



Cloquet Economic Development Authority
REGULAR MEETING
AMENDED AGENDA
Wednesday June 3, 2026 at 8:00AM

CITY HALL 101 14th Street Cloquet, MN 55720

ACTION TAKEN

1. **Call Meeting to Order** _____
2. **Announcements, Adjustments, Correspondence, and Other Comments** _____
 - a. West Prospect Avenue RFP update
 - b. Brenny Dahl Block RFP update
 - c. Third Thursday Downtown
 - d. Please review Informational Updates
3. **Public Comments?** _____

Please give your name, and address. Visitors may share concerns on any issue which is not already on the agenda. The Chair reserves the right to limit an individual's presentation if it becomes redundant, repetitive, irrelevant, or overly argumentative. All comments will be taken under advisement by the Commission. No action will be taken at this time. Public Comments will be limited to 10 minutes per topic or 30 minutes total. The Commission may request an item be placed on a future agenda for further discussion as part of the regular meeting.
4. **Approval EDA meeting minutes** _____
 - a. May 6, 2026
5. **Monthly Financials** _____
 - a. April 2026
6. **Action Items:** _____
 - a. EDA Feedback on Q3 Imagine Cloquet Marketing Plan
7. **Closed Session** Per Mn. Stat. Sec. 13D.05, Subd. 3(c)(3) _____
 - a. Direction and discussion on lot interests in the Cloquet Business Park as conditional land uses and if so, to determine the asking price for real or personal property to be sold by the government entity.
 - b. Closed meeting to develop offers to purchase real property.
8. **Motion to Reopen the Regular Cloquet EDA Meeting** _____
9. **Adjourn** _____

CHAMBER

- June 2: **Minnesota Chamber Statewide Policy Tour** – located at USG Interiors. This isn't open to our full Chamber Membership – but Chamber staff and Board will be attending.
- June 8: **Chamber Golf Outing**. We still have hole sponsorships available and we're also on the search for raffle prizes!
- June 11: **Chamber Chat luncheon at Gordy's Hi-Hat and The Warming House**
- June 25: We have two **ribbon cuttings scheduled for Aspirus and BP Builders**

FDL BAND

- This week the return of approximately 3,400 acres of land known as the **Cloquet Forestry Center** to FDL Band which lies wholly within reservation boundaries, **see attached announcement.**

CITY

- On May 15th the Chamber and City/EDA hosted a brown bag Lunch N Learn on the status of Child Care in the Cloquet Area featuring Courtney Greiner of Esko Mini's as the speaker. The Northland Foundation has agreed to extend the Cloquet project by one more year to continue efforts. Treats and drinks were sponsored by ULF and USG, thank you! See attached article in the Star Tribune **Up north, parents wait years for child care they can barely afford.**
- On June 2nd City Council will be asked to back the city sponsored event of **Third Thursdays Downtown – Celebrating Summer in Cloquet** in our downtown business districts encouraging participating businesses to offer promotions to draw customers during their operating hours.
- **New Cloquet Aspirus Clinic grand opening!** Aspirus has renovated the former MedExpress clinic and is planning a ribbon cutting on June 25th to celebrate the new Cloquet clinic.
- **Solem Lofts** will be working to plan a public open house later in June, stay tuned.
- Recent state **grant awards** for the **Cloquet Terminal Railroad** have generated interest in the region's short line railroad system, **see attached article.**



COUNTY

- None provided

You're Invited

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

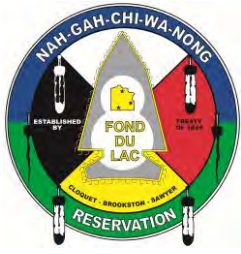
**Aspirus St. Luke's
Cloquet Clinic**




Aspirus Health is hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the opening of Aspirus St. Luke's Cloquet Clinic. The project creates a new opportunity for families in the community to have access to high-quality services like family medicine, lab, radiology, and more.

Thursday, June 25 at 1:00 pm | 707 Minnesota 33, Suite 19, Cloquet

Please join us!



Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Reservation Business Committee

Chairman Bruce M. Savage Secretary/Treasurer Wayne Dupuis
District I Wally J. Dupuis District II Brad Blacketter District III Earl Otis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Wednesday, May 27, 2026

3,400 Acres Returned to the Fond du Lac Band in a Historic Step for Tribal Sovereignty

The Fond du Lac Band announces the return of 3,400 acres currently known as the Cloquet Forestry Center, marking an important step in restoring stewardship of this portion of the Band's homeland.

NAGAAJIWANAANG – FOND DU LAC RESERVATION, CLOQUET, MN —

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa recognizes an important moment in our history. With the signing of the state bonding bill this morning, the path is now clear for the return of approximately 3,400 acres of land known as the Cloquet Forestry Center to our Band. This land lies wholly within our Reservation boundaries and has long been part of our homeland and our responsibility.

For many years, our people have maintained a close connection to this area through land management, natural resource protection, and community use. Its return strengthens our ability to continue this work in a way that reflects our values and our responsibilities as a sovereign Tribal Nation. Many in our community have described this moment as welcoming a relative home, not in a symbolic sense, but in the way we welcome back something we have cared about, relied on, and remained connected to through our stewardship.

