



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



*Thursday, January 23rd, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office*

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Jon Birky, Duke Strobel, Dustin Madden, Kayla Schneider, Karla Berry, Jamie Malone, Jeannie Stramel, Jeannine Byers-Long, Aaron Talbott (online), Malinda Walker (online), Lisa Sandberg, and Mike Parsons.

Call Meeting to Order:

Jon Birky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Opening Announcements: None.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Karla made a motion to approve the minutes from November, Jeannine Byers-Long seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 96% of the budget for the year, YTD \$88,007.82 with a remaining balance of \$4,092.18. ED fund #155 has spent 92% of the budget for the year, YTD \$229,537.53 with a remaining balance of \$20,462.47. Mike stated they don't usually use that much of the budget but with the storm damage and purchasing a new vehicle it's a little higher.

Board Elections: Duke made a motion to elect Jon Birky and President and Dustin Madden as Vice President. Jeannine Byers-Long seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Open Conversation: Discussion was had about board member absences and options for replacements. Mike will start the communication.

Board Terms: Mike made a board term calendar; it was pointed out that it needs some work.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.

- E-Community Loan Program – They got a Patterson Foundation grant to turn it into a forgivable loan for E-community and GrowKS.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other- There are applications on Mike's desk, they will be reviewed by the committee soon.

CVB Funding Request:

Grassroots Art Center- They are requesting \$1,000.00 for the grand opening and April Fools-A-Palooza. After board discussion, Jamie Malone made a motion to approve for \$1,000. Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Planning ahead: LaSada Lodge will be hosting the KSSCA State Sporting Clays & Super Sporting Championships May 29th-June 1st. Discussion was had about what could be done to support LaSada Lodge for the event.

Projects/Clients:

- **Great Plains Land Pride Infrastructure:** Working with Department of Transportation and Department of Commerce. Greely Ave is in disrepair; conversation was had about what it would take to get it repaired.
- **Flintwood housing Complex:** Paperwork has been started at the state to release the funds, we should have them soon.
- **Workforce Housing Taskforce:** Mike gave a quick update; he stated that the committee met with Purefield Ingredients about workforce housing. Looking to form a public/private partnership as things move forward.

Open Conversation: Duke asked what the median for affordable housing was, Jeannine Byers-Long provided insight on her experience with housing loans.

- **Project AA:** They have started another project; they will be putting in another loan application in the future.
- **Project GI Joe:** Confidential matter.
- **Project Candy Cane:** In Waldo they are doing a soft open of sorts with a Valentine's dinner, but their plan is to be fully open later in the year.
- **Project Beano:** Mike stated C store is currently closed with bags on the pumps, while the restaurant/bar is still up and running.
- **Project Crystal Ball:** This is a new client, business startup.
- **Project Stone:** Client is pursuing a loan/grant mix for a business expansion.
- **Project Topsy Bull:** The business is back up for sale and being advertised for \$250,000.

Programs/Events:

- **Love, Kansas-** With our office being shorthanded this program isn't getting a lot of attention right now.
- **Make My Move-** Mike stated someone is trying to move here, and has passed the background check, they are trying to line out the details.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **Billboards-** Mike spoke with the board about needing to decide on the billboards, possibly another grant program, no action was taken.
- **Promo Video-** Mike said the video is completed; he is in touch with Collins Media regarding edits that need to be done.
- **USDA Grant-** Mike and Lisa have been working on a \$25,000 grant alongside Locable. The due date is next Friday but we are going to try to submit everything tomorrow.
- **Visitor Guide-** Tabled until a later date.
- **Dues/Memberships-** Mike discussed the dues/memberships for 2025 with the board to see which one should be continued, nothing was decided.

Open Conversation: Mike gave an update that Gorham Fire Department is applying for a Community Foundation Grant, and he is reviewing it for them. Gorham also received a CDBG in the amount of \$542,663.00 for their splash pad. Mike told everyone about the Russell County Chamber of Commerce Banquet on Monday night. Jeannie said the coffee shop at Switchgrass in Lucas is open. Mike added, storefront/signage grants were awarded and stayed under budget.

