



NORTH BRANCH

—Minnesota—

Sara Paul
Chair

Dennis Johnson
Vice Chair

Jessica Thelander
Commissioner

Marshall Saunders
Commissioner

Patrick Meachem
Councilmember

Cassie Koecher
Commissioner

Kevin Schieber
Mayor

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGULAR AGENDA
TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026 @ 3:30 PM
CITY HALL, 6408 ELM STREET, NORTH
BRANCH, MN 55056**

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTH BRANCH IN THE COUNTY OF CHISAGO AND IN THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, January 20, 2026

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sara Paul called the Economic Development Authority Meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

City Councilmember Patrick Meachem led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Present: Commissioner Marshall Saunders, Councilmember Patrick Meacham, Commissioner S Paul, Commissioner Dennis Johnson, Commissioner Jessica Thelander, Commissioner Cassie Koecher

Absent: Mayor Kevin Schieber

Remote:

Others Present:

Notes:

4. OATH OF OFFICE

- a. Oath of Office - Cassandra Koecher

VERBAL
UPDATE

Cassie Kecher was sworn in by oath of office as an Economic Development Authority Commissioner by Community Development Director Nate Sondrol.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Provides an opportunity for the public to address the Council on items that are not on the Agenda. Please raise your hand to be recognized. Please state your name and address for the record. This section is for the express purpose of addressing concerns of City services and operations. It shall not be used to clarify individual's views for political purposes.

6. AGENDA APPROVAL

a. Approve Agenda

ACTION

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Jessica Thelander

SECONDER: Marshall Saunders

AYES: Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher

ABSENT: Kevin Schieber

NOTES:

7. CONSENT AGENDA

All matters listed under Consent Agenda are considered routine and/or non-controversial and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Councilmember or citizen so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the Agenda.

a. Approval of December 9, 2025 EDA meeting minutes

ACTION

RESULT: Passed

MOVER: Patrick Meacham

SECONDER: Marshall Saunders

AYES: Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher

ABSENT: Kevin Schieber

NOTES:

8. REPORTS

a. Chisago County HRA-EDA Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Chisago County HRA Executive Director Nancy Hoffman gave a brief Chisago County HRA-EDA Update. The Chisago County HRA-EDA is still doing marketing mornings, which are on the first Friday of the month, which can be attended virtually or at their office. The retail trade analysis will be on February 19th from 2-4 PM. We will also be discussing the grocery study at this time, and it will be held at the Senior Center here in North Branch. We started two new grant programs. One is for entrepreneurs and new ventures, and it's up to \$10K to get yourself kicked off in a business or new venture. One requirement is to come to the Small Business Development Center and work on a business plan and projections. For this entrepreneur, you come back every quarter to go through the business plan. The other grant is for building improvement, it's a forgivable loan, up to \$10K, and then each year, for 5 years, we would forgive 20% of it. There's currently a lot of interest in the new grant programs.

b. North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

c. North Branch Area Schools Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Chair Sara Paul gave the North Branch Area Schools update. On February 10th, the North Branch Area School District is asking the community to support us in a renewal of the Capital Projects Levy. Three key points, we're not asking for any more than what's needed, it's a renewal, so it's the same percentage that's been in place since 2017, and lastly, what do we need this renewal for? The money will go towards technology that supports safety in the buildings and cybersecurity. If anyone has any questions, please contact Sara Paul at spaul@isd138.org

d. EDA Executive Director Update

VERBAL
UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the EDA Executive Director Update. The Mayor conducted a State of the City presentation at the Chamber during their last meeting, where the presentation was shown. The City has received a full-price offer for the old fire hall. City Council discussed the offer at the last meeting on January 13th and they approved the offer with the condition of having consistency with the comprehensive plan. The Planning Commission meets in early February and they will be providing commercial industrial supplies, consoles, similar type of materials. They would like to close by the beginning of March and be open by May 1st.

e. Comprehensive Plan Update

INFO

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol gave the Comprehensive Plan Update. A copy of the Comprehensive Plan, sections 2 and section 5, was included in the Commission's packet, and it is strongly recommended that the commission members review it and come to the meeting in February to discuss the goals, objective and visions for economic development. City Administrator Matthew Hill commented that we would like to hold a joint meeting on February 18th, to talk about the comprehensive plan and some other factors, as well as some other partnerships amongst those organizations regarding the future community and growth.

f. Appoint Chair and Vice Chair for 2026

ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented that the EDA and our bylaws say that we should appoint the chair and vice chair for the upcoming year, 2026.

