

Q2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION MEETING
WSI BOARD ROOM & VIA TEAMS CONNECTION
1600 EAST CENTURY AVENUE
BISMARCK ND
April 22, 2026
2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Economic Development Foundation members present: Keith Lund, Spencer Marchand, Kevin Müller, Anna Nelson, Cassidy Hjelmstad, Matt Perdue, Jaci Praska, Zac Smith Mike Seminary.

Commerce staff present: Chris Schilken, Katie Ralston Howe, Sara Otte Coleman, Maria Effertz, Rich Garman, Alison Widmer, Corby Kemmer, Sherri Frieze

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME MEMBERS

Vice Chairman Kevin Müller chaired the meeting for Chairman Mike Seminary. The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m., welcoming the Economic Development Foundation members and guests in the room and online via the TEAMS connection.

MINUTES/FINANCIAL SUMMARY/REQUEST FOR FUNDS

MINUTES

Motion: It was moved by Mike Seminary, seconded by Keith Lund, to approve November 6, 2025, Minutes. No discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Motion: It was moved by Mike Seminary, seconded by Zac Smith, to approve the April 17, 2026, Balance Sheet for \$57, 668.79. Currently the Foundation holds a balance of \$120,721.22 that includes a joint account for Workforce Recruitment Funds. With no discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR FUNDS

Rich Garman

The Commerce Economic Development and Finance (ED&F) Division is applying for accreditation through the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Accreditation program. The program is designed to acknowledge organizations that meet high standards of professional excellence in economic development. The accreditation signifies that an organization operates effectively and is committed to continuous improvement and accountability in serving its community.

A site visit will be conducted in early June by out-of-state reviewers and ND community partners. Travel, lodging and per diem are to be covered by the ED & F Division. Rich Garman offered the amount of \$6,500.00 for expected costs.

Motion: It was moved by Spencer Marchand, seconded by Anna Nelson, to approve a Request for Funds from the Economic Development Foundation to be used to cover costs associated with IEDC accreditation for the Commerce ED & F Division. No discussion, all in favor. Motion carried.

COMMERCE AGENCY UPDATES

Commissioner Schilken mentioned the Governor's Budget that highlighted state agencies to cut budgets. Commerce budget needs to be cut by ten percent, resulting in \$3.2 M from the General Fund. Dated programs are being investigated to achieve that cut.

FORMED SUBCABINETS**Commissioner Schilken****Sara Otte Coleman****Katie Ralston Howe**

Housing Subcabinet – composed of industry, community, and finance professionals.

- Where to exist.
- One page marketing material is being created defining differences between slum and blight.
- Conversations between the Housing & Finance agency and the Bank of ND are happening.
- Housing and Finance dashboard is being created, highlighting the needs for housing across the state.

Outdoor Recreation Subcabinet – composed of Tourism, Parks and Rec, Game and Fish, land management agencies
Sara Otte Coleman

- Working together to break down silos, organize ideas.
- Formed goals with partners of campgrounds, outdoor recreation on rivers, lakes, boat ramps, prairies, and trust lands.

Workforce Subcabinet – composed of Governor's office, NDIIT

Katie Ralston Howe

- Naturalizing the recommendations that came out of the workforce ecosystem study released last year.
- Established a share vision, skilled workforce with ND's economy, commitments with upskilling, reskilling, supporting recruitment of new businesses into the state, and helping with barriers to employment.
- Working with 3 different task forces, and additional task forces to be launched later.
- A shared website to be formed across state agencies that will help with workforce resources.
- Data integration Task Force – shared measures across workforce programs to demonstrate progress or improvement.
- Another task force (back end of the landing page) is working on connecting agencies together to benefit job seekers and/or companies.
- A desk guide to be distributed this fall.

COMMERCE DIVISION UPDATES

Emailed to all members – Q & A

Discussion ensued on various topics including government, tourism stats., workforce programs and economic development across the state.

BOARD MEMBER AROUND THE ROOM UPDATES/LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

All

Topics of discussion included:

Childcare, Housing, Safe Communities, Cost of Living, Higher paying jobs for students to stay in ND,

OTHER/Q&A

No comments

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 4:00 p.m.