



NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

49 Ridgmont Drive, Ridgway, PA 15853

Phone: (814) 773-3162

Fax: (814) 772-7045

North Central Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 27, 2022 – 9:30 AM

Members – via Zoom or In Person

Cliff Clark	Cameron County
Jodi Brennan	Clearfield County
Matt Quesenberry	Elk County
Tracy Gerber	Elk County
Padraic McGrath	Elk County
Jeff Pisarcik	Jefferson County
Jamie Lefever	Jefferson County
Jim Sleigh	Jefferson County
Carol Duffy	McKean County
Tom Kreiner	McKean County
Richard Fry	McKean County
Nancy Grupp	Potter County
Doug Morley	Potter County
Abbi Peters	At-Large PA Wilds Center
Jill Martin-Rend	At-large BC3@Brockway
Carolyn Newhouse	At-large Bradford Area Alliance

Staff - via Zoom or In Person

Jim Chorney
Amy Kessler
Chris Perneski
Julie Kasmierski
Samantha Mitchell
Shelly Caggiano
Sherry Dumire
Jenn Hibbard
Mary Lou Jessop

Guests

Bob Morgan	USDA Rural Development
Daniel Blottenberger	USDA Rural Development
Jill Grosch	Rep. Martin Causer's Office
Becki Taylor	Elk County
Josh Zucal	Cameron County
Brian Stockman	Ridgway Record

Chair Nancy Grupp called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS

Roll call was taken and there was a quorum.

MINUTES

With no corrections or amendments to the May 25 and June 22, 2022, Board Minutes, Doug Morley moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded by Jim Sleigh. Motion unanimously passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Reports

With no corrections or additions to the May and June Financial Statements, Jeff Pisarcik moved to accept the Financial Statements as presented, seconded by Tracy Gerber. Motion unanimously passed.

A95s

There were no A95s.

FY 23- ARC Projects – Staff Recommendations

As part of our role as a Local Development District, ARC has us do area development projects. We solicit those projects from your communities and our member counties. In the past we have come up with a priority ranking; however, this time we are doing it differently with ARC as we are not ranking the projects. We are just saying these are the projects that, based on the expectations of ARC, are the most ready to go for consideration for a full application.

Sherry reported we have five total projects: four access road projects and our NC PREP application. As we work through cost-concurrence with PennDOT for the access road projects we continue to update the pre-applications to capture accurate cost estimates. This year we were prompted by ARC to forward any pre-applications of projects that are “ready to go” meaning they fit the ARC priorities, have any required match in place and can have the necessary supporting documentation for any performance measures shown ready for a full application should they be invited to submit for full application.

1. North Central PREP:

This project provides community and economic assistance to the six-county region. The project anticipates serving 400 businesses, creating 60 jobs as well as retaining 330 jobs. \$3.5M in leveraged private investment and \$1.7M in public financing. The total ask from ARC is \$285,000 and total project cost is \$570,000.

2. Lutheran Home at Kane Access Road:

This project is located in the Borough of Kane, McKean County, and serves McKean, Elk, and Warren Counties. The project proposes the design and construction of 1,000 feet of access road. This access road will serve as the only access to the back side of the facility and will allow access to the remaining 25 acres of the property for future expansion. This is Phase 1 of a major expansion project for the Lutheran Home. The project anticipates creating 10 jobs, retaining 136 jobs, \$7M in leveraged private investment and improvement of the quality of life for 121 residents of the Home. The current total ask from ARC is \$591,138.36. As you can see the amount has increased since the initial cost estimate provided in the

board packet. While seeking cost concurrence, the total is anticipated to increase due to missing line items discovered prior to submitting the estimate for PennDOT Review.

3. Bradford Township Owens and Doe Hill Road Improvements:

This project is located in Bradford Township, Clearfield County, and proposes to design and construct improvements to 3,221 linear feet of roadway on Owens and Doe Hill Roads: 1,901 feet of the project is located on Owens Road, with 1,320 feet located on Doe Hill Road. The project proposes the complete reconstruction of these roadways to correct subgrade failures, drainage and to improve the structural integrity of the roadway to accommodate the heavy truck traffic. The project will serve four businesses, allow for the development of 530 acres, retain 1,474 jobs and create 50 jobs. The total ask from ARC is \$2,520,000.