This moment reflects steady work, careful conversations, and a shared commitment to doing things the right way. Our Band, the University of Minnesota, state leaders, and many others have worked together to reach this point for years up to this point. Today's action honors treaty based rights, strengthens our sovereignty, and reflects the values of the Truth Project: Towards Recognition and University Tribal Healing.

Chairman Bruce M. Savage

"This land has always been connected to our people and our responsibilities as Anishinaabe. Its return is an important step for our community and for the work we have carried for a long time. We are grateful to the University of Minnesota, Governor Walz, and the Minnesota Legislature for working with us in a way that respects this land, our history with it, and our sovereignty as a Tribal Nation. This moment reflects the work of many Tribal leaders, staff, and community members over many years, and we honor everyone who helped move this forward. As we move ahead, we will continue building a respectful relationship that supports the land, honors our sovereignty, and creates space for learning and stewardship. This is a meaningful step for our people today and for the generations yet to come."

A Shared Path Forward

Our Band and the University of Minnesota have a long history of working alongside one another at the Cloquet Forestry Center. We support the continuation of research, teaching, and community programs at the site. The University will maintain its operations while we work together to finalize agreements that reflect shared stewardship, respect for our sovereignty, and a commitment to the long term health of the forest.

This ongoing relationship supports opportunities for:

-
- forestry and natural resources education
 - research grounded in cultural values and ecological responsibility
 - fire stewardship and Ishkode teachings
 - youth learning and community engagement
 - long term forest health and climate resilience

This is a new chapter for the Cloquet Forestry Center, grounded in respect, collaboration, and responsible stewardship of this land.

How Research Will Continue Under Our Stewardship

For the past several years, our Resource Management Division and the Cloquet Forestry Center have worked together through a shared research review process. This ensures that any new project aligns with our cultural values, our management goals, and our long term vision for the land.

Thomas Howes, Director of Resource Management, Fond du Lac Band

“Our Fond du Lac Resource Management Division and the Cloquet Forestry Center have worked side by side for many years. We have a research review protocol that ensures new projects align with our cultural values and management goals, and we used this process as recently as last week. Current research and educational activities will continue while we coordinate next steps with the University. This legislation is incredibly meaningful to our entire division and to our Tribal Nation. Bringing this portion of our homeland back under the care of the Band carries significant responsibility, and we are prepared for the work ahead. There will be many decisions to make about access, use, and timelines, and our staff will have questions just as many Band members will. This is an important step, and it is one we are ready for.”

This shared system protects the land, supports research, and supports the working relationship between our Band and the University.

Statement from the University of Minnesota

University of Minnesota President Rebecca Cunningham shared the following message in today’s joint announcement:

“Returning the Cloquet Forestry Center land to the Fond du Lac Band is an important step in recognizing our shared history and moving forward together. We are grateful to the Fond du Lac Band for their collaboration, and to Governor Walz, the Legislature, Minnesota’s 11 Tribal Nations and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council for their support. This work is about more than land. It is about building a future grounded in respect, reconciliation and shared stewardship.”

This statement reflects the ongoing commitment to continue working together in a respectful and collaborative way as this historic transition moves forward.

What This Means for Our Community

The return of this land is deeply meaningful for our people. It restores our authority to guide the future of a place that has always been part of our homeland. Decisions about stewardship, access, and long term planning will be made by our Band, guided by our cultural values and our responsibilities to the land.

This moment honors those who came before us and strengthens the path for those who will come after us. It reflects decisions made not only for today, but for generations far beyond our own.

A Model for What Is Possible

We want to continue to be an example for ourselves as to what is possible when we work as a collective and what is possible for other Tribal Nations. This land return shows that long term, respectful, and

collaborative work can lead to meaningful change. It demonstrates that land reclamation is not only possible, but beneficial for our Tribal communities, those we collaborate with, and the land itself.

Next Steps

With the signing of the bonding bill, several administrative and governance steps will follow. Our Band and the University of Minnesota will continue coordinating to finalize implementation and operational agreements. The University's Board of Regents will also take action related to the transfer process.

We will continue to communicate with our community as this work progresses.

About the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa is a sovereign Ojibwe nation and one of six Bands of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe. Our homeland, Nagaajiwanaang, meaning "Where the Water Stops," lies within the 1854 Treaty boundaries and remains the heart of the present day Fond du Lac Reservation established under the 1854 La Pointe Treaty.

Our Reservation includes three districts: Bapashkominigong (Cloquet), Gwaaba'iganing (Sawyer) and Ashkibwaakaaning (Brookston). These places and the land and water that surround them continue to sustain our identity, our language, and our way of life.

Our Band has always been and continues to be a proud sovereign Ojibwe nation upholding the rights guaranteed to us in the 1825, 1826, 1837, 1842, 1847 and 1854 Treaties. These agreements recognize our sovereignty and our enduring relationship to Nagaajiwanaang and our ceded territories. We honor our ancestors, strengthen our sovereignty and our community, and protect our way of life for the generations to come.

About the University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota, with campuses in Crookston, Duluth, Morris, Rochester, and the Twin Cities, is driven by a singular vision of excellence. We are proud of our land-grant mission of world-class education, groundbreaking research, and community-engaged outreach, and we are unified in our drive to serve Minnesota. Visit system.umn.edu

For Media

All media inquiries must be directed to the Fond du Lac Band's Communications Director. Due to the volume of requests, interviews will be scheduled based on availability and relevance to the Band's communication priorities regarding the land transfer. Written statements may be provided in place of interviews. Please contact:

Media Contact

Caleb Dunlap, Communications Director
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
CalebDunlap@FDLBand.org 218-481-2814

University Public Relations, unews@umn.edu

Shortline railroads: Hidden but important

By Erin Makela

Shortline railroads, once an overlooked segment of the transportation landscape, have emerged as vital connectors within the North American rail system. Their story is one of adaptation, resilience and quiet influence—especially in regions like Minnesota, Wisconsin and the Great Lakes, where their tracks thread through forests, fields and industrial towns, keeping the wheels of commerce turning.

The emergence of shortline railroads

Shortline railroads are, by definition, smaller railroads operating over relatively short distances, often less than 500 miles. Their origins trace back to the heyday of railroad expansion, when local lines sprang up to serve mines, mills and rural communities. Many of these lines were eventually absorbed by larger railroads, only to be spun off as independent shortlines in the late 20th century as major carriers focused on high-density, long-haul routes.

In the Upper Midwest, this pattern created a patchwork of shortlines serving industries from timber and paper to agriculture and mining. These shortlines included the Minnesota, Dakota and Western (serving the Boise Mill in International Falls), the Cloquet Terminal Railroad (serving SAPPI and USG plants in Cloquet), and the



David Schauer photos

Primarily a tourist railroad, the North Shore Scenic Railroad (above) occasionally handles freight and provides car storage, adding variety to its operations. It is using the historic DM&IR tracks. With routes from Chippewa Falls to Cameron, the Wisconsin Great Northern (below) once moved significant volumes of frac sand and continues to serve local freight needs.

Wisconsin Great Northern.

These railroads may lack the scale of their Class I counterparts, but their role is outsized: they provide “first mile/last mile” service, bridging the gap between local industry and the vast national rail network. In doing so, they support thousands of jobs, often with little visibility to the broader public.

The Staggers Rail Act and its impact

A pivotal moment in the evolu-



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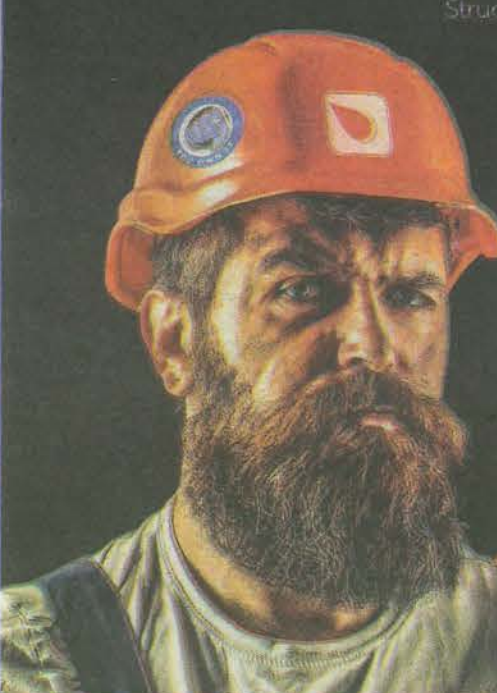
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tion of shortlines was the passage of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980. Prior to the Act, railroads were tightly regulated by the federal government, with strict controls over rates and routes. This system led to inefficiencies, abandoned lines, and financial strain across the industry.

"Old lines used to merge into bigger and bigger lines until the Stagger's Act in the 1980s, which opened rail lines and allowed them to set their own prices and eased restrictions on the shorter lines," said Hank Calvert, local railroad enthusiast.

The Staggers Act deregulated much of the industry, allowing railroads to set their own freight rates, negotiate contracts directly with shippers, and abandon unprofitable routes. It encouraged competition and operational flexibility, ushering in a wave of investment and innovation. For shortlines, the Act was transformative: it enabled the creation and survival of smaller carriers by making it feasible for major railroads to sell or lease marginal routes rather than simply abandon them.

As a result, dozens of shortline operators emerged across the Midwest, taking over lines that would otherwise have withered away. Their local orientation and customer service focus allowed them to thrive where bigger carriers could not, revitalizing rail service for countless communities.

Economic impact: Keeping commodities (and communities) connected

Shortline railroads are economic enablers. They move the essential commodities that underpin regional economies: timber, paper, grain, minerals and more. By providing affordable, reliable transportation, they keep local industries competitive; without rail access, many businesses would face higher transportation costs or be forced to close altogether.

Consider the role of the Cloquet Terminal Railroad, which connects the SAPPI paper mill and the USG plant to the broader rail network. Or the Fox Valley & Lake Superior, now owned by Watco, which serves communities in northern Wisconsin and Michigan—sometimes as the only freight option

available. The Wisconsin Northern Railroad, under Progressive Rail, has been pivotal for industries in Barron County, at one point moving vast quantities of sand for the oil industry.

Or, passer at the local heritage passenger shortlines in our area are the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad (Duluth), North Shore Scenic Railroad (Duluth), and Wisconsin Great Northern (Trego, WI).

