

Moving Forward: Scott County Needs

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Date: June 11, 2020 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.



FISH Board Chair Tom Christie welcomed 40 participants to the meeting and commented that FISH wanted to hear from our cities and businesses who have lots of employees and could post needs for them.

Stacy Crakes from the First Stop Shop explained the Scott County CDA Small Business Recovery Loan Program, that gives businesses up to a \$5,000 one-time loan with zero interest to locally owned and operated Scott County businesses. If they are still in business after 12 months the loan is forgiven. The deadline is noon on July 17. This is funded by Scott County CDA and the City of Savage. They are looking for more available funding. New Prague encompasses two counties and is working on a program for their businesses.

Commissioner Jon Ulrich said the county has a large amount of Covid dollars and will be working with the CDA to make it available. Mayor Janet Williams of Savage said they took money out of their Economic Development funds to partner with CDA. Local franchises of large chains which are locally owned are also eligible. There is also funding for minority-owned businesses.

Mayor Chuck Nickolay said New Prague wants to be able to help LeSueur businesses too. The city is dealing with issues around masks and social distancing. The Peace Center food shelf has seen increased needs. Brooke Sticha, New Prague Chamber Director, said a lot of businesses took advantage of available aid and the community also provided resources. Right now businesses need to stay open. As a whole they are doing okay but they need to stay open. A lot of businesses require masks and social distancing. They have hand sanitizer available. Jon asked how FISH could help chambers and all businesses. Brooke will share information about FISH to businesses.

Prior lake Mayor Kirt Briggs commented that the majority want schools open in the fall. They are assisting businesses in applying for loans. Chamber Director Sandi Fleck said residents are being very supportive. Stores all have hand sanitizer. They have six new chamber members recently. They are getting used to the new normal. Restaurants, some who have outdoor patios, are surviving. Other businesses are doing okay. There are increased costs because of increased cleaning and safety requirements so some prices are going up. Prior Lake is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Chamber of Commerce and will have a 50 Days of Lakefront Days celebration. They are being very creative in celebrating with Zoom meetings.

Jon commented that the county is earmarking \$5.5 million of the Covid relief money to the second round of the CDA program. Commissioner Barb Brekke added that they want to fill gaps for the people who weren't helped in the first round. This will be an action item at the next county board meeting.

Tom said if people are earning less money and need help fixing their car so they can get to work, their employer could post a need on FISH to help them. Jeanne will send registration information to the Chamber contacts. Bethany is available to speak about FISH at Chamber meetings.

Janet commented that when Covid started the City of Savage did a number of things:

- Sent a bi-weekly message from the mayor
- Article on dealing with mental health – biggest response
- Helped with 92 drive-by birthday parties that included a squad car, fire truck and city truck when available

- two restaurants closed, but one was taken over by another company which provided take-out food and plans to reopen the restaurant under a new name. Everyone agreed that curbside takeout meals are here to stay.
- Rent program for renters in City of Savage buildings
- 2nd round aid will include beauty salons run from the home
- New development going on along with city projects

Heather Proskey from the Savage Chamber said most businesses are staying open and she is keeping in touch with businesses to see what the chamber can do.

Bill Reynolds, Shakopee City Administrator said there are serious concerns about the downtown area businesses. The shutdown has had a big impact. The city will be initiating a \$200,000 program for small businesses at their next meeting. The rest of the community has all kinds of housing and industrial and commercial projects continuing. They are reaching out to the CDA, Chamber and County to focus on downtown. FISH could help with employee needs. Angie Whitcomb, Chamber Director, said they are helping members apply for loans. They are now in recovery mode. She said the city was helpful in changing regulations to allow a large tent on First Avenue for outdoor dining. WCCO featured Shakopee in a Save Our Main Streets segment.

Lezlie Vermillion, County Administrator, said the County Board had the first formal work session on Covid funding and this is what was proposed:

- \$5.5 million small business support (there are over 3,000 small businesses in Scott County!) School superintendents agreed that small businesses are the top priority.
- \$2 million to CDA and CAP for mortgage and rent relief
- \$1.7 million food security
- \$1 million technology – broadband extension
- \$800,000 township broadband help
- Small businesses will include daycares and agricultural operations, nonprofits such as MRCI and New Options

Bill Reynolds said hats off to the county on the focus of these proposals. Bill Jaffa, CDA, said they have made some changes to how they help small businesses. Bethany commented that FISH is here right now to help with needs.

Announcements:

- Next month's meeting on August 13 will address families coping; with children and he stay at home order.
- FISH partners can send any updates to Bethany to be included in the Daily Message
- Friendship Church in Prior Lake hosts a 2nd Harvest food distribution on the 2nd Thursday of each month from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- The Highway 13 and County Road 21 roundabout opens June 12!
- The Windmill in Savage is open along with area farmer's markets.