

MINUTES
HARMONY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting

October 2, 2025
7:30 AM

Council Room
Community Center

Present: Kerry Kingsley, Keith McIntosh, Kyle Scheevel, Greg Schieber, Stuart Morem

Also Present: Alissa Stelpflug (City Administrator), Katrina Hurley (CEDA), Erica Thilges (Harmony Area Chamber of Commerce), Jessica J. Hemenway (Harmony Area Chamber of Commerce)

Community Members Present: Jessica Hemingway, Cindy Ofstedal, Erica Thilges, Amy Bishop, Ann Lyons, Alan Dahl, Umbelina Cremer

Absent: –

The regular meeting was called to order at 7:29 A.M. by Kerry Kingsley.

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the September 4, 2025 meeting. Schieber made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by McIntosh and approved by the board.

Introductions:

SMIF:

Benya Krause from SMIF was unable to attend but plans to possibly attend the November meeting.

Harmony Kids Learning Center Update:

Umbelina Cremer, owner of Harmony Kids Learning Center, provided an update on the center, which has been in operation for ten and a half years. She emphasized the center's commitment to providing high-quality educational services and being actively involved in the community. She shared that the center is currently full with eighty full-time children, with fifteen to nineteen spots reserved for Special Assistance children, who are treated like family. Staffing includes fifteen full-time employees, three part-time employees, one substitute who has been with the center for seven years, and three directors. Umbelina explained that the infant waiting list is one year, requiring parents to plan well in advance, and that the center has earned a four-star rating on Parent Aware after opening with one star. Staff complete over fifty hours of CTE annually to maintain this rating. The curriculum is effective but expensive, and the center's Action 100 books have been translated into Spanish by staff.

Umbelina noted that a friend, board member Schieber, helped identify the center as a “small school” rather than a daycare for property tax purposes, saving approximately fifteen thousand dollars annually. She described safety measures, including the use of the Procare system, parent fobs to enter and exit the building, and controlled access to the main doors, which remain locked outside of operating hours from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. She also highlighted educational programs such as teaching Spanish and sign language to students. Recent renovations included rubberized flooring in the infant classroom, a shade shelter over the playground, and sound barriers installed in the gym. Additionally, five units were installed in the infant room by Think Light Company to disinfect surfaces.

Challenges and support needs were discussed. Schieber expressed the EDA’s appreciation for Umbelina’s dedication and emphasized support for small rural businesses. Kingsley highlighted the importance of planning for the future continuity of childcare services. Umbelina expressed her gratitude for EDA support, noting the significant unpaid hours she has dedicated to maintaining operations. She emphasized her love for the children, the community, and the parents, and expressed confidence that, together, they can keep the center running successfully.

Financial Reports and Claims:

Hurley reported that the check for the May 2025 Downtown Revitalization Grant has been issued. Hurley also noted that all revolving loan fund accounts are current and up to date.

Prospects / Community Update:

Morem shared that the north end of the Swartzentruber building in the community needs a mural, and both Kingsley and Schieber agreed with the suggestion.

Reports:

Chamber of Commerce:

The Chamber of Commerce reported that Fall for Harmony was very successful, with record sales and high participation. Plans for upcoming events include Haunted Harmony, a pumpkin-themed event at the library, a trunk-or-treat event, and Monster Bash. The Chamber is conducting a membership drive and preparing the guidebook advertisement. They are still actively hiring for a position and conducting interviews next week.

CEDA Work Update:

CEDA provided an update on grant opportunities, including generator grants, solar grants, and playground grants. Applications have been submitted for solar lights at the welcome signs, with one grant covering labor and maintenance and half of the supplies, and a second grant covering the remaining materials. The Economic Development grant will cover costs for a business lunch-and-learn series and Hurley will submit it on October 10, and the HAHS will be notified about the SMIF \$10,000 grant on October 15, 2025. MNHS Legacy Grant applications are set to have

results in mid-December.

Public Forum:

In the public forum, Cindy reported that the green home that is a blight to the community (Tom Burke's old house) located at 160 2nd Ave SE, Harmony, needs work. Alissa discussed that it has been purchased, and the new owner plans to participate in the home rebate program. Anne discussed an upcoming presentation from Mienergy and Dairyland Power, including a Q&A session. Alissa clarified that there will be a formal Q&A session after the presentation and then if community members want to stay longer and discuss more questions MiEnergy, Dairyland Power, and the City of Harmony will each have a table set up for more indepth questions regarding their expertise. Kingsley strongly advised attendees to approach the session with no preconceived notions.

New Business:

Informational Town Hall:

An informational town hall scheduled for October 7, 2025, at 6 P.M. at the Harmony Community Center. This town hall is only for informational purposes and will be discussing the types of data centers, what they bring to a community pros and cons, and what MiEnergy and Dairyland Power are working on.

BCC Summit:

The Bluff Country Collaborative's 8-Year Summit will be held on October 9, 2025, at 5:30 P.M. at Rushford Peterson High School. Need to register on eventbrite for accurate attendance information. This event is to streamline the process of a workforce pipeline within Fillmore County and the surrounding regions.

Old Business:

Rolling Hills Transit Survey:

Regarding the Rolling Hills Transit Survey, Hurley noted that they are still waiting for updates from Bill.

Home Rebate Program:

The Home Rebate Program website has been updated to reflect current information and resources.

Industrial Park:

Concerning the Industrial Park, the cost for Brent's quote has been incorporated into the calculation for next year's EDA levy. As the discussion was continued due to funding research there was an ask for a motion for approval. Morem made a motion to approve contracting to complete a concept Plat and Scheevel seconded. The motion passed without further discussion.

Bike Trail:

Planning for the memorial ride on the bike trail is ongoing, with further details to be determined as the event approaches. Working on developing a committee

Adjournment:

Hearing no objections, EDA President Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2025 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center. A special meeting has been scheduled for October 7, 2025 at 6PM to mitigate the risk of quorum being present at the Informational Town Hall.

Katrina Hurley
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October 2, 2025