"All three were born from rail lines that were deemed surplus by larger Class 1 railroads and spun off to government entities," North Shore Railroad President David Schauer said. "Local governments were keen to view these rail lines as possible economic drivers for future commercial development and also to support the growing tourism economy in the region as

RAIL continued on page 16



Photo by David Schauer

Some shortline cars are in regular use while others are stored around the region when they aren't being used. Both cargo and passenger cars are part of various shortline fleets here and elsewhere.

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Successor to the historic Duluth and Northeastern Railroad, the Cloquet Terminal Railroad line supports the SAPPI Mill and USG (United States Gypsum) Plant, continuing a legacy that began with logging in the 1890s. It operates in Cloquet.

heritage railroads have become popular across the United States. The benefit of government ownership of the lines for the operators is that maintenance work on the track is funded by the owners, to an extent, in partnership with the heritage shortlines."

The economic ripple effects extend far beyond the railroads themselves. Local jobs in manufacturing, timber, mining and agriculture depend on cost-effective freight service. Ports, warehouses and intermodal terminals rely on shortlines to supply and ship materials. In the Twin Ports of Duluth-Superior, shortlines are the critical link tying local production to global markets.

The Port of Duluth: Where rail meets the world

The Port of Duluth-Superior stands as a testament to the importance of rail connectivity. As the farthest inland port on the Great Lakes, it is a transshipment point for iron ore, coal, grain and other bulk commodities. Rail lines—both Class I and shortline—converge here, enabling seamless transfers between ship and rail.

Major players like Canadian National (CN), BNSF Railway, Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) and Union Pacific (UP) serve the port, but shortlines help gather freight from outlying mills, mines and elevators, feeding shipments into the global logistics chain. For example, the historic Duluth, Missabe and Iron Range Railway (now part of CN) was integral in moving iron ore from the Mesabi

Range to the docks, shaping both the city's fortunes and the region's industrial legacy.

"You can't have a world-class seaport without world-class land-based connections," said Jayson Hron, spokesperson for the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. "The multimodal connection of sea, road and rail is critical to efficient and economical freight movement, and Duluth-Superior enjoys a special advantage with four Class I railroads, plus award-winning inland rail clearances and capable shortline operations throughout the region."

Collaboration with Class I railroads: Extending reach

Shortlines rarely operate in isolation. Their value is magnified by their connections to Class I railroads—giants like CN, BNSF, UP, and CPKC. These partnerships, known as interline service, allow a load of timber, grain or paper to travel seamlessly from a rural loading dock to a distant market, switching from shortline to mainline as it goes.

At junctions like Ranier (where the Minnesota, Dakota and Western connects with CN), or Cameron, Wis. (where the Wisconsin Northern meets the CN mainline), goods move from local to global networks. These handoffs are the arteries of trade, ensuring that even remote communities have access to world markets.

Local successes on shortlines

The stories of businesses thriving thanks to shortline rail are everywhere. The SAPPI mill in Clo-

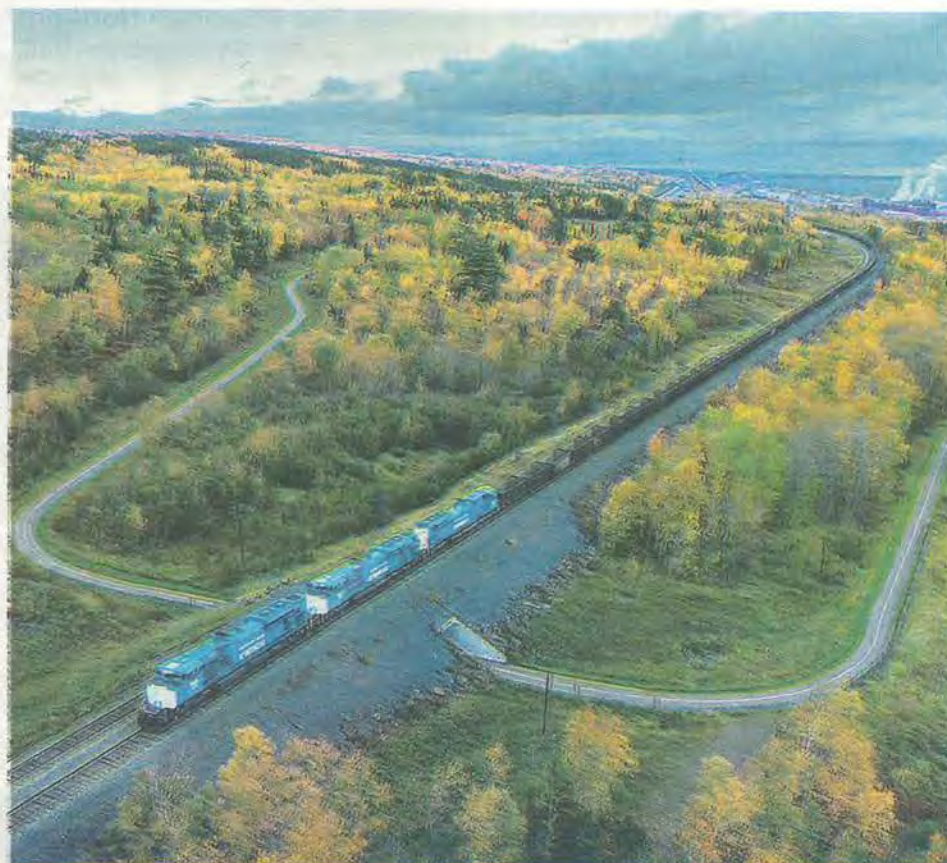


Photo by David Schauer

An example of a private shortline is Northshore Mining's 47-mile railroad in Northeastern Minnesota. This line is not a common carrier and exists mainly to move taconite rock from the Peter Mitchell mine at Babbitt to NSM's E. W. Davis processing plant at Silver Bay located along the North Shore of Lake Superior.