4. Reynoldsville Area Industrial Development Corporation South 5th Street Extension:

This project is located in the Borough of Reynoldsville, Jefferson County, and proposes to design and construct 1,884 linear feet of roadway to connect South Street Extension with Industrial Boulevard. The project includes widening the roadway to construct shoulders on each side of the road, construct pavement underdrains to control stormwater runoff and curbing. The road is projected to open up an additional eight acres of land for new development or expansion of current businesses. The project will improve four businesses. The total ask from ARC is \$1,027,241.

5. Industrial Park Road Improvements- Phase 2:

This project is located in Lawrence Township, Clearfield County, and proposes to design and construct improvements for 4,800 linear feet. The project is Phase 2 of the improvements to Industrial Park Road. The project proposes milling and resurfacing 4,800 feet of roadway. Without improvements the road will deteriorate beyond use. The road serves the Clearfield Commerce Park which is a 250-acre business park that is located in a Keystone Opportunity Zone off Interstate 80. The project will promote the creation of an estimated 486 jobs, retain 1,052 jobs and improve 20 businesses. It will also promote the development of 162 acres. The total ask from ARC is \$945,000.

These are the projects that most align with ARC criteria and are the closest to being ready for application submittal from our Call for Projects list. The remaining projects on our list are projects that do not meet ARC criteria and are currently being matched with funding sources such as EDA, USDA and DCNR to name a few.

The projects that do meet ARC criteria but are missing the match component or are still trying to identify potential outcome measures will continue to be cultivated by ARC staff and applicants in order to bring them to a readiness point that they can be submitted. Many of the projects submitted are in the very early stages of planning due to applicants being uncertain of what funding sources were options for their projects and how to apply.

When asked if a motion to accept these projects was required, Jim stated that wasn't necessary as we just need to make the Board aware of them.

Correspondence

There were several pieces of Correspondence.

The first was for the approval of new CEDS members, due to the resignation of several members and one for missing three consecutive meetings without an excused absence. The new members are:

- Kelly Bruno, Potter County representing the Coudersport Chamber of Commerce
- Peter Dibiase, Potter County representing Potter County Planning
- Brittany Madera, Clearfield County representing the PA Wilds Center as an At-large member

Chair Grupp called for a motion to approve the new members to the CEDS Committee as presented.

Carolyn Newhouse moved to approve the new members to the CEDS Committee as presented, seconded by Padraic McGrath. Motion unanimously passed.

The second was a Request to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracting under the Engage! Program for 2022-2023. Jim asked Chris to give a brief overview of this.

Chris stated we applied for the Engage! funding for the program year starting July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$159,200. North Central mainly serves as the fiscal agent for the Engage! Program. We subcontract these dollars out to our PREP Partners in an attempt to supplement some of their PREP-related activities. We do take a small amount to administer the contacts.

We stayed with the same number of interviews per PREP Partner and that is usually based on past performance and/or what they requested to do by county. We pay \$750 per interview.

Below is the breakdown of where the dollars are intended to be subcontracted.

Performance Metrics

Region: North Central Region	2022-2023 Engage! Metrics
Engage Surveys Completed	201
Referrals to Partners	107
Focus Groups/Business Walks	2
Action Plans Developed	175
Action Plans Accepted for Implementation	163

Budget

Per Interview	Subcontract Allocation	Number of Interviews
\$750	\$150,750	201
Subcontractors	Allocation July 2021	Number of Interviews
Cameron EDC	\$3,000	4
Clarion SBDC	\$46,500	62
Clearfield EDC	\$46,500	62
Elk St Marys EDC	\$10,500	14
Jefferson County EDC	\$22,500	30
McKean County Commissioners	\$11,250	15
Potter County Education Council	\$10,500	14
Subcontract Total	\$150,750	201
Admin Cost	\$8,450	
	\$159,200	

We are asking for permission to be able to issue subcontracts to those Partners.

