

TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 2012

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2012-12 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole June 26, 2012, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CDT. Chair Don Gray opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	Jane Olive	District #1
	Lyle Tjosaas	District #2
	David Erickson	District #3
	Don Gray	District #4
	David Hanson	District #5

Members absent: None

Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy County Clerk
	Chris Giesen	EDA Coordinator

EDA Coordinator Chris Giesen discussed with the Board the proposed Connecting Dodge County Program.

Connecting Dodge
County Program
Discussion

Mr. Giesen reported that the purpose of this request is to discuss a possible new program that can be developed with the support of the county, and the assistance of the University of Minnesota Extension Office, to better connect community leaders across Dodge County, thereby strengthening community networks and our identity as a county.

The following background information was shared:

Over the past few months, County Administration Jim Elmquist and EDA staff have discussed ways to increase communication and enhance the relationships between all of the communities within Dodge County.

One description that has been used is that there are several "kingdoms" around the county that all focus on their own issues without much collaboration between them.

It was noted that the County Administrator heard of a program at a recent Association of Minnesota Counties meeting about a program the University of Minnesota Extension Office developed - a "bridging" or "connecting" leadership program that can be implemented in a grassroots fashion to enhance and develop communication, education, and networking between communities within a specific geographic region like a county.

The goal of the program is to have people better understand themselves and their community, where they would like to be, and how to get there. Included in the Board packet was information from the University and program brochures from existing programs.

Connecting Dodge
County Program
Discussion -
Continued

Mr. Giesen informed the Board that currently there are three such programs in McLeod, Nicollet, and Brown County. All three have been very successful in achieving their goals.

While the focus of the program is county wide, the intention of this program, and what makes it work, is that this program is not a function of county government, but rather an organic grassroots organization of community leaders with the help of University of Minnesota Extension Educators. The role of the county government entity in this program is merely to provide facilitation and administrative support so the program can get off the ground.

One of the three programs, after 3-4 years, has successfully incorporated themselves as a private non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

To date, county staff has met and discussed at length this program with the Extension Educators as well as had discussions with McLeod County Administration about their experience. The Dodge County Economic Development Authority has reviewed this program and has recommended that a similar program be implemented in Dodge County.

EDA staff has discussed this program with each of the communities within Dodge County and they have indicated support and that there is a need for this type of “bottom-up” leadership program.

Names of various civic, school, and business leaders from each of the communities who might have an interest in establishing such a program have begun to be collected by staff.

It was the EDA Coordinator’s opinion that a successful program in Dodge County would produce a sustainable, community-based leadership structure, a natural mechanism for inter-community communication, stronger future civic relationships, and strong community leaders.

Commissioner Erickson commented that he can see the benefit of the program and the county contributing financially if all communities are supportive of creating this type of program. If all communities aren’t supportive of the program, then he doesn’t see the value in proceeding with the program.

Mr. Giesen stated that if all of the communities don’t buy into this program, it won’t work.

It was the consensus of the group that it was important to have all areas of the county represented if the county decides to move forward with the proposed program.

The EDA Coordinator reiterated that this would be a non-government organization that encourages involvement from outside organizations within the county in order to improve communication, education and networking between the communities.

It was the consensus of the Board that they were supportive of developing a Connecting Dodge County Program with the assistance of the University of Minnesota Extension Office in order to help better connect community leaders across Dodge County.

Connecting Dodge
County Program
Discussion -
Continued

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

DON GRAY
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: