



**NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REGIONAL PLANNING and DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

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North Central Board Meeting  
Wednesday, August 23, 2023 – 9:30 AM

Members – via Teams

Ann Losey	Cameron County
Cliff Clark	Cameron County
Dave Glass	Clearfield County
Kristy Smith	Clearfield County
Matt Quesenberry	Elk County
Tracy Gerber	Elk County
Eric Wolfe	Elk County
Padraic McGrath	Elk County
Jeff Pisarcik	Jefferson County
Jessica Funk	Jefferson County
Carol Duffy	McKean County
Tom Kreiner	McKean County
Richard Fry	McKean County
Nancy Grupp	Potter County
Jill Martin-Rend	At-Large BC3@Brockway
Pam Streich	At-Large Workforce Solutions

Staff - via Teams

Jim Chorney  
Amy Kessler  
Ed Matts  
Samantha Mitchell  
Chris Perneski  
Shelly Caggiano  
Mary Lou Jessop

Chair Ann Losey called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM with the pledge to the flag.

**QUORUM/INTRODUCTIONS**

Roll call was taken and there was a quorum for the meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Correspondence

Request for Approval to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracts Under the NC PREP Program 2023-2024.

Chris spoke briefly on this Request.

North Central is finalizing the NC PREP application for funds July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024. The NC PREP Network includes both funded and unfunded partners. The seven subcontracted funded partners are:

- Cameron County Industrial Development Authority
- PennWest Clarion SBDC
- Clearly Ahead Development
- St. Marys Economic Development Corporation
- Jefferson County Development Council
- McKean County Commissioners/McKean County EDC
- Potter County Redevelopment Authority

NC PREP for Program Year 2023-2024 received an allocation of \$614,496. Statewide, PREP received level funding. Allocations for each PREP region, to include this increase, were based on the established formula allocation/percentage that DCED utilized in previous years. This formula is referenced in the fiscal code of the budget.

NC PREP Allocations for Program Year 2023-2024 requested for subcontracting are:

<b>NC REP PY 2023-2024 Allocation</b>	<b>\$614,496</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Allocation 2023-2024</b>	
North Central	\$398,745	65%
PennWest Clarion SBDC	\$158,436	26%
Subcontracts	\$57,315	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$614,496</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Subcontractors Total</b>	\$57,315	
Cameron County	\$6,397	11%
Clearfield County	\$13,778	24%
Elk County	\$9,175	16%
Jefferson County	\$10,207	18%
McKean County	\$10,207	18%
Potter County	\$7,551	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$57,315</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*North Central does not hold the PennWest Clarion SBDC subcontract. Performance, metrics and reporting is the responsibility of North Central, but we do not serve as the fiscal agent.

We are asking for permission to be able to proceed with going to contract and subcontracts with our counties.

Pam asked that whenever there is a meeting with an employer and workforce is a topic brought up, that Workforce Solutions be part of those meeting or at least have follow-up conversations.

Chris responded that they try to make sure Workforce Solutions is invited to meetings.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the Request to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracting under the PREP Program for 2023-2024, to be able to proceed with going to contract and subcontracts with our counties as presented.

Jeff Pisarcik moved to approve the Request to Proceed with Contracting and Subcontracting under the PREP Program for 2023-2024, to be able to proceed with going to contract and subcontracts with our counties, seconded by Pam Streich. Motion unanimously passed.

#### Purchases

Ed reported that the IT Department is requesting permission to renew the Annual Barracuda E-Mail Protection and the Gateway Defense License. This protects against advanced email threats. This also includes the Annual Barracuda Cloud-to-Cloud Backup Service Data Protection for our Office 365 Accounts which is all our employees' emails, Teams and SharePoint. This is backed up every evening.

The total cost is \$5,923.05 and is budgeted for.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the renewal of the Annual Barracuda E-Mail Protection and the Gateway Defense License.

Dave Glass moved to approve the renewal of the Annual Barracuda E-Mail Protection and the Gateway Defense License, seconded by Matt Quesenberry. Motion unanimously passed.

