



Russell County Economic Development and CVB Minutes

Date: 08/11/2022

Time: 7:30AM

Location: Meridy's – Russell

Call to Order: Ashley Wickham at 7:30AM

In Attendance

Ashley Wickham, Jon Quinday, Trent Leach, Jeannie Stramel, Karla Berry, Janet Funk, Malinda Walker, Mike Parsons, Maggie Holloway, Jim Cross (Virtual)

Approval of Minutes

Jim moved to approve minutes from July 2022. Malinda seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Approval of Financials

Discussion was had about financials and where the remaining budget funds end up after the fiscal year. Ashley has been in discussion with Duke Strobel about eventually raising the transient guest tax and is going to ask him about the funds. Jon moved to approve financials from July 2022. Karla seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Russell County Loan Program

Mike reported that The Lounge in Lucas received a \$12,149.00 loan. There is one delinquent loan, business is working on getting current, has started to make payments.

E-Community Loan Program

Mike reported there are no withdrawals since the last board meeting. One prospect going through a business plan with the potential of a \$45,000.00 request. This might change since we now have the Grow Kansas Loan program through Network Kansas. All loans are current with the E-Community Loan Program.

Economic Development Update – Mike Parsons

- **Housing-Projects, MIH Applications** –Potential of a couple more duplexes in Russell. Needing a developer for the project. We are looking to apply for MIH Funds for the Luray & Lucas area for the purchase and renovations of existing structures. Fixing up Russell County is an incentive plan for fixing up structures, tearing them down, newly added under the program: sprinkler systems for upper-level construction. Discussion about matching funds needs to be had then presented to the county. Program comes out of the ½ cent sales tax fund. Once the program has been narrowed down, Mike will present it to the board.
 - **Discussion-** The ½ cent sales tax fund was discussed. Mike requests money from the 280 fund to go into fund 155. Mike will request information from the clerk about how the 280 & 288 funds work.
- **Child Care-Committee Update, Project Scope** Community Committee with the City of Russell, Hospital, Pure-field, etc., out of this committee a childcare survey was done. Almost 200 responses from the survey giving the committee good data to go off. A meeting was held with current & future childcare providers in the county at Fossil Creek Hotel & Suites. Good turnout along with Child Care Aware, Hansen Foundation & EICI. Programs and services were discussed for both current and start up providers. What they need the most is a “substitute” list. The school and hospital are planning on building a daycare center. Open only to employee’s children. The committee is looking at either a duplex (two group homes) with shared back yard or a modular. Budgets are also lined out. This is a work in progress.
- **Project Toothache-** New dentist prospect. Recruiting efforts and community tour planned for later this month.
- **KDHE Applications-** Applications for two water projects; Paradise and Rural District #4. NWKPC is facilitating them.
- **Project Hammock-** The Lodge in Russell- new manager, Samuel Killian. They are interested in improvements to the hotel. Energy efficient projects.
- **Project PGCI-** PGCI looking at \$150,000-\$200,000 worth of improvements & upgrades before harvest. Directed them to the SBA Funds. We might also be able to utilize the Grow Kansas Funds as well.
- **OC Intern Update-** Completed two internships this year and held a Harvesting Ceremony. Hannah Gideon and Emerson Nichols both did a great job. Hannah focused on Food & Ag & Emerson did QR Codes for the Historical Society’s Historic Walk. Economic Development offered \$15,000.00 worth of incentives through OC interns or apprenticeships for next year’s program. This incentive comes from the ED request to the City of Russell for their city dues.
- **KDC Business Awards-** Sending applications into the state. Submitting one application for each category. Local awards to be held before the end of the year.
- **NRP Update** – USD 299, 399 & 407 all approved the NRP. USD 112 will not be included due to district re-structuring. Should go to the commissioners and state in September.

- **Other Projects**
- USD 407- Have discussed facilities tour to start a tech-school program
- Russell Co. Fair had a rodeo this year, arena needs work. We have permission from the commissioners to help them apply for funds to update lighting & audio in the facility.
- Log Cabin in Luray- Not in the historical data base. Currently working with the state so the process can be started and so funds can be utilized.
- The Lounge, now open as of today.
- Project Shellshock – Wants to open a trap league, still looking for a place
- Development Database- Bring back to date.
- **Programs- Trainings- Workshops-** Cybersecurity is the next workshop. We have moved all workshops to virtual. On training per month.

Tourism Update- Ashley Wickham

- Advertising- USA Today Hunt & Fish ad, hunting regulations are coming out, KC Chiefs Yearbook ad. Working on the Northwest Kansas Ultimate Guide, Ashley is a part of that committee. Russell County currently has a full page, but she is going to talk to other local attractions to give them guide pricing to see if they want to be a part of it.
- Promotions- Playing cards with logos on the case, koozies, golf tee's & cups
- Trade Shows – Ashley attended the KS Media Event last week in Abilene, she's going to reach out to some of the travel writers to get the interested ones to Russell Co. State Fair- We will be represented by the Northwest Travel Council booth. Registered for the Monster Buck Classic in Topeka this January. In October, TIAK is being held in Wichita, Ashley is looking into the requirements for it to be held in Russell in the next few years.
- Working with the Play Park Committee to help them find funding.
- Gorham Community Development Association would like to add a splash pad.
- There is another Air B&B in Russell and getting set up.

Funding Requests

The City of Russell requested \$3,652.00 for billboards

Russell Main Street – Brew Me \$500.00/ Bricks, Broncs, BBQ \$500.00- requested \$1000.00 total.

Discussion was had about the funding of the City of Russell's Billboards. These funds would be to pay for them for one year. Due to increasing their contribution to ED they don't have funds set aside to continue the billboards. This would be to cover the rental cost and the resurfacing of the billboards. One other community attraction has been funded in the past for a billboard. There was concern that a precedent was going to be set with the other communities in the county about wanting CVB to fund their billboards as well. Trent motioned to approve \$3,652.00 in funding for

the City of Russell's billboards. Jim Cross seconded the motion. Motion passed 4 to 2; Karla Berry & Janet Funk opposed; Jon Quinday abstained.

Brew Me & Bricks, Broncs & BBQ have been funded in the past and are in good standing. Jon Quinday motioned to fund Russell Main Street \$1000.00- \$500 to Brew Me and \$500 to Bricks, Broncs & BBQ, Jeannie Stramel seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Community Updates

- Lucas- Recycling trailer got pulled, trying to figure out why, Adam's Apple Festival is 8/27, still wanting a tax sale, had a ribbon cutting at the new duplex.
- Luray- Friendship Day is Sept. 4th, Craftique is Oct. 15th & the "P" Building got a \$500 grant.
- Russell- Discussed expansion on Edwards Ave, the Holiday Inn Express & the sidewalk construction.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday September 8th, 2022 at 7:30am in Gorham.

