

BUFFALO COUNTY MINUTES

Committee of the Board: Economic Development Committee

Date of the Meeting: Thursday, March 19, 2026

Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 10:44 a.m.

Board Members Present: Mr. John Hadley, Mr. Gary Stanton, Ms. Mary Anne McMillan Urell, Mr. Brian Michaels, and Mr. Michael Taylor.

Others Present for All or Part of the Meeting: Mr. Lee Engfer, Ms. Lisa Schmitt, and Mr. Dave Carlson.

Public Comments Regarding Agenda Items: None.

Review/Discussion/Action regarding the Previous Meeting Minutes: Mr. Stanton made a motion to approve the minutes for the February 5, 2026, meeting, seconded by Mr. Taylor. Carried.

Review/Discussion/Action Regarding Update on Goals: Mr. Dave Carlson shared updates made to the Explore Buffalo County website economic development page. There are links to financial resources and businesses for sale, and the links were shown and explained to the committee. Mr. Carlson is planning on doing business visits in the future and he would like someone from the committee to join him. He is hoping for the website to continue to improve and grow each month and Vision Design Group has been great to work. The Explore Buffalo County Facebook page needs to have photos and content added and frequent posts made to build an audience. Mr. Engfer mentioned that we are looking for an intern from Winona State University to promote the county at local events.

Review/Discussion/Action Regarding Flyway Trail Update: Ms. McMillan Urell stated that there was a meeting earlier in the week and they are still working with the railroad to get access to cross the tracks near County Road P. Mr. Engfer reported that there was a public involvement meeting in February regarding the proposed County Road OO road project/bike trail. The City of Buffalo City also held a meeting on this matter. At that meeting, Mr. Engfer explained to them that there is an environmental process for grant-funded projects such as these, and an environmental impact study will be done by the state. Another public input meeting will be held later this summer where updated plans will be shared before final decisions are made. In July there is a Ride Across Wisconsin bicycle event which includes a stop at Eagle Valley Church, in the Town of Cross.

Review/Discussion/Action Regarding New Business Update: Mr. Engfer reported that he was contacted by the television show 'Empowered', who is doing a story for Discover America. Buffalo County was nominated as a vacation destination and a good place to start a business. Mr. Engfer had a phone interview with them and is again meeting with them tomorrow regarding commercials and educational pieces of media they would like to do on Buffalo County. The cost to the county will be approximately \$29,000 and the county would

have media rights. Mr. Engfer will obtain more information for the committee to discuss at the next meeting before any decisions are made on this.

Review/Discussion Regarding the Committee Chair Report: Chair Hadley reported that on March 26th on PBS a business in the Village of Nelson will be highlighted on West Coast of Wisconsin Main Streets' show. The Rural Livability Project through UW-Madison was mentioned to the committee. The project helps communities in understanding what factors they have that contribute to making them 'livable' and promote growth through different approaches. Mr. Hadley forwarded this information to the City of Alma tourism commission and city council, and this should also be provided to other communities. Mr. Taylor will be attending a tourism conference at the end of the month. A link needs to be added to the county's website for Explore Buffalo County. The newly appointed Economic Development Committee will consist of four county board members and one citizen member.

Review/Discussion Regarding the Administrative Coordinator Report: Mr. Engfer reported that Mr. Carlson is doing a great job for the county.

Review/Discussion Regarding Public Comments Not Regarding Agenda Items: None.

Review/Discussion/Action Regarding the Next Meeting Date and Time: The next meeting has been scheduled for April 16, 2026, at 10:30 a.m.

Adjournment: Ms. McMillan Urell made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Schmitt
County Clerk