

**Chippewa County
Economic Development Committee
Special Meeting
March 31, 2026
Chippewa County Courthouse, Room 302
3:00 PM**

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 03:00 PM

2. Roll Call

Members Present: James Ericksen, Charles Bomar, Pam Guthman
Members Absent: Lee Hennick, Brian Flynn
Others Present: Charlie Walker, Chuck Hull, Doug Clary, Todd Pauls, Leah Simington, Traci Bremness, Larry Schindler, Audrey Simmons, Eric Whittnebel. 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 (3 - 0)
Mover:	Charles Bomar
Seconder:	Pam Guthman
Ayes:	James Ericksen, Charles Bomar, Pam Guthman
Nayes:	None
Absent:	Lee Hennick, Brian Flynn

1. Approve the Agenda
2. Schedule Next Meeting Date - May 6, 2026 at 3 PM

5. Reports

1. Update on Rogers Behavioral Health Project - Andy Albarado

Albarado noted that an updated site plan and building plan were included in the agenda packet, and have been submitted to the City, because there were some changes; the building is positioned a little differently and the design is a little different. The number of beds are the same and the investment is probably more than the original promise. They are opening an outpatient facility in the Lakeside South building and another in Eau Claire in the fall. They are talking about dates for a groundbreaking in the next month, hopefully at the end of April. The state money is committed, and they have initial approvals from the City of Chippewa Falls. Audrey Simmons and Eric Whittnebel were present from Rogers and provided an update and answered questions. Whittnebel stated their commitment remains strong and they are talking to community members and generating interest from the Valley in how they can help out. Bomar asked what the projected construction time and time to open is. Whittnebel stated end of the first quarter 2027 is the end of the scheduled construction so in about a year. Walker asked for an

employment count that is anticipated. There have been concerns about where they will recruit employees from at their open houses. Whittnebel stated their total employment count hasn't changed, they are looking at hiring about 100 FTEs, between nursing and behavioral health techs. They are also looking to partner with UW-Eau Claire for internships. Simmons stated the goal is to recruit from the community. Whittnebel stated they are aiming for April 30th for the groundbreaking.

6. Business Items

1. Resolution to Declare May 4-8, 2026 as Chippewa County Economic Development Week

Motion:	Forwarded to the County Board
Result:	Passed (3 - 0)
Mover:	Pam Guthman
Second:	Charles Bomar
Ayes:	James Ericksen, Charles Bomar, Pam Guthman
Nays:	None
Absent:	Lee Hennick, Brian Flynn

2. Consider Request from Northern States Power/Xcel Energy for an Underground Utility Easement on Parcel Number 22908-3342-02000000B (County Owned Land Designated for Economic Development) for Service to Parcel Number 22908-3343-73311001A (former Lakeland College Building).

Albarado stated there are overhead power lines that cuts through the property, but the easement would be for an underground line to go to the building. Walker stated this is at the end of the cul de sac near Smiles in Motion. Bomar clarified, they aren't increasing the power, just rerouting it? Albarado stated right now there are overhead lines, and they will add another overhead pole, but then go underground to the building.

Motion:	Approved
Result:	Passed (3 - 0)
Mover:	Charles Bomar
Second:	Pam Guthman
Ayes:	James Ericksen, Charles Bomar, Pam Guthman
Nays:	None
Absent:	Lee Hennick, Brian Flynn

7. Updates, Announcements, and Correspondence

8. Agenda Items for Future Consideration

9. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned by Chair Ericksen at 3:23 PM.