



Minutes

Tucker County Development Authority

January 21, 2021 – 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 (joined late), Roscoe ‘Ronnie’ Beall – Treasurer, Dennis Filler, Bruce Kolsun, JR Helmick, Matt Quattro, Robert McClung, Steven Sponaugle, Ben Nelson, Cory Chase, Commissioner Mike Rosenau

Board Members Absent: Sandra Frank – Secretary, April Miller, Dan Dilly

Quorum present? Yes

Attendees:

Steve Leyh, Executive Director, Tucker County Development Authority
Tom Price, Director of Operations, Timberline Mountain

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM.

The board agreed to modify the agenda item order, to allow a guest to speak first.

Timberline Mountain Capital Improvements Update

Tom Price, Director of Operations from Timberline Mountain provided an update on improvements at the ski area. Of the total investment nearly \$9 million was spent on two new lifts, including a Doppelmayr high-speed six-pack detachable lift and a new Doppelmayr fixed-grip quad. Nearly \$2.5 million was spent on snowmaking, including adding 70 new tower mounted fan guns. Timberline Mountain has also invested in brand new snow cats, a carpet lift for beginners, RFID ticketing system, and 5,600 square feet of new lodge space. They currently have approximately 200 employees including 14 core employees that moved to West Virginia from Indiana. Steve noted that Timberline Mountain benefiting from both the West Virginia Tourism Development Act tax credit program as well as funding through the West Virginia Economic Development Authority.

6:09 PM – Al Tomson joined the meeting.



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Minutes

Robby McClung motioned to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2020 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Dennis Filler. The minutes of the previous meetings were approved unanimously.

Communications and Billing

A new letter of engagement for accounting services was received and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurers Report was accidentally skipped at this meeting. It will be presented for review at the February meeting.

Executive Director's Report

Local Economic Development Grant

- Received notice that we were awarded the FY21 Local Economic Development Grant in the amount of \$22,727 from the West Virginia Development Office.
- Signed contract and submitted to the WV Development Office
- LED Grant requires commitment of funds from the Tucker County Commission which was met.

Hardwood Alliance Zone

- HAZ counties continue to meet monthly by teleconference.
- Planning on exhibiting at the National Hardwood Lumber Association Convention in late September to promote the region to the hardwood industry.
- Will exhibit and promote region at the International Woodworking Fair (IWF) in August 2022

Unemployment Rate

- Tucker County unemployment rate crept up slightly to 5.4% in November 2020 from 5.3% in October. A dramatic improvement from the high of 17.2% in April 2020.

Support Our Shops Website Update

- Updated business information on Support Our Shops website at sos.tuckerwv.com

Paycheck Protection Program Relaunch

- Small businesses can apply for loans to help them keep their employees working despite the pressures of COVID-19. The loan is forgiven when an employer documents the money has been used properly.



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- Providing revised guidance to Tucker County businesses

Planning Commission

- Attended the January Tucker County Planning Commission meeting to provide an update on the wastewater feasibility study.
- It was suggested that the Tucker County Development Authority consider hosting a roundtable meeting of public service providers (water, sewer, etc.) to discuss all current and proposed infrastructure projects throughout the county.
- County Planner position still vacant.
- Perhaps host collaborative roundtable meeting once County Planner vacancy is filled.

Broadband

- Shentel is acquiring Canaan Cable and will be working to upgrade and expand that network.
- Atlantic Broadband has offered to expand service to the Tucker County industrial park if new businesses agree to subscribe to their service.
- Continuing conversations with SpaceX about connecting households that do not have an internet service provider.
- Frontier won most of the census blocks in Tucker County in the FCC's RDOF auction.
- The West Virginia Public Service Commission accepted Frontier Communications' reorganization plan to emerge from Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Frontier must meet monthly and quarterly reporting and could face financial penalties if it falls behind in its promises.
- As part of the agreement Frontier agreed to spend \$200 million or at minimum \$50 million annually on capital improvements by December 31, 2023 and deploy fiber to at least 150,000 locations in the state by December 31, 2027.
- Frontier has set a goal of broadband deployment to 75,000 locations three years after it emerges from bankruptcy which is expected in early 2021.

