

A. INTRODUCTIONS Those present were Grant Dockter, Tyler Gerhardt, Reice Haase, Jonathan Leonard, Tess Schmidt, Sherwin Wanner, Jordan Freitag, Jonathan Hooker. Also present was Administrator Neubauer, Business Development & Communications Director Cermak, Communications Specialist Schmidt, Building Official Singer, Assessor Markley, Planner Stromme, Mayor Froelich, Lewis & Clark Development Group Ashley Hruby, Mandan Progress Organization Executive Director Matt Schanandore and Assistant Executive Director Triston Kosek, and Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC Business Development Coordinator Noah Vroman,

B. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. *Consider approval of the minutes from the Jan. 13, 2025 Growth Fund meeting.* . Haase moved and Tess Schmidt seconded to approve as presented. Roll Call vote: Aye 8, Nay 0, Absent Fisketjon. The motion passed.

2. *Consider the financial report through Jan. 31, 2025.* Cermak presented the financial report, with a cash balance of \$220,986.64 after commitments for economic development.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. *Consider a storefront improvement application for 1307 1st St NE by Steven Kilen.* Cermak presented the item. She shared that this property did come before the Growth Fund before, but through Doug Larsen who passed away shortly after and the project was not completed. They will be changing out the windows, get an ADA door, and other improvements to make the building match the Leingang Chiropractic building. A potential use would be for a tanning and massage salon. The applicant is seeking \$30,000 in matching funds. Gerhardt moved and Hooker seconded to recommend approval of the Storefront Improvement application for 1307 1st St NE for up to \$30,000 in matching funds be structured as a forgivable loan contingent on MARC approval. Roll Call vote: Aye 8, Nay 0, Absent Fisketjon. The motion passed.

2. *Consider a storefront improvement application for 1311 1st St NE by Steven Kilen.* The application presented the storefront improvement project. This building is viewable on two sides, and the applicant is seeking up to \$60,000 in matching funds. Plans are to remove all metal siding and replace it with a mix of minimum maintenance materials; LP, hardier board, steel siding, and possibly brick/stone. Changing the existing windows in the metal building and replacing all windows. The building will be similar to the 1307 property. There will be four offices in the block part of the existing building, however there is no tenant for the building as of now. Dockter moved and Leonard seconded to recommend approval of the Storefront Improvement application for 1311 1st St NE for up to \$60,000 in matching funds be structured as a forgivable loan, contingent upon receiving Mandan Architectural Review Commission approval. Roll Call vote: Aye 8, Nay 0, Absent Fisketjon. The motion passed.

The applicant is general contractor for both projects, however he did go out and get two other estimates for his applications.

3. *Recommendation to set aside dollars for business assistance for Memorial Highway during construction*

. Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) Executive Director Matt Schandore presenting a program for getting community buy-in for Memorial Highway during construction. He wants to make sure it's more

than an advertising program, but actually getting people to spend money at the businesses along Memorial Highway. They have narrowed it down to a rewards or gift card program, that would allow locals to purchase a digital gift card for face value and then will have a percentage of that purchase matched by funds allocated from the Growth Fund. The MPO does currently use the program vendor, Yiftee, with their Mandan Bucks program.

The example provided is a \$0.25 on the dollar match (i.e. a customer purchasing \$100 in community gift cards will receive \$125 in spending power at participating businesses). The gift card program is more appealing than the rewards program, as a rewards program requires the purchase before receiving the benefit and would require more upfront marketing. If the Growth Fund decided on \$50,000, the MPO would put \$40,000 towards the match and \$10,000 for marketing and outreach efforts to make sure businesses and consumers are well-informed and engaged. There are fees associated with Yiftee, so some of the money could go towards the fees so it doesn't get passed on to the business or consumer.

Gift cards wouldn't have an expiration, but a rewards program would have an expiration date. With a rewards program, the business wouldn't have to do anything it would be on the consumer to purchase to earn and redeem rewards.

The MPO will survey businesses to see if there would be interest in the gift card incentive program. If no interest in this program, what kind of solution do they have? The committee did express interest in checking with Bismarck and see how they are doing with their Downtown Dollars program.

During COVID the MPO did a gift card blitz, where consumers got gift cards at a discount and that went over very well.

When talking boundaries for participating businesses. The committee would like to see any business in the special assessment district (both levels 1 & 2).

- D. OTHER BUSINESS The committee would like to get a meeting scheduled for the end of March.
- E. ADJOURN There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.