Motion to Adjourn: Jeannie made the motion to adjourn, Duke seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: February 20th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



*Thursday, February 20th, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office*

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Jon Birky, Duke Strobel, Dustin Madden, Karla Berry, Jamie Malone, Jeannie Stramel (online), Jeannine Byers-Long (online), Malinda Walker (online), Lisa Sandberg, and Mike Parsons, Alex Lofland, and Sarah LaRosh.

Call Meeting to Order:

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

Opening Announcements: Guests Alex Lofland and Sara LaRosh are joining us.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Karla made a motion to approve the minutes from January, Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 2% of the budget for the year, YTD \$2,069.17 with a remaining balance of \$90,030.83. ED fund #155 has spent 9% of the budget for the year, YTD \$24,524.79 with a remaining balance of \$225,475.21.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – Awarded a \$15,000 loan for a business expansion.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other-

CVB Funding Request:

Russell Sunrise Kiwanis- They are requesting \$1,000.00; After board discussion, Karla Berry made a motion for \$500. Jeannie seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Projects/Clients:

- **Flintwood Housing Project:** Mike gave an update and stated he is hopeful this project will break ground in May.
- **Project AA:** An emergency HEAL grant through the state is being sought after for additional repairs.
- **Project Candy Cane:** They are aiming to be fully open in May or June, Sarah LaRosh highlighted potential resources.
- **Project GI Joe:** Confidential matter.
- **Culinary Recruitment Plan:** Planning for the future; Mike stated recruitment and retainment efforts are being made.
- **Project Longhorn:** Confidential business recruitment.

Programs/Events:

- **BRE Program-** Mike gave an overview of the Business, Retention, Expansion program.
- **Billboard Grant Program-** Discussion was had pertaining to the current billboards, the office will work to develop a business grant/ community contest for the billboards.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **Promotional Video-** Mike stated it is currently being edited and cut to 30 second segments for promotional purposes.
- **USDA Grant-** The grant was successfully submitted by the deadline; Mike gave a brief overview of what this grant will cover.
- **Legislative Updates-** Mike said he aims to send these out every week to keep everyone in the loop.
- **P Building-** Mike provided an update on a community effort to preserve a building in Luray.

Open Conversation: Malinda mentioned that Wyatt gave a speech for the log cabin, and he has raised \$21,000 so far.

- **Website Overhaul-** Mike redesigned the website russellcountyks.org
- **Convention Recruitment-** Mike has been filling out RFP's.

Community Updates/Open Conversation: Project Crystal Ball has been making connections. Jeannie said there is a gala on 4/5, but it is by invitation only. Mike spoke about the banquet in Lucas tonight.

Motion to Adjourn: Jamie made the motion to adjourn, Dustin seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: March 20th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



*Thursday, March 20th, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office*

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Jon Birky, Dustin Madden, Karla Berry, Jamie Malone, Jeannie Stramel (online), Jeannine Byers-Long (online), Aaron Talbott (online), Kayla Schneider (online), Lisa Sandberg, Mike Parsons, and Alex Lofland.

Call Meeting to Order:

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

Opening Announcements: None.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Jeannie made a motion to approve the minutes, Karla seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 6% of the budget for the year, YTD \$5,108.49 with a remaining balance of \$86,991.51. ED fund #155 has spent 10% of the budget for the year, YTD \$39,599.07 with a remaining balance of \$211,400.93.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program –
- E-Community Loan Program –
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other- Dan Krug is pursuing three delinquent loans.

CVB Funding Request:

Blessing of the Bikes- They are requesting \$1,000.00; After board discussion, Jamie Malone made a motion to approve the funding request for \$1,000.00, Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Shrine Ceremonial- They are requesting \$500.00; After board discussion, Karla Berry made a motion to approve the funding request for \$500. Jeannie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

LaSada Lodge State Shoot- They are requesting \$1,000.00; After board discussion, Aaron Talbott made a motion to approve the funding request for \$1,000.00, Karla seconded; Dustin Madden opposed.

