

A. INTRODUCTIONS Those present were Grant Dockter, Jake Fisketjon, Tyler Gerhardt, Reice Haase, Jonathan Leonard, Tess Schmidt, Sherwin Wanner, Jordan Freitag, Jonathan Hooker, Nathan Schneider, Ashley Hruby, City Administrator Jim Neubauer, Business Development & Communications Director Madison Cermak, Building Official Jordan Singer and Planner Andrew Stromme, .

B. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. *Selection of a President & Vice President for the year..* Fisketjon moved and Hooker seconded to appoint Sherwin Wanner as president of the MGF. Roll Call vote: Aye 9, Nay 0. The motion passed. Dockter moved and Leonard seconded to appoint Tyler Gerhardt as vice president of the MGF. Roll Call vote: Aye 9, Nay 0. The motion passed.

2. *Consider approval of the Dec. 11, 2024 Mandan Growth Fund meeting minutes..* Leonard mentioned a spellcheck error in the second paragraph of the new business section of the minutes, missing a "d" in Mandan. Leonard moved and Dockter seconded to approve the minutes with the spelling correction. Roll Call vote: Aye 9, Nay 0. The motion passed.

3. *Financial Statement through Dec. 30, 2024.* Cermak presented the financial report, sharing that the uncommitted balance stands at \$227,073.42.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. *Recommendation to set aside dollars for business assistance on Memorial Highway.* This item was follow-up from the last meeting. Cermak shared that since the last meeting, Cermak, Neubauer and Kari Schmidt met with former Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) Director Del Wetch to see what was done for businesses when Main Street was under construction in the mid 1990s. Neubauer shared some of the ideas that Wetch shared, such as weekly drawings for cash prizes, given people visited businesses in the construction area, Mandan Bucks giveaways, etc. If there are prize giveaways, the City would need to work with the MPO or a separate entity to facilitate if prizes were being given out. Staff is seeking suggestions from the board on if there is interest in setting money aside from the Growth Fund to assist Memorial Highway businesses during construction. The east end of Memorial Highway is to go under construction this spring. There are two phases to be completed over three years, 2025-2027. This is separate from any money that the MGF would set aside for storefront improvement or any other assistance to Memorial Highway businesses. Planner Stromme would like to have some way of reporting a return on the investment. He shared there is software that could assist with this reporting. There was interest in how the Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC could also help.

Neubauer clarified that the ask right now is, is there interest in setting money aside to help encourage people to continue to visit Memorial Highway businesses during construction. If yes, staff will meet with the MPO to determine next steps, and then staff can come back with an update. Fisketjon said he has some concerns related to programming, asking if this request is in response to a need or in anticipation of needs. Stromme shared that the City has heard a lot of concerns from business owners along Memorial Highway, and Neubauer shared that we'd like to be proactive due to the reduction in traffic counts anticipated with a three-year long construction project. Cermak shared that the City has an obligation for economic development to help the businesses in the area. Tess Schmidt asked if this is within the realm

of the Growth Fund. Neubauer stated that it is because one of the purposes of the MGF is to help with business retention and expansion. The City does contribute \$75,000 to the MPO and then gives a \$20,000 grant for events (marketing, the event itself, etc.). Neubauer shared that would be very similar to this request.

Neubauer shared that there is a timing issue to consider, as construction will begin as soon as load restrictions lift. The consensus was that the committee would like to learn more and to hear from the MPO on ideas that the money would be used for to promote business activity along Memorial Highway during the construction years, as well as how reporting would happen. The committee would like to hear some ideas from the Chamber EDC as well. Schneider shared that the east end of Memorial Highway is more reliant on people driving by and stopping in, whereas the west half is more destination driven.

D. OTHER BUSINESS

1. *Future meeting dates.* Cermak will send some meeting dates for March, however she does anticipate an application possibly before March. She will follow up with the applicant.

E. ADJOURN There being no further business to come before the board, the meeting adjourned.