Chair Grupp called for a motion to approve the Request to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracting under the Engage! Program for 2022-2023.

Jeff Pisarcik moved to approve the Request to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracting under the Engage! Program for 2022-2023, seconded by Abbi Peters. Motion unanimously passed.

Purchases

There were three Purchases.

The first is requesting permission to renew the Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI) annual Maintenance Agreement for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$10,000. This is software used by the GIS Department and the money has been budgeted for.

Chair Grupp called for a motion to approve the renewal of the ESRI annual Maintenance Agreement for the

period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$10,000.

Doug Morley moved to approve the renewal of the ESRI annual Maintenance Agreement for the period of July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 in the amount of \$10,000, seconded by Nancy Grupp. Motion unanimously passed.

The next was the approval for the purchase of yearly loan servicing software supplement fees for the On-line Loan Application and the Borrower Portal in the amount of \$5,500. This is to be charged to the Loan Administration for which funds have been budgeted.

Chair Grupp called for a motion to approve the purchase of yearly loan servicing software supplement fees for the On-line Loan Application and the Borrower Portal in the amount of \$5,500.

Jim Sleigh moved to approve the purchase of yearly loan servicing software supplement fees for the On-line Loan Application and the Borrower Portal in the amount of \$5,500, seconded by Richard Fry. Motion unanimously passed.

The third purchase was requesting permission to conduct billboard advertising throughout the WIC service region.

In order to make people more aware of the WIC Program, they are looking at doing a Billboard Advertising Outreach Campaign through Lamer Outdoor Advertising.

Before expending WIC program funds for advertising and/or outreach, Julie must obtain approval from the PA WIC Agency. On July 13 she received approval from Harrisburg to do the Billboard Advertising Outreach Campaign with Lamar Outdoor Advertising in the amount of \$6,200. The funds are available for this.

Chair Grupp called for a motion to approve the WIC Billboard Advertising Outreach Campaign with Lamar Outdoor Advertising in the amount of \$6,200.

Jeff Pisarcik moved to approve the WIC Billboard Advertising Outreach Campaign with Lamar Outdoor Advertising in the amount of \$6,200, seconded by Carol Duffy. Motion unanimously passed.

Resolutions

There were no Resolutions.

Loans

Sarah L. Seyler, dba The Dog Shop, Clearfield, Clearfield County, has requested a loan in the amount of \$50,000 from the USDA Intermediary Relending Program Microloan Fund for 10 years at 5% for the purchase of an existing dog grooming business, Jen's Happy Tails Dog Grooming, including real estate, equipment and inventory. North Central's collateral will be first mortgage on real estate located at 415 Nichols Street, Clearfield, first lien security interest on all business assets, as well personal guarantee of owner and spouse. One-full time job will be created within three years.

Chair Grupp called for a motion to approve the loan to Sarah L. Seyler, dba The Dog Shop.

Matt Quesenberry moved to approve the loan to Sarah L. Seyler, dba The Dog Shop, seconded by Richard Fry. Motion unanimously passed.

Before Jim introduced our guest, he updated the Board on several projects going on within the building. The air conditioning is completed in the main part of the building. We are anticipating construction of the road project to happen within the next several weeks. From there we will make a decision as to how much of the available credit line we have that we will be able to fix the remaining rooms in the building. Right now, things are looking pretty optimistic that we will be able to fit it all under the initial credit line we had requested. Jim will keep the Board updated as we get more information as to when things will get underway.

GUEST

Jim introduced and welcomed Bob Morgan, State Director, USDA Rural Development, and Daniel Blottenberger, Public Affairs Specialist, to the meeting. Bob and Daniel are in our area this week to talk about the programs that USDA has to offer and doing outreach which we have been helping with. There is a meeting after today's Board meeting, beginning at 10:30 where Bob will be doing a presentation. There is another meeting tomorrow at the LaunchBox in DuBois beginning at 10:00.

Bob stated he was appointed State Director in October 2021, so he and Daniel are trying to visit as many places as possible. North Central planned a great agenda for this week allowing them to see a lot of people in the area, people that have been impacted positively by being able to receive funding from the USDA IRL funds. It is wonderful to meet our clients through that kind of extended relationship.