Wicked Fest- They are requesting \$1,000.00; After board discussion, Jamie Malone made a motion to approve the funding request for \$500.00 contingent on them getting approval from the City, Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Dorrance Decoration Day- They are requesting \$750.00; After board discussion, Dustin Madden made a motion to approve the funding request for \$500.00. Karla seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Longhorn:** Confidential matter.
- **Project Originals:** Mike stated that Kansas Originals owns the building but not the land, discussion was had about what can be done to help, if anything.
- **Project TB:** Mike gave an update that there is someone interested in purchasing Topsy Bull and there is an application in the works.
- **Project High Power:** Confidential matter.
- **Project Hacksaw:** Confidential matter.
- **MicroMansions:** More discussion was had about possibly touring a MicroMansion and getting reviews on them; The idea is affordable housing for our community.
- **Child Care Center:** A new client is trying to find a building to use as a childcare center.
- **Project AA-HEAL:** An emergency HEAL grant through the state is being sought after for additional repairs, the county will host the application.
- **Project Smoke:** Mike gave a quick overview on this project; Restoration efforts have been started.
- **Project Water Pump:** Confidential matter.

Programs/Events:

- **KARL Program - Travel-** Mike leaves Saturday for Washington D.C. and will be gone until the following Saturday.
- **ROZ - Grow-** Talks of making a new program, more robust program called GROW.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **Assistant Director Position-** Mike stated that the interview process has begun, and one will be held later today.
- **Sea Plane Operation-** Mike gave a quick overview of this project, said there is a meeting coming up to learn more about it.
- **Lucas Infrastructure-** Looking for matching funds to apply for a grant, more information on this later.

Community Updates/Open Conversation: Jeannie stated there will be a gala that she will send invitations out for the board. Jeaninne shared some information about MakeMyMove that she thinks everyone should look at. Mike stated the Luray Fish Fry will be on Friday.

Motion to Adjourn: Jamie made the motion to adjourn, Dustin seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:38 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: April 17th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



*Thursday, April 17th, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office*

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Jon Birky, Dustin Madden, Duke Strobel, Karla Berry, Jamie Malone, Jeannie Stramel, Jeannine Byers-Long, Malinda Walker, Kayla Schneider, Alex Lofland, Lisa Sandberg, Mike Parsons, Angie Muller, Mandy Funk, and Shanda Mooney.

Call Meeting to Order:

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

Opening Announcements: None.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Kayla made a motion to approve the minutes, Jeannine seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 8% of the budget for the year, YTD \$5,108.49 with a remaining balance of \$82,368.04. ED fund #155 has spent 18% of the budget for the year, YTD \$45,146.08 with a remaining balance of \$204,853.92.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other-

CVB Funding Request:

Lovegrass Music Festival- They are requesting \$3,000.00; After board discussion, Duke made a motion to approve the funding request for \$3,000.00, Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Russell County Free Fair- They are requesting \$5,000.00; After board discussion, Duke made a motion to approve the funding request for \$5,000.00, Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Asteroid:** New business start-up; They are in the beginning stages of exploration.
- **Project Pearl:** Business expansion, currently looking for a building to expand to.
- **Project Topsy Bull:** Mike gave an update that there is someone interested in purchasing Topsy Bull and there is an application going to the loan committee today.
- **Project Hacksaw:** Dean's Auto is closing at the end of the month and succession planning is not needed.
- **Man/Dist Incubator:** Mike stated he is reviewing the RFP/RFI report to what business can come to Russell.
- **Project Toothache:** Lucas Carpenter is doing renovations to expand Downhome Dental to Russell and is hopeful to be open in May.
- **Project Benao:** Mave stated there is a client looking to expand and has been connected with Danny Hermann.

Programs/Events:

- **Welcome Event-**Tri County welcome event with the left-over Love Kansas funds.
- **OC/JAGK-** Mike said they will be having their meeting soon and he will work to nail down a budget to help them out again this year.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **Main Street Development Incentives-**
- **Luray Log Cabin-** Mike gave a quick update on the Luray Log Cabin; Troy Waymaster went to the Department of Commerce and secured \$10,000.00 for Wyatt Mullender's project.
- **Assistant Director-** Ryleigh Wagner will start Monday as the new Assistant Director.

