

## ARROWHEAD REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (ARDC)

December 18, 2025 – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**ARDC, 221 West First Street, Duluth, MN 55802** (Hybrid – in person and via MS Teams due to emergency inclement weather)

### Minutes

Present	Member's Name	Representing
	Briggs, Brian	At Large (ARDC Commissioner = Communities Under 10,000 (Int'l Falls))
<b>X</b>	Goutermont, Rick	County Commissioner (Lake)
<b>MS</b>	Harala, Annie	County Commissioner (St. Louis)
<b>X</b>	Hell, Destry	County Commissioner (Koochiching)
<b>X</b>	Holliday, Jason	NATC, <i>Secretary</i>
<b>X</b>	Hoppe, Joel	At Large
<b>X</b>	Johnson, John	County Commissioner (Itasca), <i>Vice Chair</i>
<b>X</b>	Kearney, Mike	County Commissioner (Aitkin)
<b>X</b>	Lyons, Steve	Advisory Committee (Aging)
<b>MS</b>	Medure, Pat	At Large
<b>MS</b>	Nevanen, Paul	At Large
<b>MS</b>	Rasmussen, Allen	At Large, <i>Treasurer</i>
<b>X</b>	Storlie, Ginny	County Commissioners (Cook), <i>Chair</i>
<b>MS</b>	Zmyslony, Susan	County Commissioners (Carlton)
<b>OTHERS AT MEETING</b>		
<b>MS</b>	Chicka, Ron	ARDC
<b>X</b>	Kane, Kristi	ARDC
<b>MS</b>	Winter, Nate	ARDC
<b>X</b>	Sash, Rebecca	ARDC
<b>MS</b>	Teskey, Beth Ann	ARDC
<b>X</b>	Alexandra, Renee	ARDC
<b>X</b>	Binstock, Dee	ARDC
<b>MS</b>	Leah Wilkes	Financial Programs Coordinator – Minnesota State Energy Office
<b>MS</b>	Jeff Bartlett	Financial Programs Coordinator – Minnesota State Energy Office

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Storlie at 10:03 a.m. Round robin introductions.
2. **CONSENT AGENDA for approval of the following:**  
 Board Meeting Minutes, November 18th, 2025.  
**Motion by Rasmussen/Harala to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.**
3. **RESOLUTION:** Authorizing a Work Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Transportation to Provide Staff Services for the Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership in 2026  
**Motion by Rasmussen/Johnson to support. Discussion Occurred. Motion carried**

unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

**Motion to Amend/Nulify the original. Rasmussen/Harala to Support**

4. **RESOLUTION:** Ratification of Elected Member of the Advisory Committee on Aging  
**Motion by Johnson/Hoppe to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.**
5. **RESOLUTION:** Authorizing a Contract with Wild Seeds of Carlton, LLC for with the Professional Services with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission for 2026  
**Motion by Zmyslony/Hollinday to support. Discussion occurred. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.**
6. **RESOLUTION:** Authorizing a Contract with Chad Ricord for Assistance with the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission Revolving Loan Fund for 2026  
**Motion by Hoppe/Nevanen to support. Discussion occurred. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.**
7. **RESOLUTION:** Authorization of Loan Requests totaling Two hundred Thousand (\$200,000.00) from ARDC's Legacy Regional Revolving Loan Fund for Negley Properties, Donald & Leanne Negley  
**Motion by Harala/Johnson to support. Discussion occurred. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.**
8. **TAC Meeting Summary** – Executive Director Kristi Kane introduced the idea of introducing pre-construction loans for housing to the Board. Planning to update the Legacy RLF Plan for 2026. Limit was discussed on loan amounts. HRA single home housing developments.
9. **REVOLVING LOAN FUND (RLF) REPORT:** Director Kane noted a loan payoff this month. Working with borrowers on flexibility of pay. Received a notice from EDA that set limits on administrative charges. Expands on C-Pace as a tool for businesses to create more energy efficiencies for their business. Notes there's an opportunity to capitalize a new Loan Fund opportunity with C-Pace. It would require JPAs for local counties that cover lower loan amounts. St. Paul Port Authority doesn't want to make loans under \$100,000, so ARDC could cover that gap.
10. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** November 2025's financial reports were reviewed by Nate Winter from Clifton Larson Allen, ARDC's temporary acting Finance Director. Winter noted that liabilities decreased from previous month. About right on the line for the year on budget. ARDC has had strong asset liquidity. Overall expenditures and budget are in line for the year. Executive Director Kane noted on last month's suggestion about moving banks to be local. She read the Bylaws stating that the bank needs to be state or federal. Looking to review Bylaws in the near future.
11. **PRESENTATION: C-Pace Program** by *Presented by Leah Wilkes*  
**Motion to move forward with the C-Pace Program Johnson/Zmyslony to Support**