quet, for example, relies on the Cloquet Terminal Railroad to move its pulp and paper efficiently. Louisiana Pacific and Johnson Timber, key players in the region's timber industry, depend on shortline service to move logs to processing plants and markets.

Even tourist operations, like the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad, the North Shore Scenic Railroad and the Wisconsin Great Northern, highlight the adaptability of shortlines. Where freight demand faded, these railroads piv-

oted to tourism, drawing visitors and supporting local hospitality industries.

"Heritage railroads are well-received, given they are relatively quiet, operate during waking hours, and provide an attraction to boost the local economy. There is also a nostalgia factor for older community members," Schauer said. "Common carrier shortline freight railroads typically go about their work without much public attention, but their importance to local industry is well known to pol-

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Challenges and the rail ahead

Shortline railroads are not without challenges. Many lines inherited aging infrastructure, requiring ongoing investment. Changes in commodity markets—such as the decline of coal or shifts in the oil industry—can threaten traffic volumes. Yet, their flexibility and deep local roots often allow them to adapt more nimbly than larger carriers.

Communities and governments increasingly recognize the value of shortlines, supporting preservation efforts, infrastructure grants and public-private partnerships. Their continued health will depend on the ability to evolve, maintain connections to major carriers, and find new or alternative markets for their services.

“The heritage shortlines are at the mercy of their governmental entities that own the tracks they operate over. Their future will remain bright as long as those entities see value in passenger train operation and are willing to invest in infrastructure,” Schauer said. “Tourism will remain solid in the area, but competition from other attractions and overall increasing

costs will put pressure on maintaining a profitable operation. Freight shortlines and contract switching operations in our region are dependent on the health of the industries they serve and, as such will reflect the strength and weakness of their respective customer base, whether that be mining, pulp/paper, wood products, refining, or agriculture, to name a few.”

Maintenance and investment in lines for freight and passenger travel remain important as well.

“All heritage railroads invest in their equipment, which is costly given the age of most passenger cars being well over 50 years old, with some being over 100 years old,” Schauer said. “Depending on specific agreements with the governmental agencies that own the route, repair and maintenance of rail infrastructure is ongoing to provide safe operation.”

The quiet power of shortlines

Shortline railroads may not command headlines, but they are the hidden backbone of regional economies. From the forests of northern Wisconsin to the docks of Duluth, they keep commodities—and communities—moving.

Shortline rail in our region

By Hank Calvert

Shortline railroads are a crucial yet often overlooked component of the regional transportation network. Serving specialized industries and communities, these lines support local economies, connect to major rail carriers and sometimes offer unique tourist experiences. Each shortline has its own history, role and significance.

1. Dakota, Minnesota and Western: Operating out of International Falls, this shortline serves the Boise Mill (now Packaging Corporation of America) and once connected to Fort Frances, Ontario. Its primary purpose is industrial freight. The cross-border connection to Fort Frances, Ontario, is no longer active since the closure of the Resolute Forest Products mill in 2014.

2. Cloquet Terminal Railroad: Successor to the historic Duluth and Northeastern Railroad, this line supports the SAPPI Mill and USG (United States Gypsum) Plant, continuing a legacy that began with logging in the 1890s. It operates in Cloquet, Minn.

3. Fox Valley & Lake Superior (formerly Wisconsin Northern): Owned by Watco as of 2022 when it took over former Canadian National tracks in northern Wisconsin and the U.P. This line's service is currently limited due to flood damage. It once served copper mines.

4. Wisconsin Great Northern: Starting as a preservation effort, this line now offers tourist rides, dinner trains, and limited freight service, including timber transport. It is located in Trego, Wis..

5. Wisconsin Northern Railroad: With routes from Chippewa Falls to Cameron, this Progressive Rail subsidiary once moved significant volumes of frac sand and continues to serve local freight needs.

6. Northshore Mining Railroad: A private line dedicated to moving iron ore from the Babbitt mine to Silver Bay, serving only Cliffs Mining operations, carrying iron ore.

7. North Shore Scenic Railroad: Primarily a tourist railroad, it occasionally handles freight and provides car storage, adding variety to its operations. It is using historic DM&IR trackage.

8. Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad: This all-volunteer, all-tourist railroad follows Duluth's original rail route, focusing on heritage and visitor experiences, and follows the original 1870s rail route.

9. Duluth, Missabe & Iron Range Railroad (DM&IR): Once a major regional carrier for iron ore, DM&IR is now part of Canadian National Railway and continues to operate mineral and freight traffic.

10. Cliffs Erie Railroad: Though out of service for two decades, its infrastructure remains from Hoyt Lakes to Taconite Harbor, reflecting the cyclical nature of mining activity.

