



Minutes

Tucker County Development Authority

July 16, 2020 – 6:00 PM

Due to COVID-19 health concerns the meeting was held by videoconference

Board Members Present (by teleconference):

Wayne Smith – President, Al Tomson – Vice President, Sandra Frank – Secretary, Roscoe 'Ronnie' Beall – Treasurer, Ben Nelson, Dennis Filler, Dan Dilly, Bruce Kolsun, Cory Chase, Matt Quattro, Jon Bush – County Commissioner

Board Members Not Present: Robert McClung (excused), April Miller, JR Helmick,

Quorum present? Yes

Attendees:

Steve Leyh, Executive Director, Tucker County Development Authority

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by President Smith.

Minutes

Dennis Filler motioned to approve the minutes from the June meeting. The motion was seconded by Al Tomson. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved unanimously.

Communications and Billing

No communications or billing was presented.

Treasurer's Report

The financial report was emailed to the board. Director Leyh asked if there were any questions about the report. There being none, the financial report will be placed on file for audit.

Executive Director's Report



Tucker County Development Authority

PO Box 176
Thomas, WV 26292
(304) 614-8839
tuckercounty@gmail.com
www.TuckerWV.com

Rural Rise Summit

- Attended the annual Rural Rise Summit virtually. The event brought together hundreds of rural ecosystem builders from across the country to discuss how to respond to the COVID-19 economic crisis.

HUD Housing Training

- Participated in a webinar on responding to housing challenges caused by the pandemic.

Hardwood Alliance Zone Meeting

- Attended the HAZ meeting virtually. The two major trade shows that we usually display at have been cancelled because of COVID-19. We are looking to invest in the HAZ website and other digital marketing.

West Virginia Economic Outlook Webinar - WVU

- Joined a webinar hosted by the WVU John Chambers College of Business and Economics discussing the economic outlook for our state. Much of the discussion revolved around West Virginia being an attractive place for remote workers and how to market to them.

wvOASIS system

- Worked with the WV Auditor's office to register the Tucker County Development Authority in the wvOASIS system. This will allow for direct deposit of grant funding.

FirstEnergy Economic Development

- Participated in a webinar hosted by FirstEnergy. Much of the conversation revolved around shifts in supply chains and how the pandemic will increase the likelihood of reshoring - bringing manufacturing and services back to the U.S. from overseas.

New Businesses

- Continue to work one-on-one with various prospects that are considering major investments, or smaller prospects who are looking to set up shop in Tucker County.

Retention Efforts

- As part of our business retention efforts, I have been calling or emailing businesses. I also created an email list and I have been using that to send out relevant information to Tucker County businesses. We have been successful connecting them to various grant programs or technical assistance.

New Residents

- I have been fielding phone calls from people in urban areas who are interested in permanently



Tucker County Development Authority

PO Box 176
Thomas, WV 26292
(304) 614-8839
tuckercounty@gmail.com
www.TuckerWV.com

relocating to the area. The staff at the Thomas Post Office estimates 15 new residents since the beginning of the year. Real estate sales throughout Tucker County have significantly increased. The catalyst is the sale of Timberline, but also people seeking refuge from more urban areas.

Mountain View

- Continue to monitor Mettiki Coal and the Mountain View Mine as demand for electricity has fallen sharply since March, largely because of the economic impact of the pandemic but also because of lower natural gas prices. The coal industry has been hard hit throughout West Virginia. The parent company of Mettiki, Alliance Resource Partners has ceased production at many of their mines throughout Illinois Basin and East Kentucky. Mountain View which provides coal to Mt. Storm and is the largest employer in Tucker County remains largely unaffected.

Old Business

Tucker Accelerator Project (TAP) Room

Woodlands is including the TAP Room project in their application for the next round of AML funding, Executive Director Leyh reported. The AML grant deadline is the end of this month. Steve reached out to Abbey Hart with USDA to discuss the rural business development grant and how they could potentially be used for the TAP Room project. She indicated one possible use would be to furnish the co-working space.

COVID-19 Economic Response

The unemployment rate in Tucker County reached a record high in April at 17.2%, it has since come down to 13.4% in May. Tucker County has seen 7.51% growth (36) new businesses formed during 2020 - this ranks us eighth out of the 55 counties in West Virginia for new business growth. So far, only 5 business entities have terminated their operations since January 1, all were real estate/ vacation home related.

The Small Business Administration EIDL Advance Program is out of funding, the EIDL Loan Program continues to accept applications. The Paycheck Protection Program continues to accept applications. The Paycheck Protection Program was extended until August 8. Governor Justice announced up to \$5,000 in grants for West Virginia Small Businesses as part of the CARES Act funding. Those grants are available until the end of September.