Community Updates/Open Conversation:

Motion to Adjourn: Jamie made the motion to adjourn, Dustin seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:38 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: May 15th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



*Thursday, May 15th, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office*

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

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

Call Meeting to Order:

Jon Birky called the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Opening Announcements: None.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Dustin made a motion to approve the minutes, Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 18% of the budget for the year, YTD \$16,980.73 with a remaining balance of \$75,119.27. ED fund #155 has spent 22% of the budget for the year, YTD \$57,170.11 with a remaining balance of \$192,829.89.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other-

CVB Funding Request:

Rural Grocer Retreat- They are requesting \$2,000.00; After board discussion, Duke made a motion to approve the funding request for \$1,000.00, Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Waldo Fireworks- They are requesting \$800.00; After board discussion, Jon made a motion to approve the funding request for \$800.00, Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Asteroid:** New business start up
- **Project Bubbles:** New business start up
- **Project Rendezvous:** New business start up
- **Project Pearl:** Business expansion, they are still searching for a bigger building to relocate to for more space.
- **Project AA – HEAL Grant:** The grant would fund repairs and allow for further development of the basement and an additional upstairs living space. Results are expected within two to three weeks.
- **Project Beano:** Mike stated Fossil Station has been sold to a new owner from Kansas City with the intent of retaining the gas station and restaurant.
- **Kansas Originals:** Kansas Originals has been offered a recruitment package to relocate to Downtown Russell; They are exploring all options.
- **MSM Buyout:** Mike is attempting to get in contact with them to see what can be done to help.
- **Project Pheonix:** Recruitment efforts are being made for this manufacturer looking to relocate, they are currently based in Colorado.

Programs/Events:

- **Welcome Event:** More discussion on the tri county event, possible date of 6/2
- **Flintwood Ground Breaking:** This will take place on 5/22 @ 10 am.
- **OC/JAGK Internships:** Tabled for a later time.
- **Childcare Networking Event:** Discussion was had about what the event may look like in the future, nothing was decided.
- **Down Home Dental Ribbon Cutting:** The Down Home Dental ribbon cutting is scheduled for tomorrow at 1:00 pm; it is a come-and-go event.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **Childcare Incentives/Resources-** Discussion was had on whether the small business startup loan program fits the needs of childcare centers or in-home providers.
- **MicroMansions-** Plan to submit a grant application this fall for MIH funds, targeting down payment assistance, construction cost offsets, and possibly land acquisition for micro-mansions.
- **Log Cabin-** Mike started paperwork with the Kansas Department of Commerce on Wyatts grant.
- **Workforce Recruitment Plan-** Tabled for a later time.
- **Promo Video-** Ryleigh has been working with Mike Collins of Collins Media to make some changes to the promotional video and finalize everything.
- **Visitor Guide-** Ryleigh has been updating some sections of the guide, she also created a brochure that showcase the county as well.

Community Updates/Open Conversation: Dustin Madden stated Tom will be retiring this summer, Kayla said elections will be open soon and there are 4 seats open, 5 if you include the mayor. Duke gave a quick update on the Hell Creek Bridge.

Motion to Adjourn: Dustin made the motion to adjourn, Jeannie seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:59 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: June 19th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



*Thursday, June 19th, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office*

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Jon Birky, Dustin Madden, Karla Berry, Jamie Malone, Jeannine Byers-Long, Aaron Talbott, Malinda Walker (online), Kayla Schneider, Angie Muller (online), Alex Lofland, Lisa Sandberg, Mike Parsons and Ryleigh Wagner.

Call Meeting to Order:

Jon Birky called the meeting to order at 7:29 a.m.

Opening Announcements: None.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Dustin made a motion to approve the minutes, Kayla seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 28% of the budget for the year, YTD \$25,462.09 with a remaining balance of \$ 66,637.91. ED fund #155 has spent 28% of the budget for the year, YTD \$ 71,789.55 with a remaining balance of \$178,210.45.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – Russell Specialty Book & Gifts is set to be reviewed by the committee.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other-

CVB Funding Request:

Russell Main Street, Inc.- They are requesting \$3,000.00; After board discussion, Jeannine made a motion to approve the funding request for \$3,500.00 to include the sponsorship fee, Kayla seconded; motion carried unanimously.