11. Lake Superior & Ishpeming Railroad (LS&I):

Specializes in iron ore transport and connects to major shipping ports, hauling iron ore from the Tilden mine to Marquette for Cliffs.

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**CLOQUET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**

101 14th St., Cloquet, MN 55720

May 6, 2026

MINUTES OF THE CLOQUET EDA MEETING

EDA Commissioners Present: Dan Rahman, Jenny Blatchford, Aaron Peterson, Lyz Jaakola, Mark Lanigan (EDA Commissioners)

Ex-Officio Staff/Staff Members/Others Present: Shelly Peterson, Promoting Me; LLC Holly Hansen, Tim Peterson, Katie Bloom (City of Cloquet), David Schafroth (Carlton County)

EDA Commissioners / Ex-Officio / Staff Absent:

Lara Wilkinson (EDA Commissioners), Ryan Pervanize (Carlton County), Kelly Zink (Cloquet Area Chamber)

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was conducted at Cloquet City Hall and was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS, ADJUSTMENTS, CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER

President Peterson shared the announcement of the heartfelt loss of Cloquet EDA Commissioner Sue Ryan and pending funeral arrangements. He then shared two additions to the agenda which included:

- a. Request for **SCDP grant funding from Randy Flynn of 10 North 12th Street** was interested in \$3,644.36 (returned with the sale of Union Lofts) towards a furnace replacement, as such that would be added to the agenda; and
- b. Request from the **Cloquet HRA for SAHA funding towards their PHOP grant award from MnHousing for siding replacement at Aspen Arms.**

3. APPROVAL EDA MEETING MINUTES

President Peterson asked for any corrections, additions, or deletions to the April 1, 2026, Cloquet EDA Regular Meeting Minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion.

Motion: Commissioner Blatchford moved, and Commissioner Lanigan seconded, that the EDA approve the April 1, Cloquet EDA Meeting Minutes. (Motion passed 5-0).

4. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY FINANCIALS: March 2026

Ms. Hansen reviewed the March financials with the board. President Peterson asked for motions to approve.

Motion: Commissioner Lanigan moved, and Commissioner Rahman seconded, that the EDA approve the March Financials. (Motion passed 5-0).

5. Action Items:

- a. **Revolved Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grant funds 10 N. 12th Street** Randy Flynn, owner of **10 North 12th Street** was interested in completing an application to use the \$3,644.36 (returned with the sale of Union Lofts) in revolved small cities funding towards a commercial furnace replacement located under the Epic Nutrition portion of the commercial building.



**CLOQUET ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY**

101 14th St., Cloquet, MN 55720

May 6, 2026

Motion: Commissioner Jaakola moved, and Commissioner Lanigan seconded, that the EDA hold the SCDP grant funding for Randy Flynn’s project at 10 N. 12th Street. (Motion passed 5-0).

b. Cloquet HRA request for SAHA Funding towards their PHOP grant award from MnHousing for siding replacement

Ms. Hansen shared the requested, noted that Fund 207, which is pooling allocations received from the state in Statewide Affordable Housing Aide could indeed be utilized as a portion of the match towards this project. Being that the Council may want to discuss this request President Peterson suggested it be referred onto Council for further decision making.

c. Branding Strategy Rollouts for Feedback and facilitated discussion with EDA on additional marketing concepts

Shelly Peterson of Promoting me distributed handouts with marketing concepts, brand strategies etc. for feedback from members. In the handouts she provided visual samples for potential brand messaging. Her handout summarized feedback and messaging obtained through interviews with businesses and community members. She stressed the importance of sharing this with partners for alignment in messaging. The purpose of this subset branding project is to assist with the EDA’s unveiling and messaging of this project and connecting it to the videos sharing the stories, feelings, and experiences, creating an emotional connection. This project built the foundation, moving forward it will require the involvement of the EDA, businesses, hospital etc, for community messaging and alignment

Commissioners shared feedback on taglines, messaging, and visuals. City Administrator suggested pulling the marketing element out for monthly future discussions related to actions and implementation by EDA. *“This should be an action item for every meeting for about ten minutes to revisit for very spection action based goals,” shared Tim Peterson.* Visit Cloquet was discussed and concerns with many of the website links not functioning and the need to market Cloquet, plan events within the city and downtown, and more which may require future rethinking as part of this (and recent presentation by Minnesota Main Streets to the EDA). Perhaps a future billboard or commercial should be considered, however expensive. For now we start with phase 1 and a press release on the project and building awareness and alignment with community partners and their human resource teams in a marketing package for Cloquet partners to tap into this strategic messaging. Ms. Peterson said she’d share a document tool with Ms. Hansen for use at next EDA meeting for pulling out the marketing goal and monthly/quarterly actions.

Adjourn

President Peterson adjourned the meeting at 9:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Hansen, Community Development Director



Community Development Department
101 14th ST • Cloquet MN 55720
Phone: 218-879-2507 • Fax: 218-879-6555

To: City of Cloquet Economic Development Authority (EDA)
From: Holly Hansen, Community Development Director
Date: May 28, 2026

ITEM DESCRIPTION: EDA Review of Monthly Financial Statements (April 2026)

EDA Requested Action

The EDA is asked to approve the April 2026 EDA financials.

