



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



*Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB  
Office*

## Meeting Minutes

### In Attendance

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

**Call Meeting to Order:** John Fletcher called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

**Opening Announcements:** None

**Review and Approval of Minutes:** Jeannine Byers-Long made a motion to approve, Jon Birkey seconded; Motion carried unanimously.

**Financial Review:** Mike presented the financial statements for the month of February and discussed the CVB #150 and ED #155 accounts by line item. Total expenses for the month of February = \$28,606.42, YTD expenses = \$46,706.86.

### **Loan Program Updates:**

- Russell County Loan Program – No current applications. Balance of \$69,594.32
- E-Community Loan Program – Delinquencies to collections, no current applications. Changes to loan program will be provided to the board and loan committee.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current applications.

### **Projects/Clients:**

- **Project Stone #1 & #2:** Mike is working with the client to pursue funding for specialty equipment and possible construction of new commercial building. Business plan being updated to include second phase.
- **Housing Proposal/Senior Complex:** Mike updated the board on the current status of the proposal submitted to the State to help fund infrastructure for the housing project, partnership with Representative Waymaster, Northwest KS Innovation Center, and Kayla (City of Russell).

- **Project Toothache:** Potential dental business recruitment. Client was not interested in the available programs the office/region has to offer – looking for grants, not loans. Existing business/building being pursued by client sold. Project currently stagnant.
- **Project Quest:** Mike is working with a client on the construction of a new business in Russell. NRP paperwork provided, business plan started, exploring capital options.
- **Project RB Club:** Rodney Brown is exploring the idea of building a clubhouse at his newly built trap facility. Mike provided NRP paperwork and discussed the possibility of a CVB funding request for events with the board.
- **Project Buttery Biscuit:** Mike is working with an investor on the possibility of a new eatery franchise.

**Additional Conversation:** Confidential conversation was had – no action taken.

### **Programs/Events:**

- **Storefront/Signage Grant Awards-** Mike announced the recipients of the 2024 program and the checks written so far.
- **KDA Strategic Meeting-** Planning meeting in Wilson on 03/27/2024. Issues at State level – Mike plans to attend.
- **Fishing University-** Much discussion was had about the advertising proposal from FU. Request of \$7,500 + 18 rooms + 18 meals. It was the consensus of the office and board to pass on the promotion due to the lack of ROI.
- **Fixing Up, Russell County-** Mike plans to evaluate the housing program and apply again for foundation funds. Discussion was had about the structure of the program, what might please the review board, and a partnership with an existing city of Russell program.
- **Community Roundtables-** The office asked for feedback on the potential structure on the community roundtables – it was decided to pursue a quarterly meeting during lunch and to send invites in several ways, not just email.

**Note-** Don Varner & Jon Birky excused from meeting @ 8:15 a.m.

**Additional Conversation:** A conversation was had about the JAG convention in Hays and its turnout.

- **Internships-** Mike and Kayla provided an update on this years JAGK internship program. Still working to narrow down budget.
- **Business Showers/Ribbon Cuttings-** Discussion was had about partnering with the chambers to help boost ribbon cuttings and the possibility of ‘business showers’. Mike will start the conversation.
- **Make My Move Grant-** The office received a grant from NWKS Innovation Center to host the program – training will take place the end of March – committee meeting shortly after.

### **Office Miscellaneous:**

- **Lucas & Bunker Hill NRP-** Mike is still working with both cities and the state to implement the programs.
- **CBA Kansas Commerce-** New cost benefit analysis tool offered by KDC. Mike did a walkthrough with KDC – now a free service.

- **Night Owl Business Planning-** Mike plans to implement late night business hours as a trial, trying to adjust for the small business owner, current and future.
- **Youth On-Board Initiative-** There was a brief discussion of possibly adding one or two high school students to the board and what that might look like.
- **Coloring Book Promotion-** Looking into options for community involved/designed coloring books to hand out in the visitor bags.
- **Website Overhaul/Visitors Guide-** Maggie has the visitors guide done and is in the process of doing an overhaul on the website.
- **Emma Estates-** Discussion as had and it was stated that we have received another NRP for Emma Estates
- **Bylaws-** The board looked over the correction to see if any more are needed.

**CVB Funding Request:**

**Dorrance Decoration Day-** Maggie presented the funding request of \$1150. After board discussion John Fletcher made the motion approve \$500, Jeannine Byers-Long seconded; motion carried

**Community Updates, Additional Announcements, and Open Conversation:** Maggie mentioned events that will be coming up soon. Kayla gave a quick update on possible projects for the future, there was also some discussion about transient guest tax.

**Motion to Adjourn:** John Fletcher made a motion to adjourn, Duke Strobel seconded; Motion carried. Meeting adjourned @ 8:57 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: April 18<sup>th</sup> @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office