## 12. MANAGEMENT UPDATE

- **Planning**

- **NOAA Saint Louis County Climate Resilience Project** developed the Northland Climate Resilience Collaborative to foster a regional response to climate challenges by uniting neighboring counties, Tribal Nations, and local governments in a collaborative effort. The work has been so impactful that the Northland Climate Resilience Collaborative was invited to a NOAA conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, in Spring 2026 to represent the Great Lakes Region to highlight the project's successful Tribal engagement and coastal resilience strategies. This Collaborative has been a strong demonstration for other NOAA projects across the nation. **(Credit to Josh Bergstad, Deanna Geelhoed, and Ann Seigfreid)**
- **Legislative -Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)** selected ARDC to lead and partner with Headwaters Regional Development Commission on a \$1.2 million Northwoods and Waters Community Resilience Collaborative project across the Region. It is slated to mirror our NOAA project which emphasizes energy and climate resilience. Official language was approved for inclusion in the bill for funding the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund in the 2026 legislative session. Work would begin in July 2026. **(Credit to Josh Bergstad and Deanna Geelhoed)**
- **Investing in Our Regional Economy - NADO Photo Contest Winner Josh Bergstad** - Reconstruction of the Duluth Seawall was completed in 2025 to support docking of Great Lakes cruise ships, local sightseeing boats, and improved resilience to flooding and storms. ARDC acted as liaison between the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the City of Duluth, assisted with grant writing and response (including State Historic Preservation Office review), and a request to the EDA CARES Act grant due to COVID-related construction cost increases. The project has greatly impacted the City of Duluth, Duluth Port, Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center, local businesses, the Duluth Airport, Cruise Ship Companies, and tourists. Rebuilding of and improvements to the seawall were made possible by a \$4.9 million EDA grant, part of a larger \$22 million redevelopment project. A University of Minnesota Duluth Economic Impact study projected nine cruise ships in 2025 with a \$10 million economic impact. **(Credit to Josh Bergstad)**
- **Safe Routes to School Duluth and Floodwood (MnDOT)** – ARDC continues to conduct an 18-month planning study to identify infrastructure and programs that will improve bicycle and pedestrian safety for school children in the Duluth and Floodwood School Districts. Walk audits and hazard zone observations were completed and data is being compiled for an engineering study. MnDOT has made a point to highlight the attentive and collaborative work ARDC Planner, Gavin Bukovich, has been doing with ISD 709. **(Credit to Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver, Gavin Bukovich, and Carson Polomis)**
- **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)** – Initial CEDS Steering Committee meeting was held December 11<sup>th</sup>. Carson Gorecki, regional labor market analyst for MN DEED, Minnesota's chief economic development agency, presented key Northeast Minnesota economic development strategy data and a SWOT analysis was performed. **(Credit to Josh Bergstad)**
- **Gitchi-Gami Trail Association** – ARDC's staff assistance to the Gitchi-Gami Trail Association helped to further over 36 miles of trail development, with the most recent section being completed in Fall 2025 in Tofte. **(Credit to Michelle Pierson)**