51st Lucas Adams Apple Festival- They are requesting \$2,000.00; After board discussion, Malinda made a motion to approve the funding request for \$2,000.00, Jamie seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Community Updates: Perfect Print experienced delays due to extensive CDBG red tape and compliance requirements. The Holiday Inn developer is still interested in building, state incentives are being explored, as the developer is unfamiliar with Kansas-specific programs. The Main Street design is expected to be completed around January. A joint meeting with the school district superintendent, Jordan, was discussed to establish different goals.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Pearl:** Linda Crowder is working to secure loans to purchase Marty Myers' middle building, having already contracted her current building. The loan committee will review her application soon.
- **Kansas Originals Relocation:** Kansas Originals is still seeking a location near the interstate, having moved some inventory off-site as a temporary measure.
- **Satellite Mechanic:** The idea to partner with a larger company to provide a satellite location for mechanics is being pursued.
- **Culinary Recruitment:** A culinary recruitment initiative is being launched, including a "Foodpreneur" training program in partnership with SBDC and Network Kansas. Our office has partnered with Network Kansas, Russell County residents can receive a \$50 coupon towards the \$75 registration fee, reducing their out-of-pocket cost to \$25.
- **Project Asteroid:** Several changes to business plans, including locations/building, are in the works. Funding sources for the projects are being explored.
- **Meridy's:** Meridy's is for sale at \$925,000. Efforts are underway to retain it as a restaurant due to its significant community impact.
- **Project AA:** The emergency HEAL grant application was not approved by Commerce, as other projects were prioritized. They have been encouraged to reapply for the regular HEAL grant in October.

Programs/Events:

- **Love, KS:** State funding for the next fiscal year has been cut, but remaining funds are available for out-of-state residents moving for jobs that meet a certain wage threshold.
- **Countywide NRP:** Mike stated the NRP comes to an end in December, efforts are underway for a renewal, avenues were discussed of what it might look like.
- **Workforce Recruitment Incentive:** A draft incentive package has been sent to the Innovation Center for review, targeting higher-paying jobs. The goal is to create a robust incentive system for major employers.
- **MakeMyMove:** Lisa and Ryleigh are updating the Make My Move program to include local incentives and information on the ROS (Rural Opportunity Zone) program.
- **Farmers Market:** The organization now provides website support for online registrations and advertising. For the week of the Russell County Free fair, the farmer's market will be at the fairgrounds.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **Impact Reports-** The first economic impact report, provided free by the state, analyzed the state shoot at LaSada Lodge, involving 277 participants from 11 states. The report detailed impacts on business, taxes, jobs, and income.
- **Promotional Items-** Remaining Love, Kansas funds (\$3,500) will be used to purchase promotional items. While the Love, Kansas program is no longer active, the funds will not be returned.
- **Board Appointments-** Efforts are being made to improve record-keeping for board appointments; including start and renewal dates, the terms are three years and are renewable.
- **Child Care-** The coalition has received its EIN number and is applying for non-profit status, with RCACF (Russell County Area Community Foundation) serving as a flow-through for grants in the interim.
- **Extranet – Event Listings-** Ryleigh is working to update the Kansas Tourism Extranet page for Russell County with current information, socials, and blogs.
- **Lodging Promotions-** Guidance was sought on how to promote Airbnb's and VRBOs without listing all 70+ properties, many of which are not "attractions." The suggestion was to include a general link to Airbnb/VRBO on the website, allowing consumers to explore options and rely on reviews, rather than the organization making selective promotions.

Executive Session – Confidential Projects

Open Conversation: Mike stated Network Kansas sells \$2 million in tax credits annually to support loan programs. The board aims to sell these tax credits locally, offering buyers 75% tax credits. Importantly, 30% of the sales revenue is returned to the board for special projects, such as down payments for micro mansions or supporting childcare initiatives.

Motion to Adjourn: Dustin made the motion to adjourn, Jeannie seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: July 17th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



*Thursday, July 17th, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office*

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

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

Call Meeting to Order:

Jon Birky called the meeting to order at 7:29 a.m.

Opening Announcements: Mike stated Meridy's will be moved to executive session.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Dustin made a motion to approve the minutes contingent on adding Karla to the attendance, Jamie seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 41% of the budget for the year, YTD \$37,626.99 with a remaining balance of \$54,473.01. ED fund #155 has spent 34% of the budget for the year, YTD \$85,112.95 with a remaining balance of \$164,887.05.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other-

Community Updates/Open Conversation: Kayla mentioned they have an agreement with NWKEICI to get a new housing assessment done. She will be forming a stakeholder group and will reach out to board members at a later date with more information.

CVB Funding Request:

Lucas Chamber of Commerce- They are requesting \$500.00; After board discussion, Duke made a motion to approve the funding request for \$500.00, Jeannine seconded; motion carried unanimously.

