

**Growth Fund Members:**

Don Boehm, Chairman  
Term: 2019-2021

Jeff Erickson, Vice Chairman  
Term: 2018-2020

David Lehman  
Term: 2019-2021

Chad Peterson  
Term: 2020-2022

Rocky Reddig  
Term: 2020-2022

Maria Walen  
Term: 2018-2020

Sherwin Wanner  
Term: 2018-2020

Mark Weide  
Term: 2018-2020

Lee Weisbeck  
Term: 2019-2021

**Liaisons:**

Mayor, City of Mandan  
 Tim Helbling

City Attorney, City of Mandan  
 Malcolm Brown

City Administrator, City of Mandan  
 Jim Neubauer

Building Official, City of Mandan  
 Shawn Ouradnik

Business Development &  
Communications Director, City of  
Mandan  
 Ellen Huber

Bismarck-Mandan Chamber EDC  
 Brian Ritter  
 Nathan Schneider

Lewis & Clark Development Group  
 Brent Ekstrom

Communications & Community  
Services Coordinator, City of  
Mandan  
 Kari Moore

**Mandan Growth Fund Committee**  
**Tuesday, June 2, 2020**  
**Noon**  
**City Hall & Online Via GoToMeeting**

**MINUTES**

1. Introductions/roll call

*Boehm called the meeting to order. Those participating are marked with a . Also online was Assistant City Attorney Amy Oster.*

Procedural Matters

2. Consider approval of minutes: May 12, 2020

*Walen moved to approve the minutes from May 12, 2020. Weide seconded. Motion passed unanimously.*

3. Review financial statement through May 31, 2020 (if available)

*Huber reported the economic development uncommitted balance stands at \$230,734.75. This does reflect the approval of the Rice Bowl Storefront Improvement project and a correction from the April report as the interest buydown hasn't happened for Memorial Square Shopping Center phase II since they changed lead lenders.*

New Business

4. Discuss findings and implications from round 3 COVID-19 business impact survey

*Huber reported there have been three surveys sent to local business owners since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The first survey received about 400 responses, the second had over 200, and the third survey received over 100 responses. Nearly 1/3 of the responses were from Mandan businesses in the third survey.*

*Huber gave a brief recap of the survey results from the third round. Most respondents stated they have reopened, but 11 indicated that they have chosen not to reopen yet. For those that have restarted, they reported operations are still below normal. She added that there are signs of optimism with 30% of respondents reporting that they are seeking to hire. On the flipside, 11% responded that they do not have enough work to hire. The survey also looked at businesses outlook for 2020. Among respondents, 73% reported weekly revenue decreases. She said there were some indications of good news regarding weekly revenue now that businesses are re-opening. In the survey, 77% indicated they could withstand more*

than five months of interruption to business. She added that 26% of respondents reported they haven't talked with lead lenders adding that there is some hesitancy to take on additional debt.

Boehm asked about business response to Fourth of July activity announcements. Huber has heard from some businesses that are disappointed the parade and Art in the Park won't happen but are understanding of the circumstances. She added that it's hard for the public to understand why one event may cancel and others go on, but there's a lot of factors that go into these decisions. Huber said during a recent restaurant owners' discussion, many said sales seem to trend down during the summer normally unless the business is located on the river. Huber added consumer confidence will determine how well businesses do during this time. No restaurant business model was made to operate at 50% occupancy.

#### 5. Discuss local response ideas

Huber highlighted some different programs and assistance being offered by other states and N.D. cities. She shared that the North Dakota Opportunity Fund offered working capital loans with 0% interest for the first six months with a five-year re-payment term at 4%. Some businesses did take advantage of it, but it was soon followed by the federal government programs. Other examples were included in the agenda packet and discussed.

The committee discussed options for a program in Mandan to assist businesses negatively impacted by COVID-19. Huber noted Dot Frank had suggested during a recent restaurant owner discussion an innovation or resiliency grant that would help businesses adapt and diversify their current business model. An example would be an e-commerce website, or other means of mitigating impacts to help them be more resilient.

A sales tax rebate was mentioned, but Huber shared concerns about the amount of staff time to collect data, obtain permission from applicants to receive data with the N.D. Tax Department, and verify data, all as compared to the potentially minimal amount of assistance that could be offered. It would also be limited to businesses that generate sales tax. Schneider noted other N.D. communities are looking to do something for resiliency. Huber added that even a small grant could cover a month's rent, which will be helpful for some businesses. Mandan will likely lose some businesses from COVID-19. Schneider thought public perception of a resiliency grant would be more favorable as it would be seen as the City trying to help the business community sustain and grow, not just throw them a lifeline. The amount, even if small, would be significant enough to help local businesses.

Huber reported that in a recent call for economic developers with commercial lenders, one banker favorably called out Mandan's Storefront Improvement program for providing assistance for things that aren't necessarily bankable but important to business success.

Wanner asked if there were any City ordinances that could prevent a business from doing something innovative, such as outdoor seating to help assist with consumer confidence. Huber reported the City Commission recently approved an outdoor seating ordinance that pertains to seating in the public right of way. She added that staff recently reviewed some ideas from Copper Dog Café to temporarily have outdoor seating without impacting occupancy numbers that could trigger a requirement for a fire suppression system. Outdoor seating adjacent to the alley wasn't an issue, but staff is waiting on a

*response from the N.D. Department of Transportation about seating in front of the business along Main Street. Neubauer noted issues arise, at times, when public right-of-way areas come into play.*

*Boehm said he would like to see another gift card blitz to help businesses. Huber said that she would check with the Mandan Progress Organization (MPO) to see if staff would have the capacity to conduct another promotion, most likely after July 4.*

*After much discussion, Walen moved that staff be directed to develop a proposal for an innovative grant program to assist businesses impacted by COVID-19 and to consult with the MPO about another gift card blitz. Lehman seconded. The motion passed 6-0. Staff will work on a proposal for consideration by the committee in mid to late June.*

#### Other Business

#### 6. Adjourn

*There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.*