

ARROWHEAD REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (ARDC)

May 15, 2025 – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

ARDC, 221 West First Street, Duluth, MN 55802**Minutes**

Present	Member's Name	Representing
X	Briggs, Brian	At Large ((ARDC Commissioner = Communities Under 10,000 (Int'l Falls))
X	Goutermont, Rick	County Commissioner (Lake)
	Harala, Annie	County Commissioner (St. Louis)
X	Hell, Destry	County Commissioner (Koochiching)
	Hollinday, Jason	NATC, <i>Secretary</i>
	Hoppe, Joel	At Large
	Johnson, John	County Commissioner (Itasca), <i>Vice Chair</i>
	Kearney, Mike	County Commissioner (Aitkin)
X	Lyons, Steve	Advisory Committee (Aging)
X	Mayou, Mike	Advisory Committee (MIC)
X	Medure, Pat	At Large
X	Nevanen, Paul	At Large
X	Rasmussen, Allen	At Large, <i>Treasurer</i>
X	Storlie, Ginny	County Commissioners (Cook), <i>Chair</i>
X	Zmyslony, Susan	County Commissioners (Carlton)
OTHERS AT MEETING		
	Chicka, Ron	ARDC
X	Kane, Kristi	ARDC
X	Mattila, Krista	ARDC
X-MS Teams	Sr. Mary Matthew Morrisroe	ARDC
	Sash, Rebecca	ARDC
X	Teskey, Beth Ann	ARDC
X	Sherman, Grant	ARDC Commissioner – Townships, Aitkin
X	Alexandra, Renee	ARDC
X	Kangas-Olson, Lori	ARDC
X	Watson, Rondi	ARDC

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Storlie at 10:00 a.m. Round robin introductions.
- 2. CONSENT AGENDA for approval of the following:**
Board Meeting Minutes, March 20, 2025.
Motion by Rasmussen/Briggs to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.
- 3. ARDC Staff Introduction.** *Renee Alexandra, ARDC Executive Assistant*
- 4. DISCUSSION:**
 - **Change in Manage IT Provider.**

Executive Director, Kristi Kane discussed reasoning for a change in provider:

Over the past two years since CW was purchased by VC3, services have changed and business practices as well.

ARDC has experienced issues with the Help Desk response which has caused extra downtime, delays in responses and fixes, and extra assistance required from on-site staff to help manage the help desk and reduce downtime.

ARDC has experienced agency-wide issues that have not been addressed causing more staff downtime than necessary.

Through this process ARDC learned that we have not had an internal assessment done of our environment and that an external assessment found significant deficiencies and issues with our current setup. None of the issues caused vulnerabilities but did cause inefficiencies.

There were significant delays in warning us about increased costs from vendors, leading us to have to pay those increased costs.

The Help desk being nationwide has also caused a decline in staff that know who ARDC is, making the support response superficial and not always relevant.

Overall VC3's service to ARDC has significantly declined in recent years. We have been working with VC3 and attending monthly meetings to address immediate concerns. With recent significant price increases, changes to our contract including inclusions and cost, and the lack of service response, it was determined that this was the right time to vet other options for organizations to provide us with Managed IT Services.

Richard Sarraan did a scan of regional IT companies to see who was large enough to meet ARDC's needs, ensure continuity of operations and provide the response level needed for our largely remote workforce.

Asgard IT Services, ThriveOn IT, Integris and VC3 were all contacted regarding a formal assessment and quote. (per ARDC Procurement Policy)

Ricky coordinated meetings with Asgard (Bemidji), Thrive On and Integris, both local Duluth organizations to get offers to have them provide IT for ARDC. An assessment review was scheduled with our current provider, VC3, as well.

Ricky scheduled multiple meetings with all three organizations to understand who they were and what they offered as well as communicate ARDC's needs and logistics.

ARDC had a Technology Assessment done. Ricky, Sister Mary and Krista reviewed each organization. This included a presentation, cost information and breakdowns of the agreements that each organization offered.

Board members discussed cost-effectiveness, service provided, and cost options for the various vendors being considered versus hiring an internal employee. It was determined having an outside consultant is more cost-effective than an internal hire. Board member requested ARDC to check references to aid in decision process.

- **RLF Technical Advisory Committee**

Should the Technical Advisory Committee become a formal Advisory Committee of ARDC's Board and Commission. Discussion occurred.

Motion by Rasmussen/Goutermont to support to bring suggestions regarding making changes to the approval process flow prior to disbursement of funds at the next Board or Commission meeting. **Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.**

5. June Board Meeting – Chair Storlie made a determination to cancel the June Board meeting due to a conflicting regional meeting on same date.

6. RESOLUTION: Authorizing ARDC to Accept Funding from the Minnesota Department of Human Services for the Arrowhead ElderCare Development Partnership (CDP) Project. (*L. Kangas-Olson*)

Motion by Rasmussen/Briggs to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

7. RESOLUTION: Authorization to Enter into an Agreement with a Qualified Consultant to Produce a Comprehensive MIC Area Safety Action Plan as part of the Metropolitan Interstate Council 's Work Program Activities for CY2025-2026. (*R. Watson*)

Motion by Mayou/Medure to support. Discussion occurred. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

8. RESOLUTION: Authorizing ARDC to Apply to the Legislative Citizen Committee on Minnesota's Natural Resources for Environmental Trust Funds to Create the Northwoods and Waters Community Resilience Collaborative. (*B. Teskey*)

Motion by Medure/Nevanen to support. Discussion occurred. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

9. RESOLUTION: Authorization of Loan Request for Roots and Wings Early Learning Center, LLC. for Seventy-Five Thousand (\$75,000.00) from ARDC s CARES Revolving Loan Fund (*K. Kane*)

Motion by Medure/Zmyslony to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

10. REVOLVING LOAN FUND (RLF) REPORT was referred to by Executive Director Kane. The Executive Director noted there was little current activity. The Department of Commerce reached out to ARDC to be a PACE lender for small loans. Noted that there are lots of inconsistent variables to it. Talking about interest in it under the current payment mode as a better fit. ARDC's plan was sent, follow-up meeting to be set up. ED has been meeting with Foundations about seed money – specifically Brownfield fund development.