Monthly Review

Attached the EDA members will find the April 2026 cash balances and loans for economic development.

CASH BALANCES

The summary of April 2026 financials **which currently total \$922,853.78** are:

- **Fund 201 (LDO Loan)** there is an increase in the fund balance due to loan repayments.
- **Fund 201 (LDO-Project/Loan)** there is no change in the fund balance.
- **Fund 202 (Fed CDBG)** there is an increase in the fund balance due to interest allocation.
- **Fund 203 (ED)** there is an increase in the fund balance due to loan repayments into the fund. FB&T offered a construction deferral to JBB Group (Collins Roofing), as a loan participation, payments will be dispersed by FB&T once construction is complete.
- **Fund 206 (Revolved Phase 3 SCDP loan repayments)** Holy Smokes grant funds are being held until project work is complete – materials are on order and weather has been too cool in recent weeks.
- **Fund 207 (Housing Trust Fund)** there is no change in fund balance.

LOAN STATUS

The total outstanding loan balance for City funds is \$1,373,594.29 (5 business loans) with monthly repayments of \$7,516.16 with one loan deferrals (Collins Roofing). The building formerly owned by the City and sold to a developer in 2012 located at 1111 Cloquet Avenue has sold, however the City's loan payment will continue under original ownership until the term is complete in 2027 per the original terms of that deal.



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Policy Objectives

As a standalone EDA, the monthly financial statements must be reviewed and approved by the EDA.

Financial Impacts

None at this time.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the EDA move to approve the April 2026 EDA financial statements.

Supporting Documentation

- April 2026 Cash Balances; April 2026 Loan Balances

City of Cloquet Economic Development Authority

**THE PLAN TO ROLL OUT THE INITIATIVE:
IMAGINE CLOQUET-START HERE. STAY
HERE. GROW HERE.**



<p>Imagine Cloquet Initiative</p>	<p>Purpose: Imagine Cloquet initiative is the foundation for how Cloquet defines itself moving forward through opportunity, connection, and culture.</p> <p>Our Focus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase visitor engagement and community awareness 2. Strengthen workforce attraction and retention 3. Support business recruitment and expansion 4. Deepen alignment across community and tribal partners 5. Build long-term community pride rooted in authentic identity <p>Our Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth must be intentional and inclusive to preserve community character • We must have respect for cultural identity and partnerships • We must maintain the quality of life with thoughtful, sustainable development to ensures Cloquet grows in a way that honors its roots while building its future.
<p>Project Outcome</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing visitors to the Cloquet area • Increased workforce & awareness of opportunities • Expanding businesses • Business and community alignment
<p>Marketing Strategy</p>	<p>Target Market: Developers, Residents, Business and Workforce, Tourism</p> <p>Marketing Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video & Storytelling: 4 core videos highlighting economic opportunity, workforce pathways, community life, and cultural connection, including voices and perspectives from FDL Band • Website & Digital Presence: a dedicated landing page that reflects community, culture, and opportunity, designed to convert visitors into residents and workforce • Content Strategy: Ongoing storytelling featuring real people, real experiences, and diverse community voices • Partner Alignment: Consistent messaging across City, EDA, Chamber, schools, employers, and tribal and community partners.

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QUARTER 3 MARKETING PLAN
JUNE 2026

1. Announce the initiative

- i. **Communicate the initiative project with community partners**
 - i. Share the initiative at the Cloquet Partnership meeting on June 9, 2026 (FDL Band, Chamber, ISD 94, FDLTCC, County)
 - ii. Share to city socials and with city boards verbally & via email
 - iii. Share with colleagues and those that follow on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/hollybutcher/>
- ii. **Prepare a Press Release for issuance to community and media partners on June 10, 2026**
 - i. Share the press release to City socials
 - ii. Share the initiative with the community
 1. Interview with PKN
 2. Interview with PJ
 3. Interview with WKLK
- iii. **Empowered action oriented EDA Commissioners as ambassadors' of the initiative**
 - i. Sharing the press release and social media within their own business and personal community networks to increase awareness

2. Increase website & digital presence

- i. Create an Imagine Cloquet landing page on www.cloqueteda.com
- ii. Change email, letterhead, & social media banners (<https://www.facebook.com/cloquetcommunitydevelopment>), profiles, and logos to Imagine Cloquet - Start Here. Stay Here. Grow Here. **(See Attached)**
- iii. **Unveil 1 of 6** prepared branded images with new logo with messaging and hashtags **(See Attached)**

3. Unveil Core Videos

- i. Create City of Cloquet YouTube Channel
 - i. **Release 1 of 4 core videos** (General Economic Growth, Residential Growth, Tourism, Workforce)

4. Unveil Short Reels of Storytelling featuring community voices

- i. **Launch to socials 2 - 4 of 22 reels** (10 General, 6 Workforce, 6 Tourism) with purposeful messaging from the Executive Summary for Imagine Cloquet for impromptu impact of brand statement

Facebook Header



LinkedIn Header



Email Signature



Holly Hansen, EDFP AICP
Community Development Director
City of Cloquet



Start Here. Stay Here. Grow Here.