- **Coastal Erosion Hazard Mapping** – ARDC recently hired an intern and is working collaboratively with Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program and North Shore Management Board Technical Advisory Committee to finish mapping digitization **(Credit to Carson Polomis, Travis Houle, Josh Bergstad)**
  - **Regional Transportation Advisory Committee** – ARDC is working with MnDOT on the sensitive process of obtaining feedback on Functional Class Ratings, which categorizes roads by their purpose and is a determining factor for federal transportation funding eligibility. **(Credit to Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver and Travis Houle)**
  - **Regional Transportation Coordinating Council** – ARDC partnered with True North Goodwill to build a mobile workforce program to bring career building resources to harder to reach communities, and they began work with the University of Minnesota through their Empowering Smaller Minnesota Communities program to collect data to track economic loss due to transportation access to healthcare. **(Credit to Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver and Gavin Bukovich)**
- **MIC**
    - Federal and State contracts fully signed from all parties for CY 2026.
    - Duluth, Central Entrance status: Corridor from the DOT building to Miller Hill mall – long under study – is to enter a Federal Scoping Review process that is intended – upon conclusion – to definitely answer the built amenity. The final roadway design. A reduced lane capacity (4 to 3 lanes) is still under further analysis. As well as an existing condition resolution. This phase will start next year – go for two years – get a design settled by ’29 or ’30 – Construction, at earliest, in ’31.
    - Approved in Dec – for both the Duluth and Superior area – roadway projects in our Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that receive federal funding. The TIP has project amendments throughout the course of the year as project scopes continually evolve. For highlighting: the Superior projects all concerned rail crossing work to be done in the next year or two, in preparation for the Blatnik project. Main corridors in Superior will be experiencing a significant increase in traffic and need to be ready – from a durability and safety standpoint.
    - MICs new website should be live next month.
    - MICs Safe Streets for All two-year project (‘25/’26) analyzing crash statistics across the area well underway. This plan – fully funded via federal and state sources – will result in setting up project work that can be further eligible for a specific pot of federal dollars for actual built improvements in coming years.
    - As we review MIC Bylaws, our instituting document (Joint Powers Agreement), Public comment policy for the agency and legal counsel to come. Other issues of MIC operation revolve around this as a whole.
  - **Aging**
    - Open Enrollment ended earlier in December. Last year there were a reported 27,773 calls. This year, Aging received 51,454 calls statewide. Arrowhead Staff received many accolades from MBA for remained positive and solution-focused throughout. Arrowhead saved callers \$633,427 in Rx drug costs via plan comparisons.
    - Next-Gen work has started being branded as “Launch North” 2026 workshops will take place in Aitkin and Koochiching counties.

- Will be posting for two new staff at the beginning of January of 2026. RS and Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator.
- State-issued Moratorium on 245D licensing. Affects providers ability to bill for waived services. Still working to figure out how this will affect providers and how to get an exception.

- **Operations**

- Executive Director Kane made note of the All-Staff Meeting for ARDC. Guest Speaker Holly Mirau spoke to give media training. Toilet paper drive was finished during the event, donating over 360 rolls to a local charity.
- Elections are coming up, notices for all.
- HVAC went out upstairs, in repair
- Plumbing issues continue, looking for quotes to get them repaired
- Water testing for potential lead pipes commencing
- 3 CDs are maturing in February.
- PTO conversion will be moving forward, hoping for smooth transition.
- Financial Assessment for Finance Division will be arriving soon for January Meeting.
- Potential committee to be formed by the Board to analyze value of building location and alternative options.

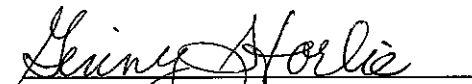
**13. APPRISE FROM BOARD MEMBERS &/OR GUESTS.**

**14. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- **Commission Meeting** – January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - (**ANNUAL MEETING**) Hermantown Public Safety Building (Fire & Police) in the Training Center
- **Board Meeting** – February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 – ARDC
- **Board Meeting** – March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - ARDC

**15. ADJOURN** Meeting was adjourned at 11:53 a.m.

**Attest:**

  
 ARDC Chair

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