May 2026 LCEDC Annual Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting Details: Wednesday, May 20, 2026
10:00 am – 11:56 am
Lincoln County Service Center, Room 156
801 N. Sales Street, Merrill, WI 54452
Online Access: Microsoft Teams

Board Members *(9/13 total)*: Brian Arndorfer (Vice President), Steve Daigle*, ~~Michael "Hob" Habeck~~, Mike Fick, Renea Frederick (Treasurer), ~~Don Friske~~, Gary Hartwig (President), Greg Hartwig, Steve Hass, Dave Johnson (Secretary), ~~Val Mindak~~, ~~Roger Schlegel~~, Jeff Schneider

Other Attendees *(5)*: Rod Akey (City of Merrill), Sara Guild (EDC Director), Sarah Brooks* (Merrill Chamber), Jennifer Turkiewicz* (Tomahawk Main St); Melissa Wrycha (Park City CU)
Participated online (3 total)

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1. **Call to Order & Welcome – 10:00 am by Chair Hartwig**
   Quorum at start = 10, including 1 proxy (Wrycha for Mindak)
   Post-quorum Board arrivals = Daigle (10:05 am)
   Partial meeting attendees: Brooks (out after Topic 5) and Turkiewicz (present from 10:15 – 10:45 am)

2. **Review & Approve Lincoln County EDC Board Meeting Minutes: February 18, 2026**
   Hass/Johnson m/s to approve February 18, 2026, meeting minutes as presented; motion carried.

3. **Consider Approval of 2026-27 LCEDC Board Members & Executive Committee Members**
   Hartwig reviewed the slate of 2026-27 LCEDC Board Member candidates as presented in the packet:
   NEW MEMBERS: Don Friske, Lincoln County Board Chair (replacing Jesse Boyd)
   Michael "Hob" Habeck, Tomahawk City Mayor (replacing Steve Taskay)
   RENEWING: Mike Fick, Greg Hartwig, Steve Hass, Val Mindak, and Jeff Schneider
   No other candidates were presented for consideration.
   MOTION: Johnson/Hass motioned to elect the slate of 2026-27 LCEDC Board Members as presented for two-year terms ending at the 2028 LCEDC Annual Meeting; motion carried.

   Hartwig opened nominations for the 2026-27 LCEDC Executive Committee and referenced the draft slate in the packet, which proposed approving the same Members as the prior year:
   President = Gary Hartwig — Secretary = Dave Johnson
   Vice President = Brian Arndorfer — Treasurer = Renea Frederick
   He noted that both he and Arndorfer have been on the Board since 1999 and would like to transition off the leadership team by the 2027 Annual meeting. Any Board members interested in stepping into a leadership position should contact him to discuss opportunities to create a training/transition system. No other 2026-27 Executive Committee candidates were nominated.
   MOTION: Hass/Greg Hartwig m/s to elect the slate of 2026-27 LCEDC Executive Committee members as presented in the packet for terms ending at the 2027 Annual Meeting; motion carried.

4. **Annual Review of LCEDC Policies & Guiding Documents**
   The Board reviewed the following documents as part of the annual review process:
   a. **Board Conflict of Interest Policy**: No changes recommended; approved by consensus. All Board members were asked to sign the form in order to remain compliant with the annual attestation requirement.

b. **Decision Making Policy:** Requires annual review by Executive Committee. No changes recommended. Johnson/Arndorfer m/s to reaffirm the Decision-Making Policy as written; motion carried by Executives.
c. **LCEDC Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation:** Attendees reviewed both documents and affirmed they remain accurate. It was suggested that the Board consider adding Executive term limits next year.

5. LCEDC Finance Reports through April 2026

Guild briefly reviewed the finance report narrative and clarified how to read each section of the report. She noted that the organization's total net revenue through April was slightly ahead of budget projections, primarily because Summit expenses came in under budget while the event's income goal was achieved.
Frederick/Johnson m/s to approve the LCEDC April 2026 finance report; motion carried.

Guild informed the Board that the LCEDC's 2025 tax filing would be completed later this month per her recent conversation with Zach at Mamer Accounting.

Guild also reported that the LCEDC's CD at Crossbridge Community Bank would be maturing on June 3rd after earning approximately $742 at a 3.72% interest rate for 6 months. Attendees briefly discussed ideas for what to do with the $40,000+ remaining in the account after it matures.
MOTION: Johnson/Greg Hartwig m/s to close the Crossbridge CD account after it matures and move $15,000 into a 6-month CD at Park City Credit Union at a 5% interest rate and deposit the balance into the LCEDC's existing checking account at Park City to earn 2% interest; motion carried.

Brooks out

6. General Reports

a. *Executive Director*

Guild reviewed her written report. She noted that she spent approximately 30% of her time the last three months on Summit-related activities and another 10-15% of time on technical assistance activities. She also confirmed that the new office transition is largely complete, but she is waiting to update the organization's mailing address until the new mail box is installed. Attendees briefly discussed if it was necessary to continue receiving detailed written reports, then directed Guild to transition to providing verbal reports in the future and to use the written Strategic Plan report to highlight any key data points.

b. *Strategic Plan Activities Update*

Attendees reviewed the updated Strategic Plan Activities report and noted that there continued to be progress towards achieving all of the plan's goals. Guild affirmed that she intended to complete significant updates to the LCEDC's website this summer with support from the REV team.