#### Audit and Financing Committee Recommendation

At the July meeting the Organizational Budget was presented was presented by the Audit and Finance Committee. At that time it was requested that additional details be forwarded to the entire Board, which was shortly after the meeting.

Today we are bringing the motion that was brought up at the July meeting to approve the Organizational Budget through the recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee. We are hoping to receive a vote on that today.

Carol had a question on the Contractual. When you see all of that you can see that Contractual is under the Greenways Program. Should there be another line for Projects rather than Contractual because aren't those like Projects?

Jim replied they are. We have always considered them Contractual because we enter into an agreement with each of the individual projects and reimburse them that way.

In the future if that is something the Board would like to see a separate Line Item for that, that is something we could consider adding to the budget.

We will have that conversation as far as potentially adding a separate Line Item as it really isn't that big of an issue within our Accounting System.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the Organizational Budget that was presented at the July meeting.

Padraic McGrath moved to approve the Organizational Budget that was presented at the July meeting, seconded by Nancy Grupp

#### Building Committee Update

Jim gave a brief update. We have been working with the engineer to get the bid document out, as well as getting the advertisement out.

Regarding the papers, for the St. Marys Daily Press and Bradford Era, the ads were run on August 22 and will be run again on August 25. The DuBois Courier will be August 21 and August 24.

We have already received one person of interest in the bid.

On August 31, a Pre-bid Meeting will be held here at the North Central Office for any potential applicants. On September 19, the bids will be due by 3:30 PM in our office. On September 20, the Committee will be opening the bids and reviewing them.

That is a brief update as to where we are with that and no motion needed as this is an update only. However, if anyone has any questions, we will be happy to field them.

#### Executive Committee Update and Recommendation

At the July 26 Board meeting a motion was passed to grant North Central the approval to move forward with the RFP process to hire a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of North Central's salary structure. The Executive Committee met and reviewed the RFP to go to bid. After several back and forths, a final product was arrived at.

The Executive Committee recommends granting North Central approval to proceed with advertising the RFP for Compensation Consulting Services.

Chair Losey called for a motion to grant North Central approval to proceed with advertising the RFP for Compensation Consulting Services.

Carol Duffy moved to approve the motion to grant North Central approval to proceed with

advertising the RFP for Compensation Consulting Services, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. Motion unanimously passed.

Nancy asked if we voted on the Organizational Budget. The motions were made by Padraic and herself.

Dave added that we received the motions but didn't vote on the action.

The motion unanimously passed.

### Tax Assessment

Just prior to the meeting Jim received a phone call from the Assessment Office. North Central does qualify as a purely public charity. What that means is that North Central land and any property we occupy would be tax exempt. The Keystone Rural Health portion of the lease would still be taxable at this point, unless they decided to go through the same process we just went through regarding applying for exemption.

If they did and were considered to be exempt, then their portion of the property could potentially be exempt from taxes as well.

Right now the building is right around 27,000 sq. ft. and Keystone Rural Health currently occupies just over 12,000 sq. ft., which is about 45% of the building. They are looking at adding another 2,200 sq. ft. which would put them right around 54% of the building. These are estimates because we don't have actual numbers and we will need to sit down with the Assessment Office and go through the square footage and the new assessed rate, because it is not going to be at the old rate, which was Office rate. It will be a Medical rate which is a little higher but the number we have was about \$30,000 which was our new tax rate. At 54% it is just a little over \$16,000 that the taxes would be. We currently pay around \$21,000. That is where we would stand with this. Again this is subject to change given that Jim will have to sit down and have a conversation with the Assessment Office to work out the specifics of everything.

It would be at our discretion and the Board's discretion as to whether we approach Keystone Rural Health as to whether they want to consider applying for exemption.

Ann had a question. If Keystone happened to do this and the entire building would be tax exempt and we were talking about like a payment in lieu, at that point would we want to discuss that?

