

ARROWHEAD REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION (ARDC)

February 19th, 2026 – 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))
	Goutermont, Rick	County Commissioner (Lake)
MS	Harala, Annie	County Commissioner (St. Louis)
	Hell, Destry	County Commissioner (Koochiching)
	Hollinday, Jason	NATC, <i>Secretary</i>
MS	Hoppe, Joel	At Large
X	Johnson, John	County Commissioner (Itasca), <i>Vice Chair</i>
MS	Kearney, Mike	County Commissioner (Aitkin)
MS	Lyons, Steve	Advisory Committee (Aging)
MS	Medure, Pat	At Large
MS	Nevanen, Paul	At Large
MS	Rasmussen, Allen	At Large, <i>Treasurer</i>
X	Storlie, Ginny	County Commissioners (Cook), <i>Chair</i>
MS	Zmyslony, Susan	County Commissioners (Carlton)
OTHERS AT MEETING		
X	Chicka, Ron	ARDC
X	Kane, Kristi	ARDC
MS	Winter, Nate	ARDC
X	Sash, Rebecca	ARDC
MS	Teskey, Beth Ann	ARDC
X	Alexandra, Renee	ARDC
MS	Binstock, Dee	ARDC
X	Mattila, Krista	ARDC
MS	Grimm, Ashley	ARDC Commission

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, December 18th, 2025.
Motion by Medure/Rasmussen to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

Consent of February Agenda

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

3. **RESOLUTION:** Talent Acquisition Contract – Revised (*Krista Mattila*)
Motion by Johnson/Briggs to support. Discussion Occurred. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

4. **RESOLUTION:** Resolution of Support for the CSAH 100 (Main Street) Railroad Crossing Grade Separation Project BUILD Grant Funding Application (*K. Kane*)
Motion by Medure/Rasmussen to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

5. **DISCUSSION: MIC Joint Powers Agreement** (*R. Chicka and K. Kane*)
Director Kane noted that back in October of 2025 ARDC and MIC staff started looking closely at the MIC founding documents and policies. This was reported to the MIC policy board specifically the by-laws, but also the Joint Powers Agreement (JPA). ARDC and NWRPC (Wi) are both designated by their respective governors as the Metropolitan Planning Organizations for their regions. The two have a mutually agreed upon joint powers agreement in which ARDC handles the funding and assumes staffing responsibility. The JPA designates the MIC Policy board to make decisions on NWRPC and ARDC's behalf. In looking at these historical documents from 1976, it has come to our attention that they have not been updated, and that the agreement does not reflect changes that have occurred in legislation and/or recommended best practices and does not clearly outline the requirements of the MPO. ARDC can make changes, but it may impact the Wisconsin side. The two RDC's are jointly working with State and Federal partners to determine recommended changes that will ensure uninterrupted work and funding for both Wisconsin and Minnesota during any changes to the agreements. The MPO will keep operating as is until complete legal review has been done. Staff are working in the background to determine next steps. Any changes could prompt a redesignation in which case both governors would have to agree to redesignate.

6. **RESOLUTION:** Authorizing ARDC to apply for and accept funds from the Minnesota Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Partnership Development Grant Program (*B. Teskey*)
Motion by Medure/Johnson to support. Motion carried unanimously. No members opposed or recused upon request.

7. **REVOLVING LOAN FUND (RLF) REPORT:** was referred to by Executive Director Kane. The Executive Director noted the grey portion on the report. This has been added as a requirement of the audit. The loan has been written off the books, but it is still working and collecting on them. The conversation with C-PACE has continued and ARDC is expecting an application to be presented soon. Planning to set up meetings with the counties to discuss participation in entering into a Joint Powers Agreement. Hoping to get participation from the full region. Funding is still available for the RLF in both funds. Discussions have occurred over the inclusion of housing in loans opportunities.

8. **FINANCIAL REPORT:** January 2026's financial reports were reviewed by Nate Winter from Clifton Larson Allen, ARDC's temporary acting Finance Director. Winter noted that assets have gone up from tax levies. All balances are unaudited, May 4th is when audit begins. Numbers may potentially be adjusted as they go through the process. Spending is on target.

9. **PRESENTATION: Climate Resilience Planning in the Northland** *presented by Deanna Geelhoed and Josh Bergstad*