Corridor H Update – (As of September)

- Kerens to US 219 Connector – 7.5-mile grade, drain, bridges by Kokosing anticipated to be complete by 2022 at a cost of \$241.6M. Paving completion late 2022 at a cost of \$40M.
- US 219 to WV 72 at Parsons – 3.1-mile grade, drain, bridges by Kokosing anticipated to be completed by 2023 at a cost of \$192.1M. Paving completion Fall 2024 at a cost of \$20M.
- WV 72 interchange to Parsons – 4.0-mile grade, drain, bridges, paving, interchange construction (excluding Cheat River Bridge) anticipated to begin Spring 2022 with completion late 2024 at a cost of \$217.8M
- Cheat River Bridge - .03-mile bridge construction anticipated to begin Fall 2024 at cost of \$278.3M
- Wardensville to Virginia – 6.8-mile construction anticipated to begin early 2027
- Parsons to Davis - 9.2-mile construction anticipated to begin early 2031

Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area



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- 18 counties (16 in West Virginia & 2 in Maryland) were designated a National Heritage Area in March 2019.
- The National Heritage Area has 3 years from designation to develop a management plan to be approved by the Department of Interior and guided by the National Park Service
- Provided input and recommendations to the consultants who are assisting with the organization's management planning.

Business Technical Support

- Continue to help entrepreneurs and connect them to resources.

Old Business

Tucker Accelerator Project (TAP) Room

An announcement is imminent from the Governor's Office on our grant application for the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) program. The AML grant application was submitted in collaboration with Woodlands. It requested funding for both the TAP Room and Davis Center projects. Although the Davis Center project is no longer an option, the TAP Room project could still be funded. The TAP Room would create a coworking space in Thomas with workforce housing on the upper levels.

Wastewater Feasibility Study

The West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Council officially committed \$50,000 to the Wastewater Feasibility Study contingent upon matching funds from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). EDA is anticipating our grant application to be reviewed on January 28, 2021. Steve has been in contact with Tracey Rowan, EDA's Economic Development Representative for West Virginia to discuss the application, provide additional documentation, and to communicate our need for funding the study. If EDA awards the \$50,000 grant, this will eliminate the need for local matching dollars thus saving Tucker County significant funds.

Workforce Housing at Industrial Park

TCDA continues to collaborate with Woodlands to develop workforce housing at the industrial park and exploring the idea of a community land trust. TCDA and Woodlands met with the WVU Land Use and Sustainable Law Clinic to discuss how to develop a legal structure. Since this type of project would be the first in West Virginia, they recommended seeking further legal consultation to gain insight on how West Virginia Code would be applied. The Workforce Housing Task Force Committee continues to meet monthly.

Industrial Park Development



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There have been several inquiries from individuals who are looking to purchase land at the industrial park as a long-term investment. He communicated that the purpose of the property is to generate economic growth in the form of jobs, wages, and overall benefit to the community. Prospects should reconnect if they have a specific project they want to develop.

New Business

Serving on the Board of the Highlands Trail Foundation

The Highlands Trail Foundation asked if Steve would consider joining the board since the focus on the Highlands Trail development is now shifting to the Tucker County sections. He believes further completion of the Highlands Trail, would connect our communities, have a significant economic impact, and be a catalyst for additional business development.

Maryland is moving to acquire additional abandoned Western Maryland Railway right-of-way on the Thomas subdivision (George's Creek) for possible development of a new rail trail from Frostburg to Westernport. At Frostburg, the trail connects to the Great Allegheny Passage which combined with the C&O Canal allows you to bike or hike from Washington DC to Pittsburgh, PA. This indicates an ongoing effort to develop a rail trail on abandoned Western Maryland Railway right-of-way. From Westernport, Maryland, the Western Maryland Railway crosses into West Virginia and follows the North Branch Valley to connect to Thomas.

Dennis Filler motioned to authorize Steve Leyh, Executive Director to serve on the board of the Highlands Trail Foundation. The motion was seconded by Ronnie Beall and passed uniamously.

Spring Economic Development Institute - April 24 - 29, 2021

Spring EDI is scheduled for April 24-29 in Pittsburgh. This would be the Executive Director's final week of classes before graduation. However, the program is currently scheduled to be held in-person. A decision will be made by mid-February if the program will transition to an online platform. Steve would like to participate if the program transitions to an online program and requested the board's approved to enroll in the program as soon as the decision is made. The cost is \$1,745 for the institute. He is hopeful it can be completed online again, to save money on travel and lodging.

Dennis Filler motioned to approve the Executive Director to attend Spring EDI if presented virtually. Bruce Kolsun seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Designate Industrial Park Protective Covenants & Restrictions Committee

Dennis Filler, Ben Nelson, and Bruce Kolsun volunteered to serve on the Industrial Park Protective Covenants & Restrictions Committee. The committee will review and update the



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Industrial Park Protective Covenants & Restrictions and make recommendations to the full board for final approval.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:54 PM after a motion by Ronnie Beall, seconded by Al Tomson.

The next regular meeting of the Tucker County Development Authority will be held on Thursday, February 18, 2021 at 6 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Steven Leyh, Executive Director