Jim's view is we never went into this with the intention of trying to take money away from any of the taxing bodies. But understanding it was a significant increase we were looking at where we are right now with Keystone Rural Health's portion is going to be comparable to what we pay now in taxes. If not and they choose to apply for that exemption, then we could have the conversation of payment in lieu of taxes.

Matt asked if taxes are included in the rent charged to Keystone Rural Health?

The lease agreement does not specifically identify taxes as part of it. It is just a lump sum fee they are charged based on square footage. If they were to apply for and receive the exemption, we would probably have to make some sort of accommodation in their lease agreement would be Jim's guess.

Matt asked if Jim was looking for Board support to approach them and see what they want to do.

Jim's looking for the Board's opinion on this as he doesn't have a problem approaching them and talking to them about this option. He doesn't know if they would even qualify, but they may. He's looking for some advice on that as to what the Board would like him to do.

Ann wanted to know if Keystone Rural Health is a government-run facility?

Sam answered they are a federally qualified health center.

Ann then wondered if that would even qualify them. Ann asked Matt if we just address it and ask them now to get all of this on the table and get it figured out?

Matt doesn't have an issue with that because they are going to be paying which would help the taxing bodies in Elk County. Is it the right thing to approach them or should they know that? His concern is the dollars that are still coming into the county. He's not at a point where he feels the rush to do anything but now that we know it, do we have the responsibility to alert them to this or should their board already be aware of it?

Regarding their facility in Emporium, Ann said she could check and see if they are tax exempt in the borough. It wouldn't hurt to approach them and get it out on the table and how we handle it if it does turn out to be payment in lieu.

Matt had no issue with that and thought it was a good approach. They are doing good things for our rural communities being a healthcare organization. Matt feels they should know about it since we know about it; and it would be a good thing to let them know if they want, they can consider approaching the county to file for their exemption and see what happens.

Jim said he will talk to them and see if they are interested in applying or not. Jim asked if anyone had any other questions or opinions from the Board before he takes that direction?

Hearing none, Ann said she thinks everyone is on board with that.

Therefore, Jim will talk to them and let them know that option is out there and see if they are interested in applying or not.

### Loans

Chris presented the following loans for Board approval.

Chris started by saying this loan is contingent on the appraisal value of \$125,000, which they are waiting for.

Vito's Hogie House LLC, St. Marys, Elk County, has requested a loan in the amount of \$50,000 from EDA CARES Act RLF for 15 years at 4% for purchase of real estate. Purchase the assets of Vito's Hoagie House including real estate, equipment, furniture and fixtures, inventory, goodwill and working capital. North Central's collateral will be mortgage on real estate located at 201 Parade Street, St. Marys, subject to the mortgage of CNB Bank; UCC-1 filing on all business assets, as well as the personal guarantee of the Dennis and Celeste Wilson. Two part-time jobs will be retained, and one new full-time job and four new part-time jobs will be created within three years.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the loan, contingent on the appraisal value of \$125,000, to Vito's Hogie House LLC.

Matt Quesenberry moved to approve the loan, contingent on the appraisal value of \$125,000 to Vito's Hogie House LLC., seconded by Tracy Gerber. Motion unanimously passed.

Jennifer L. Moore, dba Jennifer Moore LCSW Counseling Services, Kane, McKean County, has requested a loan in the amount of \$10,000 from the USDA RDBG Microloan for 10 years at 5%, for building improvements. Installation of new roof on building scheduled to be completed during the first week in September 2023. North Central's collateral will be second mortgage on real estate located at 9 Field Street, Kane, as well as the personal guarantee of the owner. One full-time job will be retained.

Chair Losey called for a motion to approve the loan to Jennifer L. Moore, dba Jennifer Moore LCSW Counseling Services.

Richard Fry moved to approve the loan to Jennifer L. Moore, dba Jennifer Moore LCSW Counseling Services, seconded by Carol Duffy. Motion unanimously passed.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Richard Fry thanked North Central for Elise holding the Community Call for Projects. He was hoping for a better turnout but said quite a few people stopped by. It was a good program to have and come out and do the outreach rather than having the applications online. It seemed like a good positive thing and something that should be kept going.