10. **MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

- **Planning**

- **NOAA Saint Louis County Climate Resilience and LCCMR** - Presentation given at today's meeting by Deanna Geelhoed and Josh Bergstad. See slide decks
- **Gitchi-Gami Trail Association (GGTA)** – Preparing for legislative session. Beth Ann contacted Aspirus St. Luke's about possible partnership and corporate sponsorship as Aspirus shared about use of the trail on social media.
- **Coastal Erosion Hazard Mapping (CEHM)** – Digitization of mapping for Lake County is complete with Cook County being one-third complete.
- **North Shore Management Board and Plan (NSMB/NSMP)** – Virtual meeting today to discuss final plan in preparation for public review. No cost extension to April 30th submitted to Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program.
- **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)** – Meeting scheduled with Minnesota Department of Commerce February 23rd to discuss use of funds. Application has been revamped. Contacting Aitkin communities and school districts. Await full proposal and application submission by Proctor School District.
- **Comprehensive Plans** – Work on City of Buhl and Edge of the Wilderness continues. Planning met with and is in process of preparing a quote for the City of Coleraine. Work on Tower-Breitung will begin soon. Beth Ann is taking a U of M Extension Course – How to Write a Comp Plan.
- **Economic Development Administration (EDA)** – For Disaster Supplemental funding, Bois Forte app is in review by Bois Forte and EDA, engineering report is being updated by Architect; Duluth Airport submitted last week; Itasca County app still needs to be reviewed - EDA is pushing Coal Assistance Money so apps are being updated. Brownfields closing out this week. CEDS engagement meetings being scheduled.
- **Keystone Policy Center** – ARDC and ARDC Planning website redesign in process with current focus on sitemaps, wireframes, and new content creation. See EDA for CEDS public engagement progress.
- **MnDOT Updates**
 - **Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (NEMNATP)** – Workgroup scored funding applications and the ATP voted in the recommendations. Award letters are being sent.
 - **North Shore Roadway Highway 61 (NSRN)** – Planning attended the first meeting yesterday.

- **Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC)** - Attended Non-Emergency Medical Transportation round table; Planning is working closely with U of M Empowering Small Minnesota Communities to provide contextual information and other transportation related knowledge throughout the U of M's qualitative data gathering process. The U of M interviewed healthcare staff in the Silver Bay regarding rural transportation access. Also discussing data and methodologies to seek solutions. Attended Transit Equity Day.
 - **Safe Routes to School (SRTS -Duluth/Floodwood)** – Floodwood Steering Committee meeting February 24th. Duluth elementary school engagement continues, and a short QR code survey is being provided to gain more community feedback.
 - **Waters of the Dancing Sky Corridor Management Plan (WODS)** – Await signed sub-contract from Headwaters RDC following their Board meeting yesterday. Preparation happening now for work that is slated to begin April 1.
- **MIC**
 - MIC has been looking at various documents with the Joint Powers Agreement. Keeping a steady pace for progress.
 - Working on agreements for funding with Northwest.
 - Harbor group meets this month.
 - Talk about next large consulting program possibly coming soon, potentially in April. Program will likely be in the next federal bill.
- **Aging**
 - Aging is supporting Virginia Library as a community partner for a national project called: Aging Together: An Evolution of Library Programs for Older Adults. This is 1 of 29 libraries chosen in the US for this. Aims to equip libraries nationwide to strengthen programs to reduce social isolation, support health and wellbeing, provide end of life resources, and assist caregivers.
 - Collaboration with Anishinaabe Legal Services and Justice North to provide legal services clinic at Wisdom Steps Conference this June in FDC. Aging to receive \$17,000 in state MAP funding to passthrough to support day of and follow-up.
 - M4A is finalizing 2026 legislative priorities. Will likely focus on funding for Senior Nutrition program and policy language changes to offer better flexibility at the local level.
 - Currently hiring two positions in MAP, taking in applications.
 - Final Rule implementation – almost have the grantee manual updated for OAA contractors for B.E.D. will be separate for nutrition. Training set for MARCH for OAA providers. Biggest changes for legal services, cost sharing, subcontracting, and conflicts of interest. Next step will be updating/creating AAA operations manual which will be a bit more intense.
- **Operations**
 - Audit is scheduled. Letter has been signed and forwarded.
 - Update on the building committee. The group met and requested base information from

staff – staff are in the process of gathering.

- Krista Mattila has been working closely with Directors to move forward with getting job roles filled.
- Transitioning to PTO, smoothing bumps in the transition. Overall, the transition has gone well.
- Building Committee met. Meeting entailed getting a list of what was needed to move forward with decisions.
- Heating repairs are currently happening - floor 2 is at 62 degrees and holding.
- ARDC will be co-sponsoring a Co-operative summit in Duluth this summer. We are partnering with College of St Scholastica, MN Farmers Union, MN CoOp and Northspan. We are currently in the process of getting speakers. More to come.

11. APPRISE FROM BOARD MEMBERS &/OR GUESTS.

Highway 61 Meeting will be taking place next Monday. Concerns over previous flooding. Had people reach out about solar. Funding is drying up but there is an opportunity for solar alternatives.

12. UPCOMING MEETINGS


- **Board Meeting** – March 19th, 2026 – ARDC
- **Commission Meeting** – April 16th, 2026 - Hermantown Public Safety Building (Fire & Police) in the Training Center
- **New Commission Member Orientation** – Following April Commission Meeting
- **Board Meeting** – May 21st, 2026 – ARDC

13. ADJOURN Meeting was adjourned at 11:39 a.m.

Attest:



ARDC Chair



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