

MINUTES
HARMONY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regular Meeting

November 6, 2025
7:30 AM

Council Room
Community Center

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

Absent: Kyle Scheevel

Also Present: Alissa Stelpflug (City Administrator), Katrina Hurley (CEDA), Erica Thilges (Harmony Area Chamber of Commerce), Charis Delorey (Harmony Area Chamber of Commerce)

Community Members Present: Cindy Ofstedal, Alan Dahl, Becky Jones, Amanda Heibel, Mason Weedman

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

Minutes

The board reviewed the minutes of the October 2, 2025 meeting. Corrections were noted regarding the spelling of "Umbellina" and clarification that the reference should read "green home in Harmony is Tom Burke's old home." Schieber made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Morem seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Financial Reports and Claims:

Hurley also noted that all revolving loan fund (RLF) accounts are current and up to date. There is a remaining balance available of \$68,860.21 for lending in the RLF account.

Prospects / Community Update:

The Bike Trail Committee convened its first meeting and is seeking one to two additional members. Plans are underway for a spring ribbon cutting and memorial ride for Ralph Beastrum, ending at Niagara Cave. The committee is consulting with the DNR regarding ADA-compliant options such as tractor rides or golf carts.

Reports:

Chamber of Commerce:

Charis Delorey was introduced as the new Chamber staff member. The Chamber reported that Haunted Harmony drew approximately 100 children, with 13 organizations participating. Membership renewals are at 63%, which is ahead of schedule. Upcoming events include Breakfast

with Santa, the Tree Lighting at Selvig Park, and holiday programming. The Chamber's annual meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2026.

The Chamber agreement for \$30,000 in services was discussed. The agreement had been approved by the City Council for 2025 but not formally signed. The board recommended renewal for 2025 under the same terms. No motion was required.

CEDA Work Update:

The Harmony Area Historical Society was awarded a \$10,000 Small Town Grant. The board approved a motion to apply for an MMUA Safety Grant to fund a generator for the Community Center. Schieber made the motion, Kingsley seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Hurley reported ongoing work with Umbellina on a SMIF Promise Act grant and efforts to reclassify the childcare program with USDA for food program eligibility. Reimbursement could total approximately \$70,000 annually.

Business outreach continues with plans for "Lunch and Learn" sessions in partnership with the Chamber. The board discussed the Minnesota Paid Leave Act, noting that businesses must choose private or state coverage by November 10th. The Small Business Development Center in Rochester will provide training in the future. Hurley will keep the businesses updated.

The Rolling Hills Transit survey was distributed via utility bills, assisted living facilities, and a Google form. Hurley noted that every \$1 invested in rural healthcare for aging populations yields \$3 in economic development.

Public Forum:

In the public forum, the passing of the school referendum was discussed in how it shows support for the community looking towards the future. It was mentioned that it would have been bad for the community if it would have failed again.

New Business:

Downtown Revitalization Grant Applications:

The board reviewed two applications for downtown revitalization funding. Farm Charm requested \$9,587 to install historically appropriate windows, replace the front door, and construct a permanent ADA-compliant ramp. Mason Weedman requested \$25,618.52 to complete tuck-point brick façade work and replace a shared door and window. Morem made a motion to approve both applications for a combined total of \$35,205.52. Kingsley seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously by the board.

Revolving Loan Fund Interest Rate:

The board then discussed the Revolving Loan Fund guidelines, focusing on interest rate structures used in surrounding communities. Harmony currently ties its rates to the Wall Street Journal prime rate on the date of application, which has resulted in instability. Members emphasized that the Revolving Loan Fund is intended to serve as gap financing rather than to compete with banks. The board considered adopting a tiered system and reviewing application fees. Hurley agreed to research SMIF's revolving loan fund practices and prepare draft language for consideration at the next meeting.

Old Business:

Town Hall Recap:

The board reviewed feedback from the recent data center town hall hosted by the EDA. Hurley reported on research into best practices from Minnesota, Iowa, and Virginia communities. Harmony has the opportunity to set an ordinance proactively, not tied to a developer timeline. Key considerations include moratoriums, caps on natural resource use, land restoration clauses, and community benefits.

The SMIF Data Center Forum is scheduled for November 12 in North Mankato. Additional sessions may be scheduled closer to Harmony. Stelpflug and Hurley will attend, and Council and Planning & Zoning members were encouraged to participate.

Town Mural Discussion:

The board discussed potential funding opportunities, including the SMIF "Paint the Town" grant and the Central Minnesota Arts Board grant. Challenges include high costs, the need for a project manager, and MnDOT coordination. The Harmony Arts Board can support fundraising and advertising but cannot manage mural projects. Alan Dahl expressed interest in repainting his mural. Potential sites include multiple buildings downtown, Eddie or Matt Brown's property, or the Visitor Center walls. The board agreed murals should only be pursued if high-quality and reflective of community pride

Adjournment:

Hearing no objections, EDA President Kingsley adjourned the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:25AM.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for December 4, 2025 at 7:30 AM at the Community Center.

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November 6, 2025