



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



*Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB  
Office*

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **In Attendance:**

Jon Birky, Dustin Madden, Duke Strobel, Karla Berry, Jeannie Stramel, Jamie Malone, Malinda Walker (online), Aaron Talbott (online), Kayla Schneider, Alex Lofland, Lisa Sandberg, Ryleigh Wagner, and Mike Parsons.

### **Call Meeting to Order:**

Jon Birky called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

### **Opening Announcements:** None.

### **Review and Approval of Minutes:**

Karla made a motion to approve the minutes, Jamie seconded; motion carried unanimously.

### **Financial Review:**

Mike stated our office has not received the financials and will provide an update at the next meeting.

### **Loan Program Updates:**

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.
- E-Community Loan Program – The loan committee will be meeting soon to review an application.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other- No current updates.

### **Community Updates/Open Conversation:**

Karla shared that on 11/20 @ 5:30 the Annual Chamber after Hours will be held at The Russell Historical Society if anyone would like to join. Jeannie said there is a small concert at 8 p.m. at the art center on Saturday. Malinda stated she is busy getting ready for Luray Craftique, she also said Smoky Hills Public Television will be having a meeting next week.

### **CVB Funding Request:** None.

### **Projects/Clients:**

- **HEAL Grant:** Our office is working with the clients to pursue HEAL Grant funds to help with potential building improvements.
- **Project Jump Start:** The proposed new owners are continuing to make progress.
- **Project Crossroads:** Discussions are ongoing regarding a potential partnership to strengthen local development initiatives.
- **SEED Grant:** Ryleigh has been preparing a multi-part grant application on behalf of Russell County, with results expected later this year.
- **Project Asteroids – Bricks, Blossoms, Bubbles:** Loan paperwork has been submitted for review, and the applicant has strengthened their overall project readiness.

### **Programs/Events:**

- **Holiday Collective** – Ryleigh gave an overview of what this year's event will look like and stated as of now, she is tying up the loose ends for its launch on 11/22.
- **Foodpreneur Bootcamp** – Participation numbers were strong, with several attendees utilizing a local discount opportunity.
- **Workforce Recruitment Program** – New Workforce incentive programs are being designed to attract and retain talent for major employers.
- **NRP's-** Work continues behind the scenes to prepare for the program's renewal, with plans for a longer program term.

### **Office Miscellaneous:**

- **RFP Kansas Bass Nation-** Ryleigh is in the process of submitting a proposal for a fishing tournament to be held at Wilson Lake.
- **RFP OCK Conference-** Ryleigh is leading efforts to organize a proposal for a 3-day conference in Russell County.
- **Youth On Board-** Discussions continue regarding a potential partnership to encourage youth participation in local leadership.
- **Billboards-** We have sent preliminary drafts to the billboard company and are working closely with partners to finalize the designs for installation.
- **Childcare Coalition Update-** The coalition continues to explore opportunities to expand local childcare options. They have planned their first provider appreciation event for early November.
- **American Road Magazine-** The office has decided not to renew an advertising contract with one of our previous publication partners.

**Open Conversation:**

Kayla suggested creating a one-sheet to tell people about Russell; She also stated Weihnachtsfest Fest, and the parade are going to be separate again this year.

**Executive Session – Confidential Projects**

**Motion to Adjourn:** Dustin made the motion to adjourn, Duke seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:31 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: November 20<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office