

August, 2020 Executive Director's Board Report

Business RLF: The biggest thing is that we have now officially been awarded an additional \$500,000 from the US Economic Development Administration for Covid recovery. We are still in the administrative rules phase, but will be able to start soliciting for loan applications in the next 30 days or so. We will be focusing primarily on keeping small businesses afloat, especially if they have things that are directly Covid related that they can do to improve/safeguard their business model—such as implementing online sales or shifting to produce PPE, etc.

EDA Planning Funds: We have also been awarded \$400,000 from the EDA for economic recovery assistance and planning. This is a grant to SWIPCO, but we have structured our application in such a way as we intend to sub-contract much of the work to the local economic development groups. We are also still in the administrative rules phase, but within the next 60 days I anticipate hiring a person on a limited basis to act as a point person on the project, and to solicit proposals from local economic development groups to be sub-recipients of these funds. We have set aside about \$30,000 per county to help assist their efforts. This excludes Pottawattamie and Mills Counties as these are in MAPA's EDA district, though I do believe MAPA intends to do a similar sub-contract with local groups.

CARES Act Transit Funds: We recently received a contract amendment to spend about \$200,000 of our \$3 million in CARES Act transit assistance toward capital projects. Previously all of the funds had to be spent on operating expenses. The majority of the \$200,000 will be spent on some repairs to the Council Bluffs building, which will allow for better traffic flow and cleaning since this is our primary bus disinfecting site for the western part of our area. We will also renovate the office space there so we have a better training area so we can disperse our driver training more—rather than have them all come to one site. We will also be doing some improvements to our transit office to increase distance between dispatchers, and add air conditioning up renovate the locker room space in the shop office.

Since our last meeting we have hired a new dispatcher (due to internal promotions). Her name is Denise Schoening and she lives near Shelby. She comes with a lot of experience as an administrative assistant and we're glad to have her onboard.

COVID: We are in a relatively high risk business and we are doing our best to limit those risks. I previously sent out an email to the board with a run down of our current precautions so I won't re-list them here, but the main thing is that we are trying to limit contact between staff and clients and amongst staff. Many staff are working from home, typically coming in one or two days a week as needed in the office. To date we have had 2 drivers with confirmed COVID cases who were ill but have recovered and are back to work. We currently have one driver who was quarantining because of an exposure, who is now ill and awaiting COVID test results. We have had 2 office staff quarantine because of close contact with relatives who were positive, neither employee became ill and both have completed their quarantine and are back to work. Today we found out we do have our first office employee with a confirmed case and she is symptomatic and is at home. She has been primarily working from home and because of the precautions in place no other staff are required to quarantine, although of course we monitor the situation every day!