Guild reminded the Board that the current Strategic Plan ends in December and that a new plan needs to be completed in time for approval at the November Board meeting. She recommended identifying a group of Board members to develop some preliminary plan updates this summer for the Board to review at the August LCEDC Board meeting. Following a brief discussion about the anticipated Strategic Planning process, attendees agreed by consensus to designate the Executive Committee to draft the first round of potential update recommendations for review at the August LCEDC Board meeting.

c. *Lincoln County Broadband Commission Update*

Guild provided a brief Broadband Commission update. The LCBC has coordinated multiple stakeholder meetings this year to help them better assess current barriers to technology utilization and will be using the feedback to develop future action items. Attendees discussed the potential impact that the RDOF and BEAD service installation programs would have on current service issues. They also briefly discussed possible options for future LCBC activities and focus areas, such as monitoring data center issues.

7. **LCEDC Events & Activities**
    a. *2026 Economic Summit*
    Guild reviewed the preliminary 2026 Economic Summit Report and survey results from the packet. The event hosted 119 attendees (53% from businesses) and is projected to have a net revenue of over $8,000. Expenses were kept under $5,000 due in large part to receiving many in-kind donations and discounts. Guild noted that the event survey score was slightly lower than in 2025, and that she had received some feedback that the event was more of a "small business" summit than an "economic" summit, with some guests expressing a desire for more data-driven information. Attendees discussed ideas for updating the event in 2027, such as officially making it a small business summit and/or shortening the timeframe.

    b. *Fall EDC Event Ideas*
    Building off the 2026 Summit topic, attendees discussed ideas for creating an annual "Economic Update" event in the fall to provide guests with data-focused economic updates. The event could include both local data and a featured speaker sharing regional/state/national data, similar to the Federal Reserve event held in October 2025. Guild asked if the Board would like her to develop a formal Lincoln County Economic Report to present during the event and/or online; following discussion, attendees asked Guild to hold off on creating an official report and instead provide local data as part of a presentation during the event. Final consensus was that Guild should work on developing ideas for a morning-only Economic Update event to take place this fall and bring more information to the August Board meeting.

    c. *Centergy Industry Study Update*
    Guild and Akey provided an update on the Industry Study project that was part of LCEDC's 2026 budget. They are working with Centergy's consultant (Site Selector Group) to complete a professional assessment of Merrill's Industrial TID 13 to help identify the best options and ideas for attracting developers to the site. They recently submitted a written RFI and are preparing to host a site visit with SSG on June 3rd. The final recommendations report will be available later this summer and will include information that can be applied to other sites in the County and region.

8. **REV and Technical Assistance Program Updates**
Guild, Arndorfer, and Frederick attended the REV statewide cohorts meeting last Wednesday in Green Lake as part of the Connecting Entrepreneurial Communities conference. The next REV team meeting is tomorrow. The group is continuing to develop resources and processes to support a more robust and intentional technical assistance program. They are also preparing to relaunch the *LinC & Learn Business Connections* series this fall and have secured one sponsor to date (UW-Stout MOC). Frederick shared information about UW-Whitewater's "RenewTowns" program and explained how it could potentially help generate community excitement for small business development while also filling one (or more) empty storefronts.

9. **LCEDC Partner & Board Member Updates**
    a. *Lincoln County*
    Guild presented the LCEDC's quarterly update to the new County Board the night before, during which she emphasized areas where she collaborated with County departments and staff. Greg Hartwig provided updates on recent ARPA-funded park and trail updates. He also noted that the County Board has started working on its 2027 budget and that they will need to figure out how to incorporate funding for the Lincoln County EDC now that ARPA funding is done. Attendees briefly discussed ideas to help support funding.

    b. *City of Merrill*
    Hass reported that the new housing construction along the city's riverfront was moving along nicely and the townhomes JAS was building near the hospital were under construction, as well. In addition, Zastrow the Beerman's facility expansion was underway and the Semco building was recently sold to a new owner.

c. *City of Tomahawk* – NOT PRESENT

d. *Merrill Area Chamber of Commerce*
Wrycha provide an update as Chamber President. The Chamber's new *Shop Drink Eat Local* punch card program is now active; it was created as a way to incentivize people to visit new businesses across Merrill. The Chamber's new Wine Walk event is scheduled for October 17th and will include both Chamber and non-Chamber businesses located from the downtown area west to the Ballyhoo's area. The Chamber's annual golf outing is scheduled for June 1. Sponsorships are sold out and only 2 teams are still available. The Chamber is currently short two staff members, but a new Marketing Director will start this summer; the new hire is currently the Executive Director for the Mosinee Chamber but is moving to this area.

e. *Tomahawk Regional Chamber of Commerce* – NOT PRESENT

f. *Tomahawk Main Street, Inc.* – NOT PRESENT (left early)

g. *LCEDC Board Members*
Wrycha: The new Dunkin' Donuts/Baskin Robbins will be opening in Park City's Merrill building during the first week of June.

10. Future Meeting Dates & Topic Requests

Attendees decided to hold the August 19th LCEDC Board meeting at the LCEDC's new office. Topics will include a strategic planning discussion and an update about the new fall economic data event.

11. Meeting Adjournment – 11:56 am by Chair Hartwig

Minutes Approved 08/19/2026 by LCEDC Board; recorded by SG