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Address 101-14th Street Cloquet, MN 55720	Website www.cloqueteda.com www.cloquetmn.gov

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CLOQUET**

*Start Here,
Feel It Here,
Build Here,
Belong Here.*




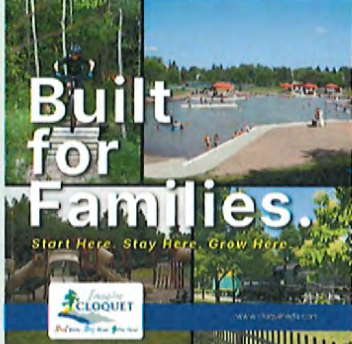
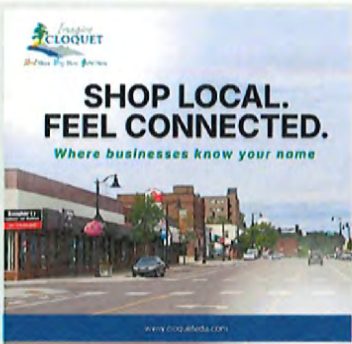

www.cloqueteda.com

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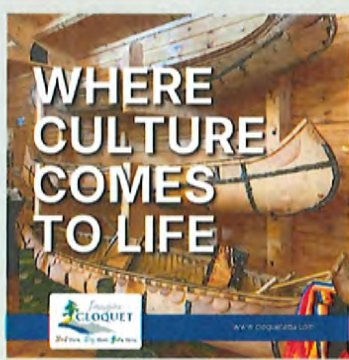


www.cloqueteda.com

Social Media

Post Image / Graphic	Caption	Hashtags
	<p>Small-Town Feel, Big-Heart Community</p> <p>There's something special about a place where people know your name. In Cloquet, community isn't just a word; it's how we live. Friendly neighbors, local events, and a true sense of belonging.</p> <p>Start here. Stay here. Grow here.</p>	<p>#ImagineCloquet #LiveCloquet #CommunityFirst #SmallTownFeel</p>
	<p>Family-Friendly Living</p> <p>Great schools, safe neighborhoods, and plenty of activities for kids. Cloquet is a place where families can truly thrive.</p> <p>Start here. Stay here. Grow here.</p>	<p>#ImagineCloquet #LiveCloquet #FamilyLife #RaiseKidsHere</p>
	<p>Local Businesses That Feel Like Family</p> <p>From boutiques to coffee shops, Cloquet's local businesses bring personality and connection to everyday life. Supporting local here feels personal.</p>	<p>#ImagineCloquet #LiveCloquet #ShopLocal #HiddenGems</p>
	<p>Nature Right Outside Your Door</p> <p>Morning walks, scenic drives, and year-round outdoor adventures.</p> <p>Living in Cloquet means you're never far from trails, parks, and the beauty of northern Minnesota.</p>	<p>#ImagineCloquet #LiveCloquet #MinnesotaLiving #NatureLovers</p>

Social Media

Post Image / Graphic	Caption	Hashtags
	<p>Start here, and discover a community rich in culture and connection.</p> <p>Feel it in the pace of life, the pride of community, and the strong cultural presence of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.</p> <p>Build your future with growing career opportunities, education, and thriving local and tribal enterprises.</p> <p>Belong to a place where people come together, contribute, and create lasting connections.</p> <p>Big Opportunities. Small Town Connections.</p>	<p>#ImagineCloquet #StartHere #FeelItHere #BuildHere #BelongHere #LiveCloquet</p>
	<p>In Cloquet, culture isn't just visited, it is lived.</p> <p>From rich heritage to local traditions and community events, it's where stories connect, and culture, community, and opportunity come together.</p>	<p>#ImagineCloquet #LiveCloquet #CloquetMN #CommunityAndCulture</p>

City of Cloquet Economic Development Authority

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JULY 2026

1. Increase website & digital presence

Unveil 1 of 6 prepared branded images with new logo with messaging and hashtags

2. Unveil Core Videos

Release 1 of 4 core videos (General Economic Growth, Residential Growth, Tourism, Workforce) Unveil Short Reels of Storytelling featuring community voices

3. Unveil Short Reels of Storytelling featuring community voices

Launch to socials 2 - 4 of 22 reels (10 General, 6 Workforce, 6 Tourism) with purposeful messaging from the Executive Summary for Imagine Cloquet for impromptu impact of brand statement.

4. EDA Commissioners as empowered action oriented ambassadors' of the initiative

- i. Sharing the press release and social media within their own business and personal community networks to increase awareness

5. Community and Business Alignment

Invite community partners and business to tap into the Imagine Cloquet Initiative

- i. Prepare a business media kit available on the Imagine Cloquet landing page.
- ii. Encourage its use by HR departments to promote Cloquet

AUGUST 2026

1. Increase website & digital presence

Unveil 1 of 6 prepared branded images with new logo with messaging and hashtags

2. Unveil Core Videos

Release 1 of 4 core videos (General Economic Growth, Residential Growth, Tourism, Workforce) Unveil Short Reels of Storytelling featuring community voices

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City of Cloquet Economic Development Authority

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Cloquet for impromptu impact of brand statement.

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SEPTEMBER 2026

1. Increase website & digital presence

Unveil 1 of 6 prepared branded images with new logo with messaging and hashtags

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3. Unveil Short Reels of Storytelling featuring community voices

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