RHS Gym Request- They are requesting \$5,000.00; Since the request was submitted, they have raised all funds needed and the board will not be proceeding with the request at this time.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Smoke:** The loan committee will be seeing a request for this very soon, this project has been moving forward with great progress.
- **Kansas Originals:** Mike attended their board meeting; options are still being explored for relocation.
- **Holiday Inn Express:** They are still interested in building; state incentives are being explored to help bridge the gap-funding that is needed.
- **Project Asteroid:** Several changes to business plans, including locations/building, are still in the works.
- **Project Pheonix:** Manufacturing company looking to relocate, Mike is still working on that in the background.

Programs/Events:

- **Foodprenuer Bootcamp-** Ryleigh stated she now has the discount code for people to receive \$50 off their enrollment fee; Before enrolling they need to contact our office.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **August Meeting Date Change-** Mike proposed we move the meeting to the second Thursday in August due to scheduling conflicts; After board discussion it was decided the meeting will be on Wednesday, August 20th.
- **Community Solutions Grant-** Our office is applying for a \$5,000.00 grant for the Leadership class to help with supplies, venues, meals, etc.
- **Log Cabin Funding-** The \$10,000.00 grant from The Kansas Department of Commerce has been deposited. A time will be set up with Troy Waymaster for distribution.
- **Workforce Recruitment Efforts-** Mike said there will be a meeting to narrow down the recruitment of the workforce.
- **Fishing Habitat – Wilson Lake-** The Wilson Lake habitat is in despair; collaboration efforts are being sought after for a federal grant.
- **Housing Updates-** Mike stated he met with Kayla, and they are working together to keep developments going in the future.

Executive Session – Confidential Projects

Motion to Adjourn: Jamie made the motion to adjourn, Dustin seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: August 20th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Jon Birky, Dustin Madden, Duke Strobel, Karla Berry, Jeannie Stramel, Jamie Malone (online), Jeannine Byers-Long, Malinda Walker, Kayla Schneider, Alex Lofland, Angie Muller (online), Lisa Sandberg, Ryleigh Wagner, and Mike Parsons.

Call Meeting to Order:

Jon Birky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Opening Announcements: None.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Dustin made a motion to approve the minutes, Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 48% of the budget for the year, YTD \$44,842.07 with a remaining balance of \$47,257.93. ED fund #155 has spent 46% of the budget for the year, YTD \$30,345.13 with a remaining balance of \$134,541.92.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other- Mike stated he has the Network Kansas agreement for review; there were a few changes made but they are just clerical. It will need to be signed by Jon, Duke, and himself.

Community Updates/Open Conversation: Kayla stated they received several bids for the main street extension from contractors but have settled on the estimate from Arrowhead. Jeannie stated Chandler resigned as the Director at the Grassroots Art Center and Adams Apple Festival is about to take place. Angie Muller gave an update on the grants

available. Duke said the estimate for the hell creek bridge has gone up by one million, Malinda stated Luray Friendship Day was coming up and that Luray Craftique currently has 110 vendors signed up.

CVB Funding Request:

Luray Craftique- They are requesting \$500.00; After board discussion, Jon made a motion to approve the funding request for \$500.00, Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Paradise Fall Festival- They are requesting \$3,000.00; After board discussion, Duke made a motion to approve the funding request for \$1,200.00, Jeannie seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Beano/Jumpstart:** Mike and Ryleigh met with the new owners; they are putting work in for a remodel of the gas station; the restaurant will not be retained.
- **Project Asteroid:** Once financials are received for the loan committee, a meeting will be held.
- **Holiday Inn Express:** Mike and Kayla are reaching out to state and regional partners to help close the gap in funding.
- **Fossil Creek Hotel & Suites:** Mike stated the new owners are getting settled in and have hired some new employees.
- **Project Smoke:** Their loan was finalized yesterday, and they are making great progress.
- **Kansas Originals:** They have temporarily moved into a location in Wilson, still looking at options closer to interstate.
- **Meridy's:** The business is still up for sale and avenues are being explored to retain it as a restaurant.

