



Announcement of Meeting
Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes

305 E. Luverne St.
Luverne, MN 56156
www.cityofluverne.org

Monday, February 9, 2026

8:00 AM

Council Chambers

A. OATH OF OFFICE

Sherri Thompson submitted her Letter of Resignation. Quinn Buss is fulfilling the remainder of her term with an expiration date of January 2031. Mayor Pat Baustian administered the Oath of Office to Quinn Buss.

B. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL

Present Patrick Baustian, Ryan DeBates, Tara Zewiske, Kevin Aaker, and Quinn Buss

A Regular Meeting of the Luverne Economic Development Authority was held in the Council Chambers, commencing at 8:00 AM.

Additional attendees include: City Administrator Jill Wolf & EDA Director Holly Sammons.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

- 1. Approval of LEDA Regular Meeting Minutes - 01 12 2026

A motion was made by Aaker, seconded by Zewiske, that these LEDA Minutes be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Baustian, DeBates, Zewiske, Aaker, and Buss

D. BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS

- 1. Approval of Regular Department Payment Report - 01 2026

A motion was made by DeBates, seconded by Aaker, that this LEDA Regular Department Payment Report be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Baustian, DeBates, Zewiske, Aaker, and Buss

- 2. Approval of Financial Report - 01 2026

A motion was made by Zewiske, seconded by DeBates, that this LEDA Financial Report be approved. The motion carried by the

following vote:

**Aye:** Baustian, DeBates, Zewiske, Aaker, and Buss

## **E. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS & DISCUSSION**

### **1. Economic Development Association of Minnesota (EDAM) Announces 2026 Excellence in Economic Development Award Winners**

Winners of the Excellence in Economic Development Awards were announced on January 22, 2026 as part of EDAM's annual Winter Conference. The City of Luverne, in partnership with Kids Rock! Child Care Center, has been selected as a winner of the Innovation Award as part of the Excellence in Economic Development Awards.

These awards recognize projects and professionals in the economic development industry who have gone above and beyond or overcome significant challenges in the past year. The awards are presented annually to highlight outstanding projects, initiatives, and leadership that demonstrate innovation, community impact, and effective problem-solving. The Innovation Award specifically recognizes a creative solution to an economic development challenge and may be awarded to a community, county, organization, individual, or collaborative team.

The Greater Minnesota Innovation Award was awarded to the City of Luverne and Kids Rock! Child Care Center in recognition of our collaborative efforts to address critical workforce and childcare challenges through innovative, community-driven solutions. This recognition reflects the strength of our partnerships, the leadership demonstrated by the City and Kids Rock! throughout the project, and the measurable impact on economic development and quality of life in our community. It also brings positive statewide visibility to Luverne and reinforces the importance of investing in childcare as essential for economic growth.

Here is the link to the Awards Page:

<https://www.edam.org/EDAM/EDAM/About/Awards/Awards.aspx>

Here is the link to the You Tube Video for the Innovation Award Project:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Q4xyAUKOBs>

As part of the Conference, Sammons and McClure were also speakers along with First Children's Finance and ISG for a facilitated panel discussion about how the community took action to address a critical infrastructure need for community growth and business attraction. Together, the panelists highlighted how collaboration, creativity, and community engagement turned an urgent need into a lasting economic investment in Luverne's future. The discussion began with a recap of the community engagement process that began in 2017 and involved a number of community meetings to include elected officials, local

businesses, current providers, and parents alike. The urgency came from parents when local family childcare providers announced they were closing and other providers were nearing retirement. Additionally, the number of family child care providers was steadily declining year after year. With limited availability, especially for infant slots, many parents were left with no options. After the community meetings, it was identified that the lack of childcare was negatively affecting many local businesses ability to attract and retain talent. The COVID period further proved that childcare is essential to workforce development. While Rock County has proudly been served exclusively by wonderful in-home family child care providers, there are simply not enough of them. Many working parents also expressed the desire for center-based care to accommodate different needs such as extended hours and consistent care over the summer, holidays, and school breaks. Making the connection between childcare and economic development, local leaders viewed childcare as essential to community growth. Furthermore, parents wanted options and a healthy community would offer both.

After securing the \$2.6 million dollar federal grant, the community went to work on fundraising another \$1 million dollars. Of particular interest to the attendees was how the community raised over \$1 million dollars. Sammons shared that businesses contributed over 60% of all dollars raised and noted the following contributions:

- 32 business donors accounted for \$756,000
- 37+ individual donations - \$150,000
- 2 Philanthropist - \$325,000
- 2 Foundations - \$99,000
- 3 Churches - \$22,500
- 3 Clubs/organizations \$10,000

The panel shared the funding structure for the project and the details about the ownership and management of the operations. Kids Rock! is the license holder and the center opened in June 2025. Attendance has steadily been increasing each month since opening. About 97 children attend per week in January and the center employs 33 people (PT and FT). Results from a recent Family Impact Survey were also shared to understand how the center's opening is impacting families, businesses, and the community:

Reliability for Employers:

- The #1 challenge families faced before Kids Rock! was a "Lack of availability and reliability" (55%). By offering different options for working parents, the center has directly reduced last-minute work disruptions for many families and improved work-life balance for others.
- 78% of parents say Kids Rock! allows them to work full time.

Peace of Mind:

- 9 out of 10 parents report significantly lower stress levels since joining the Kids

Rock! family.

Consistency:

-81% reported "Improved reliability and consistency of childcare, which is vital for long-term family stability."

Child Development:

-74% noted a direct improvement in their child’s routine and well-being.

Stress Reduction:

-89% of respondents reported "Reduced stress related to childcare."

This data confirms that Kids Rock! is not only a childcare provider but a vital driver of Luverne’s workforce stability and community appeal.

Sammons reported that the Council would be hearing a presentation from a Developer on a proposed housing project at the February 10th Council Work Session.

Sammons also reported that the City Department Heads would be attending the Rock County Future Leaders meeting on the evening of February 9th at 7pm .

**E. BUSINESS**

- 1. Motion to Approve Resolution #3-2026 "A RESOLUTION BY THE LUVERNE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ADOPTING A DATA PRACTICES POLICY AND APPOINTING A RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY AND COMPLIANCE OFFICIAL"

A motion was made by Aaker, seconded by DeBates, that this LEDA Resolution be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Baustian, DeBates, Zewiske, Aaker, and Buss

**G. ADJOURNMENT**

As there was no further business before the Luverne Economic Development Authority, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38 AM.

A motion was made by Zewiske, seconded by Buss, that this be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

**Aye:** Baustian, DeBates, Zewiske, Aaker, and Buss

**H. SIGNATURES**

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Patrick T. Baustian, President

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Holly J. Sammons, EDA Director