Nancy Grupp said she thought Elise had a good turnout when she was in Coudersport on August 10. Quite a few municipalities that had scheduled different things with Elise were there. It was very beneficial for the municipalities to be able to put a face with the name and get their questions answered.

Jim thanks Nancy and Richard for their feedback because this is a program that we feel is a great new program they are offering. It was done as a pilot and we're looking at trying to extend it for another two years with the application we just did through ARC Area Development. All this

feedback and the results that we are getting are going to help make our case that this program is important and needed in our communities.

Regarding the Broadband applications, Dave wanted his fellow commissioners to know that the State wants feedback about the applications. In Clearfield County they are going to do some forms with their municipal leaders because the State wants feedback from them as well. He thinks a lot of them probably won't understand some of the data that comes down from this process. If you want and it's helpful to this board, he can share how that goes so that maybe if it helps you all do something similar. This is just a first run on what's going to be a much bigger pot of money next year. He thinks it's important that we all kind of know what we are doing and have a sense of what is coming.

Ann thought that would be very beneficial as this seems like it's confusing for her anyway. She thinks it would be good for us to have some insight.

Dave will have a report prepared. And for Ann or anyone if you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Dave.

Pam Streich said the second survey is out for the second plan the State is working on and responses are due by October 15. She was on a call and Labor & Industry is talking about it as well. So she did send an email to her board about that new survey they are working on for the second plan.

Dave stated that is a separate thing. He's talking about the actual applications for the money that is out right now. The State wants us to review those proposals and provide feedback and whether they support the projects. They need this by the end of September.

Pam said it is confusing as there is a lot they are trying to do in a short time period.

Dave also said the input they want about the plan is important but it's unusual they ask us for feedback directly related to these proposals. He doesn't want to waste this opportunity. If we give them bad feedback, they are just going to ignore us next year. He wants to make sure what we do matters.

Amy thanked all the county planners and especially Jodi. We resubmitted the Federal Rural Transportation Bridge Grant for each county's number 1 bridge project. Grant writing is challenging at best but benefit cost analysis and federal requirements is something different so there was a lot of work that went into that. We were able to get that submitted on August 21. Thank you for all of that.

Amy added as part of our NEVI Plan, we are participating in Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Week and on September 27 we are going to have a virtual and in-personal meeting. We have partnered with the International Electric Union group (IBE 5). They are an electric union and have a fast charger and equipment on site so we're holding a meeting at their facility in Clearfield. That will be broadcast virtually for anyone who wants to attend. Information will be coming out soon.



Carol said she was aware of what was going to happen with that first release of funding. But when you look at the map and once again there is nothing across the northern part of Pennsylvania.

Amy said they decided nationally that the first round of money was going to be on the Interstate systems. And that is what you saw.

Our NEVI Plan is to anticipate the third and fourth round of their money because it is five years. We are trying to identify where to put three to five fast chargers in each county so we can then apply for that round. The goal of the Nationals is to have a fast charger every 50 miles on the Interstate. In our region with what they announced there is one in Clearfield, one in Brookville and there is already one in DuBois. She thinks our region is covered so our argument is let us build out from there. We'll see where that goes but that was the intent of us working together to try to identify what makes sense for a fast charger somewhere else. Amy would assume it is going to be somewhere on the 219 corridor or somewhere on the Route 6 corridor, but where and that is the part we are working through.

We did apply for funding through the Federal Program for Kane with Susan Zook Wilson to have a charger there. Hopefully, that comes to fruition as well. Ann did a great job pulling that together.

Carol would like to see it go across Route 6 in Pennsylvania, rather than Route 86 in New York State so we need to be on top of that and pay attention to what is happening in New York for our most northern counties. She appreciates Amy's work on this.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, Wednesday, September 27, starting at 9:30 and will be in-person and virtual.

### **ADJOURN**

With no other business, Chair Losey called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Pam Streich moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jeff Pisarcik. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Padraic McGrath, CPA  
Secretary/Treasurer