The job of the USDA is to provide for different opportunities throughout Rural America. When he talks to people at state conventions, he will say that Philadelphia is doing fine and Pittsburgh is doing fine. He is the person who works for people everywhere else because they need to do fine as well.

Urban areas have the populations which attract the opportunities. We need someone who is an advocate for rural communities and hopefully that's the role Bob and USDA staff across the state can do.

There are nine offices throughout the Commonwealth along with the State Office in Harrisburg.

They have four Program areas and the largest one by far is that USDA is either a direct or guaranteed lender in the housing market for Single-Family Housing. Looking at the numbers about 90% of their business has been done in Single-Family Housing. In many cases it is people who maybe first-time home buyers or buyers who are in the lower to moderate income range where they may need a little assistance. They may need a partner (Federal Government) to help them through the loan process.

They also do Multi-Family Housing. For those of you who may know of some apartment buildings/complexes located in rural communities USDA probably had something to do with that, either they helped with the purchase or helped with remodeling. Bob did add that for the most part the majority of those are well kept as USDA does require that some of the money received be put into maintenance every several years.

USDA also does Water Environmental Programs. They are a large provider of those programs and that may help a community fund with the laying of a municipal water line. Or more often than not, they have been the funder of local sewage systems or the treatment plants. That is where the big money is with the outputting and treatment system and various filters.

Bob and Daniel were in Brookville several weeks ago to visit a plant where USDA has been involved in. USDA apparently helped with the original plant that went online a number of years ago. The community has expanded, and they needed to expand the treatment options. There you see what the old system was like and how technology has impacted the treatment process. You can actually install much more efficient and effective processing plants by using much less space.

USDA also does Community Facilities projects such as if a municipality needs to renovate or build a new fire station or ambulance garage or may need to rehab or build a new borough building, community center or something of that nature.

They can also do funding for vehicles such as fire trucks, ambulances. They are doing two that haven't been delivered to Forest County where they replaced some of their ambulances. This was done through one of the USDA's COVID-related programs, the Emergency Rural Health Care Grant.

Most of the USDA's budget is an investment by the taxpayers so it is a loan arrangement. The advantage of a loan is it has a very long amortization schedule. The USDA can go as far as 35 years. It makes larger projects more affordable.

They do have grant money and often times this money is available earlier in the fiscal year than later. They had a project they were able to do a 55/45 loan to grant mix for a major sewage upgrade in Wayne County.

USDA also has Business Programs. For rural businesses that are expanding or investing in product and inventory, in this particular case they need to have actual, traditional bank financing in place on those transactions. What the USDA will be able to do is put a federal guarantee on that existing loan. It reduces the risk for the borrower and the lender. As a result, the interest rate associated with that loan will probably drop. This is an opportunity to make things a little more affordable.

They are also involved with electric cooperatives and internet providers in upgrades of their systems and providing better reliability in perhaps an electric cooperative service. Through the Reconnect Program they are doing work with utility companies that are providing internet service to areas that are harder to reach. The State also has a program that is involved with that. That is an important part of the USDA's mission.

The historical beginnings of the program were the electrification of Rural America back in the late 1920s and early 1930s. A hundred years ago if you lived on a farm in Tennessee you went to bed with the sun and you didn't have a radio. Providing electricity to areas not unlike northern Pennsylvania, where homes are not on top of each other, is part of their mission.

We have great communities and great opportunities, and the USDA needs to do a little bit more to support them.

Bob thanked everyone that was at the meeting and noted he will be doing a longer presentation and to feel free to stay.

Nancy thanked Bob for his informative talk.

Jim recognized Jill Grosch from State Rep. Causer's office and asked if she had anything she'd like to say.

Jill had nothing to add.

The next Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 24, to approve Loans, beginning at 9:30 AM and will be virtual.

The next Full Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 28, beginning at 9:30 AM. This meeting will be in Person and Virtual.

ADJOURN

With no other business, Chair Grupp called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jeff Pisarcik moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Richard Fry. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Padraic McGrath, CPA
Secretary/Treasurer