



Russell County Economic Development and Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board Meeting



Thursday, September 21st, 2023 @ 7:30am @ Meridys

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

Duke Strobel, John Fletcher, Malinda Walker, Jeannie Stramel, Aaron Talbott, Dustin Madden, Jon Birky, Maggie Holloway, Lisa Sandberg, and Mike Parsons.

Call Meeting to Order

Mike Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:31 am.

Opening Notes:

Mike proposed adjusting the agenda to start with the items that required action or a vote.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Dustin Madden made the motion to approve, and John Fletcher seconded with no corrections, motion carried.

Review and Discussion of Financials: ED has spent 53% of their budget. CVB budget is running very low.

Additional Conversation: Conversation was had about transient guest tax if you are a VBRO, Air B&B etc. Jon Birky requested to see the line budget more broken down, we will have a graph at every meeting moving forward.

Loan Program Updates:

No applications currently. Funds look good, e-community is almost out of delinquency.

Projects/Clients:

Senior Housing Development- Mike provided information of a potential senior housing complex in Russell. This would be a partnership between the office, the city of Russell, and a developer.

SEED Grant projects: Open until the end of October, one application is for a childcare center in Russell and the second is for the food program.

Workforce/Family Recruitment Program: Remote worker recruitment grant program offered by the Innovation Center – application submitted with community partners.

CDBG-CVR: Application submitted to the State of Kansas. This grant would provide funds to businesses countywide for ecommerce additions/upgrades.

Lucas NRP: Working with the City of Lucas and Attorney General's office on legal description.

Business Plans/ Interest Rate Increase: Susan Penka is still working on the business plans, but a lot of the businesses are small start-ups. The interest rate is a big hurdle.

Programs/Events:

Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge at RHS/RMS- Searching for a partner at USD 407. Hope to have an event this school year at RHS.

Bankers Luncheon- Planning to host this winter. The goal is to bring all of our resource partners and lenders together to share funding options and where to start.

Leadership Program Mike and Magge both spoke at the September Russell County Leadership session and will continue to be active.

Storefront/Signage Grant Program- Launches October 1st. A total of 14,000 is available for 7 applications. There is an extra page on the application specifically for Lucas, we received an additional grant.

Office Miscellaneous:

½ cent sales tax- ½ cent sales tax is up for renewal in November, the ads will all be run shortly. We have drafts ready but are waiting for quotes. Mike has already done a couple presentations on this topic. You will be seeing and hearing a lot on this topic. Mike is going to try to get on with the city council for a pitch on the half cent sales tax.

Visitor Guide – Hoping to send to the printer by October 20th. Consolidated printing out of Salina gave a quote of \$6395 for 5,000 copies. Jeannie Stramel made a motion to approve, Jon Birkey seconded, motions carried. It will also have to be taken to the commissioners because it is over \$5,000.

Big KS Roadtrip- A \$1,500 advertising grant was received and \$499 of it will be used on a wrap for the billboard by Salina for the Big Kansas Road Trip.

TIAK KS Tourism Conf. – Denver/Nebraska Trade Shows- The big state conference is in Dodge City. There are also trade shows in Denver and Nebraska at the beginning of the year. We will piggyback off another booth to help with costs.

Vice President Nominations: A proposal was made to nominate Jon Birky as Vice President. Birky agreed. All present members voted in favor of the nomination.

CVB Funding Request:

Bricks, Broncs, BBQ/Brew Me- Requesting \$1,000. \$500 for Bricks, Broncs, BBQ & \$500 for Brew Me. Duke Strobel makes a motion to approve, Jon Birky seconded, motion carried.

Hays Bass Anglers- Requesting \$100 John Fletcher motions to approve, Duke Strobel seconded, motion carried.

Luray Craftique- Requesting \$500 Jon Birkey makes a motion to approve, Jeannie Stramel seconded, motion carried.

Paradise Fall Festival- Requesting 1,000. Dustin Madden makes a motion to approve, Jon Birky seconded, motion carried.

Russell Rotary- Requesting \$2,000 and we have never funded them before. John Fletcher motions to approve, Jeannie Stramel seconded, motion carried.

Russell Masonic Lodge- Requesting \$500. It has been funded in the past, Duke Strobel makes a motion to approve, Dustin Madden seconded, motion carried.

Flatland Car Show- Requesting \$500 we have funded \$400 in the past. Jeannie Stramel makes a motion to approve, Jon Birky seconded, motion carried.

Open Conversation: Jon Birky asked what all we use the visitors guide for, so Mike explained that it is really a roustabout document. A visitor's guide, a relocation guide, there is an interactive map in it, anywhere Mike speaks at they get handed out. ½ cent sales tax will be paying for the visitor's guide, it is also available in digital flip book. Turnaround time is before the end of the year. It was stated that starting January 1, there should be a deadline for the CVB funding requests. They should be submitted 60 days prior to the date of their event taking place. Dustin Madden motions to approve, Jon Birky seconded, motion carried.

Community Updates, Additional Announcements, and Open Conversation:

Other topics were highlighted that were not included in the meeting such as Lucas Art Center elevator, Purple Heart Ceremony, Craftique, log cabin, A Step Back in Time, Dr. Jones retiring, USDA housing, job fair, and childcare training. Full Circle Floral is where Lana's used to be and is run by Holly Calvin. Fall turkey season being suspended was also discussed.

Motion to Adjourn:

Mike made the motion to adjourn, Jon Birky seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:49 a.m.