11. FINANCIAL REPORT. April 2025's financial reports were reviewed by Finance Director. The Finance Director noted the operating statement was in budget. Admin changes being implemented on invoices from requesting once per quarter to once per month. Anticipating Title III reductions in 2026.

Board member requested to try to meet with Pete Stauber to educate on Aging services.

12. MANAGEMENT UPDATE

- **Planning**

- RTCC awarded contracts.
- State Competitiveness Fund information is being sent out.

- Email Octopus system successfully released mass emails about the Direct Pay application.
- The contact list is still being fully built out for future communications.
- NSMB contract extended through 2026.
- Waiting to hear more on STAR grant.
- NOAA met with several partners over climate resolution priorities.
- Hired two fellows.
- NEMATP – Functional class updates.
- Gitchi Gami special meetings planned.
- **MIC**
 - Hired a planner, filling a month-long staff vacancy.
 - MIC's Planning Communications Specialist Rondi Watson gave an update about the MIC's Safe Streets for All (SS4A) planning grant and consultant procurement process.
 - Staff is participating in DOT planning initiatives to alleviate traffic impacts during the upcoming 3-4 year Blatnik Bridge closure. The current focus is on coordinating the traffic signal system on both sides of the bridge during its reconstruction.
 - The Harbor Technical Advisory Committee (HTAC) continues its work as a collaborative forum to address issues and coordinate activities among diverse stakeholders, including the Coast Guard, commercial port operators, recreational boaters, and environmental advocacy groups
- **Aging**
 - Aging divisions' Community Development Manager Lori Kangas-Olson reporting for Aging Director Rebecca Sash
 - Senior LinkAge Line Manager, Marjori Bottila is in the phased retirement process.
 - Laura Hoden, Aging's current Senior Linkage Line Contact Center Supervisor, is currently set to take over the position.
 - Laura's position is being internally posted to backfill her position.
 - Hired Resource Coordinator.
 - Title III funding is delayed but DHS is encouraging the preparation of RFPs for the next competitive round of the application process.
 - MN Department of Health Next Generation grant submitted; to extend Scrubs camps, an edict of the Workforce Development section of EDP.
 - May is Older Americans Month – The theme this year is "Flip-the-Script on Aging,"
 - Staff are facilitating a program to support aging-"Aging with Gusto" (A facilitated discussion that provides tools on aging with MN.)
 - 4-H and the regional MN Extension department presenting at the 4H YELLO regional conference soon.
 - Aging is also still working on their "Ducks in a Row" initiative, providing tools for individuals to do their advanced planning.
- **Operations**
 - Accountant Dee Binstock made note of a new Finance hire set to start in June.
 - **Public Records Request: Harish Patel – Sunlight Report** Recently a request was made by Harish M.K. Patel, with the following language. Pursuant to the Wisconsin Public Records Law (Wis. Stat. §§ 19.31 - 19.39) I am writing to request access to the following public records for the Duluth-Superior MPO: Because this was made citing Wisconsin Statute, we contacted our attorney for guidance. ARDC responded within the statutory timeline, with language pointing Mr. Patel to the MN Statute and our posted procedure on our website. In addition, we updated the policy/document on our website.

- **MN Paid Leave** - Krista organized a Q and A meeting with ARDC management staff and ARDC's insurance agent and Terch and Associates (Human Resources Experts). ARDC is exploring costs to the agency as well as ways to offset these costs. (see attached Q&A)
- **ARDC Audit 2023** - Sister Mary Matthew and Kane requested a meeting with our auditor regarding the preliminary draft audit and finalization. We expect (2) findings. The first is due to not meeting the audit deadline. The second comes every time there is a finding and it has to do with having proper checks and balances in place to mitigate findings. ARDC expects our finalized audit within the month. Once we have our Audit in-hand, we will be sending out RFPs for the 2024 and 2025 audit.
- **Annual Report 2024** The 2024 Annual report is in process. ARDC anticipates that it will be available for the July Board/Commission meeting. We are working on expanding our annual report slightly to contain more information.
- **All Staff Training** ARDC is planning an All-Staff training in June. This is primarily hosted by the Aging Division and Planning, MIC and Operations staff will join in the afternoon for training and teambuilding.

13. APPRISE FROM BOARD MEMBERS &/OR GUESTS.

It was noted that all people affected by the current fires are in our thoughts.

14. UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **Board Meeting** – June 18th, 2025 - CANCELLED
- **Commission Meeting** – July 17th, 2025 – Hermantown Public Safety Building (Fire & Police) in the Training Center
- **Board Meeting** – August 21st, 2025 – ARDC

15. ADJOURN Meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Attest:



 ARDC Chair



 Submitted by Renee Alexandra, Exec. Assistant, Board
 & Commission Coordinator