Programs/Events:

- **Billboard Grant Program-** Our office is hoping to launch this by October 1st, half of it will be a community contest and the other half will be a for-profit and nonprofit business. All businesses in Russell County can apply.
- **Countywide NRP Program-** The current NRP expires on 12/31/25, Mike is working to renew it and hoping to do a 5- or 10-year program instead of a 3 year.
- **Storefront/Signage Grant Program-** Mike stated Lisa already has a list of people who have requested the application by email when it is released on 10/1.
- **Workforce Recruitment Program-** Received a \$60,000 grant, there will be a meeting next week to review the claw back and agreements.
- **2026 State Shoot-** LaSada won the vote for the state shoot next year; Lodging around the county is already filling up. This year the state shoot brought in \$5,009 in transient guest tax.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **2026 Strategic Plan-** Ryleigh is redoing the childcare portion, it will be available for review at next month's meeting.

- **Convention Recruitment-** Ryleigh is in the process of applying to host a two-day conference in Russell County.
- **Phase 2 Housing Development-** MIH funding was cut; conversations have been started for phase two on housing and what that may look like.
- **Historical Society Billboard Invoice-** Mike asked if the board would like to pay for their billboard again; Jon made a motion to pay \$2,340. Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- **Building Database-** Ryleigh has been building a database for main street buildings, it will help when people are looking for more information.
- **Childcare Coalition-** Ryleigh gave an update that they will be attending the RCACF board meeting on August 26th to request funds to help build a childcare center.
- **MicroMansions-** Incentives are being sought after to get a spec home put on a vacant lot.

Executive Session – Confidential Projects

Motion to Adjourn: Jon made the motion to adjourn, Duke seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:01 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: September 18th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



***Thursday, September 18th, 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, Jeannine Byers-Long (online), Malinda Walker, Aaron Talbott (online), Kayla Schneider (online), Alex Lofland, Dyelan Reed, Sarah LaRosh, 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: Sarah LaRosh and Dyelan Reed with NetWorkKS are guests of the meeting today. Sarah LaRosh announced she took a new position, so we won't be seeing her as much, Dyelan Reed is taking over.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Jeannie stated Switchgrass Art Center needs to be changed to Grassroots Art center. Dustin made a motion to approve the minutes contingent on the change, Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike stated the financials were not ready yet but as soon as we receive them, he will e-mail the YTD financials to the board.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other-

Community Updates/Open Conversation: Malinda stated Wyatt got the last bid for log cabin, he has enough money raised to cover it. Jamie gave an update on the childcare coalition and said they put a bid in contingent on a zoning permit. Kayla shared that a preconstruction meeting takes place on Monday for the street with the housing development.

CVB Funding Request:

Partnership Grant- Our office plans to submit a grant request to support community programs in partnership with RCACF.

Impact Reports- Ryleigh provided an update on state reports outlining county expenditures and related information about events that happen around the county.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Jumpstart:** The proposed new owners are making progress with their plans, with construction expected to begin in the near future.
- **Project Crossroads:** Economic Development continues efforts to attract and support business growth in the county.
- **GP/LP Infrastructure:** Options are being explored to find funding for The City of Lucas to fix the road.
- **Luray Legion:** It serves as both their emergency shelter and community hub, and efforts are underway to explore state funding to help with needed improvements.
- **Eatery Recruitment/Development:** Efforts are being made to support eatery recruitment and development, strengthening local dining options and enhancing community vitality.

Programs/Events:

- **Foodpreneur Bootcamp-** Ryleigh stated as of last Friday there are 5 people that have registered to take the online course.
- **SFSG Program-** Applications will be open on 10/1, we have a list of people that already want to apply, we anticipate it will be successful.
- **Holiday Collective-** Regional partnerships are being developed to encourage local commerce and support community businesses.
- **Workforce Incentive Program-** Workforce incentive programs are being developed to support future growth and opportunities.
- **Plaid on the Plains-** The office will be partnering with Crystal Craig on the upcoming Plaid on the Plains event.

Office Miscellaneous:

- **Strategic Plan-** Mike presented a draft to the board and invited discussion on potential additions or revisions
- **State Fair-** Ryleigh reported partnering with NWKS to work a booth on Sunday and noted that, despite the rain, the event had a good turnout.
- **NRP Renewal-** The NRP renewal has been approved, with preparations underway to move the process forward.
- **Kansas Travel Guide-** Ryleigh explained their advertising approach and asked for feedback or suggestions from the group.

