



Russell County Economic Development and CVB Minutes

Date: 01/20/2022

Time: 7:30AM

Call to Order: Ashley Wickham at 7:31AM

In Attendance

Ashley Wickham, Janet Funk, Jon Birky, Daron Woelk, Trent Leach, Larry Hickman, Karla Berry, Mike Parsons via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes

Karla motioned to approve the November 2021 minutes; Janet seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Approval of Financials

Larry motioned to approve financials July 2021 through December 2021. Karla seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Russell County Loan Program

No report.

E-Community Loan Program

No report.

Economic Development Update

- **WKREDA Conf:** - December 8th & 9th, 2021 Russell County Economic Development hosted the WKREDA Conference. 50 participants from around the state attended the two-day conference at the Fossil Hotel filling up 23 hotel rooms. The conference was held during the day with a daycare presentation and a strategic planning workshop. Other activities included dinner at LaSada Lodge and an evening bowling session at Playdium Bowl. Russell County Economic Development hasn't hosted a WKREDA Conference since 2014.
- **Strategic Doing- Energy Center:** The goal of the energy center is to revitalize the oil patch museum and bring in all energy sources (adding wind and solar) and making it not only a museum, but a travel center and destination stop off of I-70 with a fueling station included on the 20 acres Russell Development Incorporated owns. Renderings of the project are available. Star Bonds (sales tax incentive through the State of KS) have also been discussed for this project to help repay for the project. No movement has been made currently, still in discussion phase.
- **Possible Housing Incentive Program:** Mike has developed a Housing Incentive Program. Planning on applying for grant funds from both Russell County Area Community Foundation and Dane G. Hanson in March of 2022. Program offers a range of incentives. Examples: paint program- grant for supplies and paint. Siding, windows & roof programs & outside remodels. Drafts of the plan are in place, modeled off a Norton, KS program. Grant donors (Dane G. Hanson is familiar with the program). Mike will present the drafts of the plan before grants are applied for.
- **Promotion Grant/Marketing Training:** Working with Fort Hays State University and others to bring Marketing Training to the area. Training will consist of 3 or 4 courses over a year. 75% of cost paid by Russell County Economic Development and 25% of cost paid by course attendees.
- **Childcare Task Force-** Program still in the works. No movement being made at this time.
- **Strategic Planning:** The plan is a working document on a continual basis. Main focuses and tasks have been identified. Tasks get added on as they come. (Additions & corrections can be made at any time). Review available at a different time.

Tourism Update

- **Upcoming Conferences** – Ashley will be going to Omaha, NE in February for International Boat & Travel Show, partnering with travel council to save money. This will determine if we need to have a booth set up in the future. This show is attended by families interested in traveling. In March Ashley will be going to Denver for the Denver International Sportsman's Expo.

Again, partnering with the travel council to save money. She will also be attending the Heartland Byway Conference in Leavenworth, May 3rd-5th. This is a National Conference that only comes to Kansas every now and then.

- **Billboards:** Do we change the Bob Dole Billboards? Do we include Spector or re-do?
- **Other News:** Ashely was voted to be Vice President of the NWKTC.

Funding Requests

No report.

Community Updates

No report.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday February 17th, 2022 at 7:30am at Meridy's.

