



# Russell County Economic Development and CVB Minutes

**Date:** 06/9/2022

**Time:** 7:30AM

**Call to Order:** Ashley Wickham at 7:30AM

## **In Attendance**

Ashley Wickham, Jim Cross, Jeannie Stramel, Daron Woelk, Karla Berry, John Fletcher, Jon Birky, Maggie Holloway, Mike Parsons (Virtual), Jon Quinday (Virtual)

## **Approval of Minutes**

Jim motioned to approve minutes from May 2022. Jeannie seconded the motion. Motion approved.

## **Approval of Financials**

Jim motioned to approve financials from May 2022. Jeannie seconded the motion. Motion approved.

## **Russell County Loan Program**

No update.

## **E-Community Loan Program**

No update.

## Economic Development Update

- **13 Ways Task Force - Book Club** – Wrapping up in Lucas. Succession Planning Workshop is a focus.
- **Training and Workshops-** One training/workshop every month until the year is over. Workshops currently scheduled are Marketing & Customer Engagement Workshop in June, Content Marketing 101 in July, and Cybersecurity in August. Had a request from Russell Regional Hospital to bring in a FHSU Customer Service Training. Plan on applying for grant funds for that training.
- **Project 22-** Possible land purchase/ building expansion in the City of Russell, started a business plan.
- **Project Promise-** \$400,000 expansions, services, and employees. Moving forward. Filed paperwork with Kansas Dept. of Commerce. Possible NRP applicant if it goes through.
- **Project RCA-** \$300,000 investment through SBA. Application was approved through the board. Waiting to hear back.
- **Project T-Bone-** Butcher shop in the northern part of the county. Working on regulations.
- **Food Project-** Alice Hill is still moving forward on the project. They meet Friday to go over everything again.
- **Childcare-** There was a strategic planning meeting with USD 407 and Russell Regional Hospital. Formed groups with childcare focuses. Looking at a Co-op Center. We have 2 clients that are interested in starting up childcare. A group in Lucas is looking to do something with childcare also. Setting up meeting with Scott Sproul with the Economic Innovation Center. Looking at grants through Hanson.
- **Workforce Development** – Hanson/EICI has a grant program for our workforce program. Potential grant money of \$60,000.00 for different things. More details coming. Just released.
- **NRP Tax Abatement-** Public hearing has been scheduled. Meeting with all townships tonight to vote on the plan. Next up, School Boards.
- **Bootheel Tractor Parts Inc.** – Opened up a distribution center in Russell. Distribution for agricultural parts.
- **Project 123-** SBA application and business plan around \$750,000.00. New service to town, 5 to 10 jobs starting out.
- **Housing-** Developing program including incentives for fixing and cleaning up. Hoping to add support funds for the upper level RHID for sprinkler systems to be included. Vacant lot data base with City of Russell has helped to narrow down the lots available for building projects. Housing Assessment Tool- it's preferred that it's updated every 2 years not 5 years. We can use statewide assessments to add to the

surveys. 3 main areas to start: K-18, Hwy 40, and Russell. Probably utilize the Housing Workgroup that's now formed to start on housing assessment tool. Applications will go live in July, due in September. Developers are meeting today about our project for the triplex and duplex additions. Waiting to hear updates.

- **Community Round Table** – June 16<sup>th</sup>, 6:00PM at Masonic Lodge. Goal is to get communication going. Monthly round table meetings.

## **Other Projects**

- Mike went to Texas for Ogallala Commons Intern Retreat. One of the new interns attended.
- Met with Keith Haberer, and two others. Discussed an Emergency Resilience Plan. They want to create for the region/state to help other communities when faced with something like the 4 County Fire. Keith and Mike plan on going to the commissioners to get further permission to continue.
- CDBG- Changes have been made. Water and Sewer & Community Facilities got dropped out. They say this is the only year (most likely). Hopefully next year we can apply for those again.
- Met with Purefield Ingredients CEO & project partner. Developing project.
- Budget Requests Reports are due – Discussed on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> meeting for City of Russell.

## **Tourism Update**

- Appointed NW Kansas Rep for TAC. 4 times a year go to Topeka.
- Guest Tax- \$83,205.84 currently. Ending this month.
- Purchased 2 more billboards, one by Salina and one by Oakley.
- Registered for Tourism Conference in Wichita
- Media Conference in Abilene. We will be promoted at two tables.

## **Funding Requests**

Waldo Fire Department- Waldo After Harvest Fireworks- Requested \$700.00 – Received \$1500.00

Luray Friendship Day – Requested \$500.00 – Received \$1000.00

Lucas Adams Apple Festival – Requested \$3000.00 – Received \$3000.00

Jim motioned to approve event totals of \$1500.00 for Waldo's After Harvest Fireworks, \$1000.00 for Luray Friendship Day, \$3000.00 for Lucas Adams Apple Festival. Jon Birky seconded. Motion approved.

## **Community Updates**

- City of Russell – Housing project waiting on tax credits. Holiday Express purchased more land, ongoing project. Received funds for Edward Ave. Road Project. Water tower and sidewalk on South Fossil are being worked on. Discussing water infrastructure.
- Lucas- Main Street Café is still ongoing with a business plan. Waiting on a tax sale.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Thursday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:30am in Luray

