



MEETING OF THE VISION FUND COMMITTEE

10/23/2025 - MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The Vision Fund Committee met on October 23, 2025, in the Tom Baker Meeting Room, City/County Building, 221 N 5th St, Bismarck. Chair Michael Frohlich called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM. Committee members present included Jade Scherr, Andrea Petersen, Joel Stugelmeyer and Chair Michael Frohlich. Mayor Mike Schmitz attended the meeting via Teams.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Member Stugelmeyer moved to approve the minutes from the September 25, 2025, meeting, and Member Petersen seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

2. Receive Vision Fund Financial Statements.

Eric Lund, City Comptroller, presented the financial statements.

Member Stugelmeyer moved to approve the financial statements as presented, and Member Scherr seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

3. Consider Application from New Freedom Center, Inc.

Nathan Schneider, Vice President of Economic Development, presented information on a request from New Freedom Center, Inc. for a local match of Flex PACE loan for \$107,692.29. Mr. Schneider explained that the project is new and still ramping up operations, which is why the job numbers differ between the application and the scoring sheet; the scoring sheet reflects all anticipated positions in the new facility. The project earned 10 out of 14 points on the scoring matrix. Nathan noted precedent for supporting similar service-oriented organizations, referencing a prior application from Heartview Foundation.

Andrea Swindler, co-owner of New Freedom Family Center, explained that the new facility is an expansion of their existing for-profit drug and alcohol treatment program, New Freedom Center. The new center focuses specifically on pregnant and parenting women, addressing a major barrier to treatment that most facilities do not allow women to bring their children. New Freedom Family Center is converting a former hotel into apartment-style treatment units where mothers can live with their children while receiving care. A daycare on-site provides childcare during treatment sessions. She notes a significant statewide need, highlighting that the state itself approached them due to a large gap in services and cites rising overdose rates among pregnant and postpartum individuals. They are already open and currently serving 10 clients, including some from outside the Bismarck-Mandan area.

Joshua Olson, co-owner of New Freedom Family Center, details about the program and the facility. He notes there is only one similar program in the state, Providence House near Minot. The building is secure, operating with controlled entry like a hotel and with on-site security. The building has 62 rooms, but they must limit the number of women in treatment to 16 to avoid being classified as a hospital institution. Additional rooms can house children, meaning total occupancy could reach up to 44 individuals. Their clientele grew quickly with starting operations in late September and already reaching 10 residents within a month. Olson also clarified that the building purchase was about \$6.2 million plus nearly \$500,000 in liquidated damages leaving their loan amount at \$4.125 million, with the remainder covered through personal funds.

Mayor Schmitz moved to recommend the project for approval to the City Commission, and Member Stugelmeyer seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

4. Consider Request from Surya, LLC, to Increase Local Match.

Nathan Schneider, Vice President of Economic Development, presented information on a request from Surya, LLC to increase the amount of the local match previously approved by the Vision Fund Committee in January 2025.

James Kambeitz explains that Surya, LLC focuses on solar and related renewable energy technologies. He emphasizes that solar is now the lowest-cost energy source globally and notes strong U.S. growth in American-made solar equipment, including what his North Dakota team uses. Surya has expanded rapidly, adding four employees in the past year, and has outgrown its current space. The company originally planned to occupy two-thirds of its building but now seeks to purchase the remaining 2,080 square feet to support workforce training, office needs, equipment storage, and development of new technologies such as battery energy storage, solar thermal systems, a North Dakota solar wall, and the state's first microgrid.

Member Stugelmeyer moved to approve the increase, and Member Peterson seconded. Upon a roll call vote, all voted aye. M/C.

ADJOURN

Chair Frohlich asked if any members of the committee had other business.

Member Stugelmeyer asked at what time the committee would start seeking additional funding sources as the fund could currently support four more projects. Mayor Schmitz explained that other funding sources could be identified when the fund is near depletion.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.