisconsin will be available on April 21.

Kat Cisar (Monroe Times) – Nothing to report, just listening in for updates.

Calvin Boldebeck (Congressman Mark Pocan's office) – Issues with the PPP and EIDL funding running out is on Congressman Pocan's radar. They are hoping for additional funds in the next stimulus package. Pocan is also working to help dairy farmers. He is hoping to get the risk management programs re-opened and buy up additional commodities. The office is hearing concerns about the Wisconsin election and the need to do something different in November. Congressman Pocan would prefer mail-in ballots. Congressman Pocan hosts a weekly call with local government representatives at 9:30 am every Thursday. If you would like to be part of the call, contact Calvin. The office is also hearing about the need for increased funding for rural broadband. If you have any issues with the federal government, Calvin is very willing to be your point of contact.

April Fuhr (Bug Tussel/Village of Monticello) – April had to sign off to go to the Green Cares Food Pantry, but provided a written report. She reminded the Board that we received a \$1.2 million broadband grant for Bug Tussel from the Public Service Commission. Bug Tussel is going like crazy! They are getting lots of folks connected who are working and schooling from home. Monticello was very focused on the election last week and doing it safely. April was at the polls for 14 hours that day and they had 111 in person votes but thankfully had a plexiglass barrier. The economic development group is deeply in denial and still wants to plan a farmer's market because everything will be fine soon. April wonders what other communities are doing about this. April is trying to promote delivery services from growers. Also if anyone is looking for a donation to make, please consider the Green Cares food pantry. They are feeding over 300 families of all sizes a month and are concerned about food supply for those vulnerable families.

Nikki Matley (Thrivent) – Thrivent Action Teams are being used to help United Way of Green County assist with the COVID crisis. Teresa Keehn, Director of United Way, has created a spreadsheet of needs. You can view the needs, as well as send a note to thank a healthcare worker. Thrivent is also helping with a match to raise money for the COVID response. There is uncertainty in the markets. Tonight there is a free webinar about thinking about your retirement in these times of uncertainty. Nikki is meeting with clients virtually. Many are wondering if they have enough life insurance. She will also be starting virtual workshops. Nikki thanked

everyone for their support of her for Monroe School Board. She provided a report on Kiwanis for Dave Mosher. They are currently not meeting, but are being sure to take care of each other, especially senior members.

Quick update on events: Breakfast on the Farm has been changed to June 20 at the Green County Fairgrounds. The Balloon and Blues Festival has been cancelled.

7. **Next Meeting:** The next GCDC Board meeting will be Thursday, May 21 online.
8. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn by John McNeil, second by Brian Wilson. Motion carried.