Motion to nominate Sara Paul as chair and Dennis Johnson as vice chair.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jessica Thelander
SECONDER: Cassie Kecher
AYES: Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher
ABSENT: Kevin Schieber
NOTES:

g. Consider approval of the 2026 EDA Meeting Calendar

ACTION

Motion to approve the 2026 EDA Meeting Calendar for the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 3:30PM.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jessica Thelander
SECONDER: Dennis Johnson
AYES: Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher

ABSENT: Kevin Schieber

NOTES:

h. Interstate Business Park Platting - Essby Business Park 5th Addition

VERBAL
UPDATE

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the Interstate Business Park Platting - Essby Business Park 5th Addition. The North Branch EDA approved a purchase agreement with Louisiana Pacific (LP) for the sale of 120 acres in the Interstate Business Park at the December 9, 2026 meeting. LP is proposing a 200,000 + square foot manufacturing facility with outdoor storage of materials on the site.

The terms of the purchase agreement included a 180-day due diligence period with conditions precedent prior to the closing:

- Public Hearing on Sale of Property (Dec 9, 2025)
- Plans and Specifications to be submitted by buyer (received)
- Private Financing (demonstration of sufficient funds)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Agreement (in process)
- Executing Lease to Purchase Agreement with Chisago Co HRA/EDA and transfer to North Branch EDA (completed)
- Payment of Release Price and Partial Release of Mortgage for Lease Revenue Bonds.
- Subdivision and Platting (in process)
- Existing Tenancies released. (in process)
- Form of Limited Warranty Deed.
- Title
- Approval

City staff have been working with LP to address all of the conditions to allow for a closing. A public hearing has tentatively been scheduled on February 3, 2026 for the preliminary plat and conditional use permit for outdoor storage for the site.

There was Consensus from the EDA that the layout makes sense.

i. Consider Approval of Residential Lease Agreement - Interstate Business Park

ACTION

Community Development Director Nate Sondrol presented the approval of the Residential Lease Agreement - Interstate Business Park. The North Branch Economic Development Authority (EDA) approved a residential lease agreement effective January 2, 2025, with Barry Engdahl that allows for the use of the property, including the house and outbuildings located on the property (PID 11.01072.02) located at 6247 410th Street. The property previously included a life estate that allowed the Engdahl family the use of the property. Mr Engdahl is currently also in a lease agreement with the EDA to farm the land within the Industrial Park. The current rental lease includes a one (1) year term effective through January 15, 2026, and a month-to-month term thereafter. The current rate for the term is \$5,200/month. The property at 6247 410th Street is located within the boundary of a potential purchase agreement and is scheduled to be removed with the closing of the property. The purchase agreement is scheduled to allow for a 180-day due diligence period (June 15, 2026) to allow for closing. The closing could take place any time prior to this. Mr Engdahl has expressed a desire to continue with the residential lease, but at the current rate and uncertainty of the state of the property for the upcoming year, he would only be interested in a reduced rate of \$3,500/month during the due diligence period. If the property were not to

close during the due diligence period, the rate would go back to an effective rate of \$5,200/month.

The tenant would continue to be responsible for utilities and insurance on personal property, and the EDA would continue to pay for the insurance on the buildings. The EDA discussed this at the December 9, 2025 meeting and recommended approval of the amendment to the lease at a reduced rate of \$3,500/month during the due diligence period.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jessica Thelander
SECONDER: Dennis Johnson
AYES: Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher
ABSENT: Kevin Schieber
NOTES:

9. NEXT MEETING - February 17, 2026 - 3:30 PM

10. CLOSED SESSION

The Economic Development Authority went into closed session at 3:55 PM pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, sub. 3(c) to consider the sale of real property identified as Lot 3, Block 1, Essby Business Park, North Branch, Minnesota.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Sara Paul
SECONDER: Jessica Thelander
AYES: Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher
ABSENT: Kevin Schieber
NOTES:

The Economic Development Authority Meeting went into open session at 4:02 PM.

- a. Closed meeting pursuant to Minn. Stat. 13D.05, sub. 3 (c) to consider the sale of real property identified as Lot 3, Block 1, Essby Business Park, North Branch, Minnesota INFO

11. ADJOURNMENT

The Economic Development Authority Meeting was adjourned at 4:02 PM.

RESULT: Passed
MOVER: Jessica Thelander
SECONDER: Dennis Johnson
AYES: Marshall Saunders, Patrick Meacham, Sara Paul, Dennis Johnson, Jessica Thelander, Cassie Kecher
ABSENT: Kevin Schieber
NOTES:

