

**Chippewa County
Economic Development Committee
Regular Meeting
February 5, 2026
Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 302
3:00 PM**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 03:02 PM

2. Roll Call

Members Present:

James Ericksen, Charles Bomar, Pam Guthman, Lee Hennick, Brian Flynn

Members Absent:

Others Present:

Todd Pauls, Charlie Walker, Andy Albarado, Traci Bremness, and Leah Simington. Recorder: Lisa Merrell.

3. Members of the Public Wishing to Be Heard

(Comments will be limited to 5 minutes per speaker.)

4. Consent Agenda

(Unless separation of an item is requested, all items will be adopted under one motion.)

Motion: Approved

Result: Passed (5 - 0)

Mover: Brian Flynn

Seconder: Charles Bomar

Ayes: James Ericksen, Charles Bomar, Pam Guthman, Lee Hennick, Brian Flynn

Nayes: None

Absent:

1. Approve the Agenda
2. Approve the Minutes - August 6, 2025 Regular Meeting and August 26, 2025 Special Meeting
3. Schedule Next Meeting Date - May 6, 2026 at 3 PM

5. Reports

1. WEDC Talent Recruitment Grant for MakeMyMove Economic Development Program to Help Communities Grow by Recruiting Talented People and Their Families to Relocate - Andy Albarado/Charlie Walker

Walker noted that they have advocated for legislation to put money into economic development to attract talent. This legislation was designed to help the local communities. The state approved \$5 million to go into a grant application for local communities to apply, with a maximum of \$500,000 per municipality awarded. The purpose is to attract talent and residents to your community. Walker stated there is a company called MakeMyMove, which is designed for people that are looking to make a move. People can visit their website to look at different communities, and get benefits from the community for moving there. Albarado and his team have submitted a grant application to Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) and with the grant money it is in the application that we would hire MakeMyMove to design an online platform for Chippewa County, so we can promote the communities in Chippewa County.

They made an agreement that MakeMyMove would build the platform, and if we are awarded the

grant, that is when it would start; if they aren't awarded the grant, it would not happen.

They submitted the grant application, and WEDC will make an announcement around May or June.

There is a match required for the grant of 20%, which would amount to about \$30,000. They are allowed to use in kind services toward the match amount as well, and so they are working on whittling that \$30,000 figure down.

2. Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation Report - Charlie Walker

Walker presented a power point. Walker noted for Committee members that the Valley Rally will be held on February 19th, there will be a speed dating event with legislators on March 27th, and an economic forecast with an economist is scheduled for April 20th. Walker explained some current legislation affecting economic development, and reviewed some events they have been a part of.

3. Review and Provide Feedback on the Economic Development Section in the Revised Planning & Zoning Comprehensive Plan - Andy Albarado

Chapter 9 of the Chippewa County Comprehensive Plan was included in the packet. Albarado stated the County is supposed to update their comprehensive plan every 10 years. Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and Planning and Zoning have been working on the plan and it will be on the County Board agenda next week. There was public input, they held a public meeting to gather data. Walker and the Economic Development Corporation have been heavily involved in the economic development portion of the plan. It will be a planning document, but it can be changed in the future. The plan addresses priorities and gives them stature if they want to apply for grants.

6. Business Items

1. The Committee will convene in Closed Session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Sec. 19.85(1)(e) "Deliberating or negotiating the purchase of public properties . . . or conducting other specified business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session" (Update on potential future business park).

The committee did not convene in closed session.

2. The Committee will reconvene to open session to continue with the agenda.

7. Updates, Announcements, and Correspondence

8. Agenda Items for Future Consideration

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at: 04:32 PM by Chair Ericksen.