



Russell County Economic Development and CVB Minutes

Date: 10/13/2022

Time: 7:30AM

Location: Meridy's – Russell

Call to Order: Ashley Wickham at 7:28AM

In Attendance

Ashley Wickham, Mike Parsons, Maggie Holloway, Jon Quinday, John Fletcher, Jeannie Stramel, Malinda Walker, Janet Funk, Daron Woelk and Jim Cross

Approval of Minutes

Jeannie moved to approve minutes from August 2022. Jon Quinday seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Approval of Financials

Ashley went over the CVB financials. Accounts 150 (Operating Budget) and 410 (Tourism and Convention -Transient Guest Tax) are the CVB accounts. Transient Guest Tax funds from the state gets deposited into account 410 then gets transferred to account 150. CVB has five CDs; three have \$5,000.00 each, one has \$20,000.00 and the other one has \$30,000.00. The CD interest goes to account 150. Current cash in account 150 is \$165,082.67. If needed, the budget could be amended. Current cash in account 410 (not budgeted) is \$5,600.87. Mike discussed the Eco Devo financials. Eco Devo has five accounts. 155 (Operating Budget), 280 (Salaries), 158 (RCED Loan), 210 (Capital Improvements Fund), 497- (State Micro Loan Program -NO ACCESS; funds go back to the state). Half cent sales tax and capital improvement funds get deposited into account 280. The commission budgets \$360,000.00 for account 280 for salaries, anything over \$360,000.00 gets transferred into account 210. Account 155- Operating budget is \$180,000.00. The operating budget amount gets requested and gets moved from account 280 into account 155. What doesn't get used in account 155 at the end of the year goes back into account 280. City dues get deposited into account 155 and Storefront/Signage Grant funds come out of account 155. Eco Devo has three CDs. John Fletcher moved to approve financials from August 2022. Daron seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Tourism Update- Ashley Wickham

- Fiscal year 2022 Transient Guest Tax brought in the highest amount it has been in nine years at \$98,223.75. Fiscal year 2023 is currently at \$23,974.66 (without September numbers).
- Ashley attended Kansas Regional Roundtable for Tourism in Topeka. She is one of two Northwest Travel Council Reps.
- Ashley will be in Wichita for the TIAK conferences.
- Provided 130 visitor bags in October to Bricks, Broncs & BBQ, 300 bags to The Dream Theater and 25 welcome bags to the City of Russell quarterly for new residents. Ashley has reached out to other community organizations and business to help fill the new residents' bags.
- Hosting a NWKTC meeting at Granny Mae's on Oct. 25th.
- Ashley will be going to Denver in January for the Denver Sport Show and to Omaha in February for the Omaha Sports Show.
- Working on the new guide, hoping to have it in early 2023.
- Letters of Support- Wrote letters of support for the Play Park and the 4H Building Lighting grant.
- Partnering with Encore for Plaid on the Plains. We already have the bags.
- Kansas Bass Nation has rooms at Fossil Creek & The Lodge.
- Ashley presented to the Russell Leadership Class about tourism and guest tax.
- Gov. Kelly is going to announce the TASK Grant recipients next week.
- Ashley is going to purchase the 2021 Tourism Economics Data Reports for Russell County. The report cost is \$2500.00.
- Getting ready to promote hunting season.
- Ashley will be out of the office Oct. 26th – 31st.

Funding Requests

None.

Russell County Loan Program

No report.

E-Community Loan Program

No report.

Economic Development Update – Mike Parsons

- **Strategic Plan:** Living document that Mike updates. There are five major objectives/goals. Discussion about listing metrics for success, stating the completion of the projects and adding links to the appendix document. Going to bring it back to the board for official approval.
- **NRP-** The State says it will take six to eight weeks for approval. We're at week four. Mike called to check on the status of the documents – they had not started their review yet.
- **Grant Work:** Rural Champion Grant program – Two applications were submitted county wide. Neither applicant received the grant. Seed Grant Program, applications from Luray and City of Russell. Mike wrote LOS for both of those grants. Patty Driscoll on behalf of ROAR asked the county to do a grant for the 4H Building for new lighting and fans. Maggie took lead on the grant to RCACF. Currently working with Russell Saddle Club and other organizations for a grant to update the arena lighting at the 4H arena. The Fixing Up Russell County grant was submitted to RCACF. Still waiting on word from RCACF about the two grants that were submitted. Should have word by November.
- **Housing – Incentive Program-** Applied for a \$30,000.00 grant through RCACF, plans on submitting a grant to Dane G. Hanson for \$30,000.00 with a \$15,000.00 match from the county (half cent sales tax fund). Part of the plan is to have an advisory board on a housing incentive committee to review applications. Mike is planning on having online applications for this grant program. Fixing Up Russell County has three programs - paint, revitalization and dilapidated. The structure of the program can still currently be changed. Discussion was had about who can apply – landlords, renters, homeowners, occupied, un-occupied. Match requirement – a percentage has not been set. Emma Estates – First home is coming in to sell hopefully before the end of the year.
- **Childcare-** Received the bids for both modular and duplex style homes. Idea is to raise funds for childcare buildings around the county. The renderings are approved by Dane G. Hanson.
- **Tech/Trade School-** Toured Washburn and WSU with representatives from Russell High School. Goal is to implement some of the trade programs at Russell High School.
- **KDC & Local Business Awards-** Submitted applications for state business awards- Nominated eight business. An awards ceremony is currently being planned.
- **13 Ways-** Finished the 3rd book club. The Leadership Class invited Mike to talk about it.
- **RC-RFSA-** Rural Champions Grant- Luray entity applied and didn't get it.
- **Storefront/Signage Grant Program** – Opened Oct. 1st and will close the first week in January. Matching Grant up to \$2000.00. The program awards seven grants.

- **Other Projects**

- Shared Workspace – currently exploring location and structure of entity.
- Wyatt’s Log Cabin – working with state and federal, moving along.
- Makers Space- assisting wherever possible to support their efforts.
- Paradise Grain – is looking at doing an expansion and currently exploring loan programs.
- Development Website – Mike and Maggie are working on updating the website.
- Billboard – Mike took over one of Ashley’s billboards. The plan is to do a billboard grant program with two businesses sharing a billboard. Grant program would be on two-year terms. East bound – I-70 and Toulon Exit. Switch up the Storefront/Signage program so we could put those funds towards the billboard grant. Plans on having a three-person committee for the applications.
- Ogalla Commons and YEC (Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge) – Working to develop a partnership at RHS for these programs – former partner is no longer working at USD 407.
- Marketing and Customer Engagement Workshop – Oct. 27th via zoom at 1:00pm.
- Leadership Class- Mike presented to the leadership class. They may take the lead on the 13 Ways Book Club “task force”

Community Updates

- Luray Craftique is Oct. 15th, Chicken Dinner Fundraiser and Stag are all coming up in Luray.
- School district update for Lucas.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, November 10th, 2022, at 7:30am at Meridy’s.

