



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



Thursday, January 18th, 2024 @ 7:30am @ Meridys

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance

Duke Strobel, John Fletcher, Jeannine Byers-Long, Aaron Talbott, Malinda Walker, Karla Berry, Jeannie Stramel, Dustin Madden, Jon Birkey, Kayla Schneider, Maggie Holloway, Lisa Sandberg, and Mike Parsons.

Call Meeting to Order

John Fletcher called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Opening Announcements: Mike discussed potential changes to the RCHS billboard financing, suggesting a vote on whether the CVB will continue to split the cost with the RCHS.

Review and Approval of Minutes: There are minutes from November's board meeting and there are minutes from the special funding request. John Fletcher made the motion to approve, Jeannie seconded, motion carried.

Financial Review:

Mike went more in depth on what the Economic Development and CVB spend money on by the line item. He also discussed the financial aspects of previous meetings, and the proposed budget for 2024. It was also mentioned the need to review the advertising budget due to potential financial constraints.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – Mike mentioned no loans have been given since the last meeting and they plan to bring an update on the loan program next month.
- E-Community Loan Program – No applications currently, funds look good.
- GrowKs Loan Program – Mike Parsons touched base on sending out reminders to borrowers to improve follow ups.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project toothache:** Mike discussed challenges faced in the clients business plan, potential solutions with Dr. Jones, and the exploration of alternative financing options.

- **Window Cling and Community Education:** Maggie mentioned creating brightly colored QR code window clings for businesses, which would provide information about what there is to do in the county. Maggie also discussed plans for a training academy to educate businesses about the county's attractions.
- **Visitors Guide:** Maggie took the proof and sample of the visitors guide to the meeting for review and edit suggestions.
- **New website design:** Maggie stated that she has been building a new website for the office.
- **Housing Development:** Mike and Kayla will work together to find infrastructure funds for the road construction.
- **Main Street upper-level housing:** Client on Main Street wants to do housing above a business, ideas are currently being brainstormed.

Programs/Events:

- **MakeMyMove Program/Grant-** A program aimed at recruiting families to the community, our community was awarded the grant. Mike stated they are going to meet up and put together a plan.
- **Chamber Banquet Presentation-** Mike stated that he and Maggie would be giving a presentation at the Chamber Banquet this year.
- **Childcare Programs/Meetings-** Mike noted that the childcare program, originally scheduled for the end of the year, had been postponed and they are working to reschedule.
- **Storefront/Signage Grant Program-** Mike said there were quite a few applications and discussion was had about funding all applications. (this does not include the Lucas program) Jeannie made a motion to approved, Aaron seconded, motion carried.
- **Legislative Events-** Mike will send out legislative platform and meet with legislators about the housing project.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **ED Policy Changes/Bylaws-** Mike discussed the responsibilities of the position of President, including a non-disclosure agreement and the need for updates to the policy and bylaws. Mike Parsons also stated the importance of having signed bylaws that accurately reflect their operations and structure.
- **Memberships/Sponsorships-** Mike proposed a continued sponsorship with the Western Kansas Rural Economic Development Alliance (WKREDA) for \$1,450, which was accepted without objection. Mike also mentioned the organization's annual support for the Dream Theater, the Kansas independent and Oil and Gas Association, and several travel councils.
- **Elections of Officers/Open seats-** Mike discussed the responsibilities of John Fletchers position as Chairman and stated the position was open. Duke made the motion for John Fletcher to remain Chairman and Jon Birkey to remain Vice Chair, Aaron seconded, motion carried.
- **RCBS Billboard-** The RCBS proposed a split of the billboard cost. Kayla Schneider motioned to pay for half the billboard cost out of the ED fund, Dustin Madden second, motion carried.
- **Non-Disclosure Agreements-** Mike asked everyone to please read and sign the NDA then hand it back to Lisa before leaving the board meeting.

- KDWP Special Use Permit- Mike discussed the State of Kansas' decision to impose a \$200 daily permit fee for fishing tournaments. It was suggested that the CVB could be a potential source of funding for events like festivals and fishing tournaments.
- Strategic Planning- Mike parsons talked about the strategic plans, suggesting a review and update for the possible goals and objectives, including housing, childcare, workforce development, business recruitment and retention, and community development.
- City Dues- A need for changes to the city's dues system was discussed.

CVB Funding Request:

- There are no applications currently
- Mike briefly discussed the new application rules of requesting 60 days prior to the event.

Additional Conversation: Mike will send digital copies of the ED policy, bylaws, and non-disclosure agreement to the board members after the meeting.

Community Updates, Additional Announcements, and Open Conversation: Conversation was had about Ogalla Commons, it was also mentioned that the County now has Christmas Eve off as a holiday.

Motion to Adjourn: Mike entertained a motion to adjourn, Aaron seconded, meeting adjourned at 8:54a.m.