Woodlands Community Lenders successfully secured \$750,00 of Appalachian Regional Commission to create a COVID 19 Relief and Recovery Loan Fund. Low interest loans up to \$40,000 will be available to small businesses in Barbour, Grant, Greenbrier, Nicholas, Pendleton, Pocahontas, Preston, Randolph, Tucker, and Webster Counties who need working capital or funds for business expansion.



Tucker County Development Authority

PO Box 176
Thomas, WV 26292
(304) 614-8839
tuckercounty@gmail.com
www.TuckerWV.com

The Development Authority continues to work and inform business owners to help them navigate the various programs and resources available. Both the Save Our Shops website and the COVID-19 webpage is updated on a regular basis.

New Business

Acquisition of 90 Acres Along Corridor H

It was noted that Joe R. Pyle is auctioning off 90 acres of land along Corridor H. The entrance to the property is 1.2 miles east of the Tucker County Industrial Park entrance. The land is gently sloping and offers half-mile of Corridor H road frontage as well as direct access from the highway. The auction is taking place virtually on August 5 at 6 PM. The current bid is \$20,250.00. The property does not have utilities and it is for surface rights only.

The board discussed various options. The recommendation was made that board members make individual site visits to the property. Al Tomson recommended we schedule a meeting between now and the auction date to finalize plans. President Smith suggested the Development Authority meet on July 30, 2020, if not before.

Wastewater Feasibility Study

Request for Qualifications Review

A draft of the RFQ was sent to the board to discuss. Vice President, Al Tomson suggested the RFQ be edited to include the Town of Davis, City of Thomas, Tuscan Ridge Subdivision, Tucker County Landfill Leachate, National Youth Science Center, Rubenstein Center, former Davis Center and the Tucker County Industrial Park.

3-5 Person Selection Committee

A committee for the wastewater feasibility study was suggested to include representatives of: Tucker County Development Authority (President - Wayne Smith), Representative from the Town of Davis (Councilman - Al Tomson), Representative from City of Thomas (Mayor - Matt Quattro), Representative from the Solid Waste Authority (Board Member - Dennis Filler) and County Commissioner (Jon Bush).

Dennis Filler moved to accept the committee as suggested. Al Tomson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.



Tucker County Development Authority

PO Box 176
Thomas, WV 26292
(304) 614-8839
tuckercounty@gmail.com
www.TuckerWV.com

It was noted that the selection committee will make a recommendation to the full board of the Development Authority for final decision on the selection of an engineering firm for the wastewater feasibility study.

Redevelopment of Davis Center

Executive Director Leyh explained that Canaan Valley and Blackwater Falls State Parks are facing a staffing crisis. Many factors are contributing to it, but workforce housing continues to be a barrier. Canaan is using hotel rooms to house some workers and with Timberline Mountain coming online this winter the situation will get worse. The WV Development Office asked if we would look at using the Davis Center for housing. Woodlands went to work, and they determined that the most cost-effective approach would be the construction of six new buildings with a total of 24 units on the site rather than converting the existing buildings into housing. This would result in 72 bedrooms that could be seasonal housing. The existing buildings on the site could be redeveloped in the future for various uses such as office space or community space. Steve noted that a site visit is scheduled for July 17 with DNR Director McDaniel to discuss the proposed development.

Election of Officers (1-Year Term)

The chair opened nominations for fiscal year 2021 officers:

Ronnie Beall nominated Wayne Smith for President; Sandra Frank seconded, and the nomination carried.

Sandra Frank nominated Al Tomson for Vice President; Ronnie Beall seconded, and the nomination carried.

Ronnie Beall nominated Sandra Frank for Secretary; Dan Dilly seconded, and the nomination carried.

Wayne Smith nominated Ronnie Beall for Treasurer; Cory Chase seconded; and the nomination carried.

Election of Executive Committee (3 Members in Addition to Officers)

The chair opened nominations for fiscal year 2021 Executive Committee.

Sandra Frank nominated Cory Chase. Al Tomson nominated Dennis Filler; Ronnie Beall



Tucker County Development Authority

PO Box 176
Thomas, WV 26292
(304) 614-8839
tuckercounty@gmail.com
www.TuckerWV.com

seconded. Ben Nelson nominated himself; Al Tomson seconded. There were no additional nominations and therefore the executive committee was accepted as presented.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:08 PM following a motion by Cory Chase and a second from Ronnie Beall. The motion carried unanimously.

The Tucker County Development Authority will hold a special meeting on Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 6 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Sandra Frank, Secretary