Open Conversation: Mike stated that next week our office will be participating in spirit days, and Ryleigh has been in contact with Kansas Bass Nation to recruit the state fishing tournament to Wilson Lake. Ryleigh was awarded her first grant in the amount of \$500.

Executive Session – Confidential Projects

Motion to Adjourn: Dustin made the motion to adjourn, Jamie seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:16 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: October 16th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



*Thursday, October 16th, 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 20th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office



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



***Thursday, November 20th, 2025 @ 7:30am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB
Office***

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Jon Birky, Dustin Madden, Karla Berry, Jeannie Stramel (online), Jamie Malone, Jeannine Byers-Long, Malinda Walker, Kayla Schneider (online), Alex Lofland, Angie Muller, Lisa Sandberg, Ryleigh Wagner, and Mike Parsons.

Call Meeting to Order:

Dustin Madden called the meeting to order at 7:31 a.m.

Opening Announcements:

Review and Approval of Minutes: Karla made a motion to approve the minutes, Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review: Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 68% of the budget for the year, YTD \$63,125.02 with a remaining balance of \$28,974.98. ED fund #155 has spent 63% of the budget for the year, YTD \$157,488.97 with a remaining balance of \$92,511.03.

Loan Program Updates:

- Russell County Loan Program – No current updates.
- E-Community Loan Program – No current updates.
- GrowKs Loan Program – No current updates.
- Other- No current updates.

Community Updates/Open Conversation: Conversations were had about what transient guest tax can be used for, Mike said he will look into the county resolution. Kayla stated that the City of Russell is doing a Christmas light contest, and the city offices are closed on Thanksgiving and the day after. Karla shared the annual meeting is at the Historical Society tonight at 5:30. Malinda said she toured the Smoky Hills Public Television building in Bunker Hill with Mike. She also said the Stone Church Madrigal Feast will be hosted at the Stone Church in Luray on December 6th if anyone is interested. Angie Muller said it is match month at the RCACF with opportunity to raise up to \$300,000 with the help of regional

partners. Angie also said they are hiring a Rural Prosperity Coordinator. Mike said there is a gentleman interest in joining the board and there is still currently one position open.

CVB Funding Request: None.

Projects/Clients:

- **Project Jump Start:** The new owners have officially retained possession of the building and are actively moving forward, making steady progress towards the next steps.
- **Project Blossom:** They almost have all the paperwork completed to submit to the loan committee.
- **Project Bricks:** Currently under construction, with ongoing work progressing into the next phase of development.
- **Project Bliss:** Discussion was had about the changes to initial business plan.
- **Project Bubbles:** Discussion was had about the changes to initial business plan.

Programs/Events:

- **Holiday Collective** - Ryleigh shared an overview of the finalized plans. The Holiday Collective is scheduled to take place on Saturday.
- **Plaid on the Plains-** The office has been collaborating with Crystal Craig for the upcoming Plaid on the Plains event. Ryleigh will also assist on-site by handing out bags and providing additional support as needed.
- **Workforce Recruitment-** Workforce incentive programs are being developed to support future growth and opportunities.
- **NRP's-** Preparatory work is underway for the program's renewal, with plans to extend the program to a longer term.
- **Office Miscellaneous:**
- **SLP Partnership-** Our office is actively compiling and organizing key information in preparation for nationwide distribution, ensuring it is thorough, accurate, and ready to be shared across the country.
- **RCACF Grant-** Our office was awarded a \$5,000.00 grant to enhance the CVB funding budget.
- **RMS Historical District-** Discussions with SHPO have begun to evaluate and support the process with business owners.
- **Incentive Reporting-** A discussion took place regarding the new reporting protocols established under House Bill 2304, focusing on updated requirements, timelines, and compliance expectations for economic development incentives.
- **Billboards-** Mike shared that the Christmas billboards are now up and have received many compliments. Our office will be launching the billboard competition in the near future.

Open Conversation: Jeannie shared that the Holiday Gift Show is on Saturday and they still need help filling the director position.

Executive Session – Confidential Projects

Motion to Adjourn: Dustin made the motion to adjourn, Jon seconded; motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: January 15th @ 7:30 am @ Russell County Economic Development & CVB Office