



Tucker County Development Authority

PO Box 176

Thomas, WV 26292

(304) 614-8839

tuckercounty@gmail.com

www.TuckerWV.com

Minutes

Tucker County Development Authority

August 19, 2021 – 6:00 PM

494 Riverstone Road, Davis, WV 26260

Board Members Present:

Wayne Smith – President (*via telephone*), Dan Dilly – Vice President, Roscoe ‘Ronnie’ Beall – Treasurer, April Miller, Dennis Filler, Jody Flanagan, JR Helmick, Robby McClung, Ben Nelson

Board Members Absent: Sandra Frank – Secretary (excused), Cory Chase (excused), Steven Sponaugle, Bruce Kolsun, Commissioner - Mike Rosenau

Quorum present? Yes

Guests:

Steve Leyh, Executive Director, Tucker County Development Authority
David Graham, Triad Engineering

Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by President, Wayne Smith.

Minutes

Robby McClung motioned to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2021, regular meeting. The motion was seconded by April Miller. The minutes of the previous meetings were approved unanimously.

Communications and Billing

There was no communication or billing.

Treasurer’s Report

The financials were sent to board members prior to the meeting. They will be filed for audit.

Executive Director’s Report



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Business Registrations

- Tucker County had 22 new business registrations since June 1 the Secretary of State. This represents 3% growth.

Unemployment Rate

- Tucker County unemployment rate increased to 5.6% in June 2021.

Hardwood Alliance Zone

- Updating our hardwood industry business directory for National Hardwood Lumber Association trade show.
- HAZ will be displaying at NHLA trade show September 22-24 in Florida

Thomas Housing & Business Study

- Met with Downstream Strategies to discuss development trends for a study they are completing.

Canaan Valley Gas

- Canaan Valley Gas performed a site visit of the industrial park property.
- Most lots are served but taps still need to be installed.

Boulder Park Opening

- Attending the reopening of the Boulder Park.

Infrastructure Webinars

- Participated in numerous webinars related to infrastructure and EDA funding.

Corridor H

- The Finish the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS) Act was included in the bipartisan infrastructure agreement.
- It includes \$1.25 billion in dedicated funding over five years for the Appalachian transportation network. West Virginia would receive nearly \$200 million toward the completion of Corridor H.
- Bids are due for the Cheat River Bridge October 19. project completed by October 2025.
- Recently completed a two-year term as Corridor H Authority Secretary

Helping Entrepreneurs

- I continue to meet with and be a resource for Tucker County entrepreneurs.

Old Business



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Wastewater Feasibility Study

The wastewater feasibility study is progressing and is expected to be completed next month. The team at Potesta most recently met with Mark Holstine of the West Virginia Solid Waste Management Board to discuss the needs of the Tucker County Landfill. The landfill recently lost a large customer but is planning to pick up a different customer in the future to help fill the gap. Potesta is also scheduled to meet with the Western Pocahontas Properties' engineer in a few weeks to discuss their plans. They are also planning a meeting with the wastewater operators of both Thomas and Davis.

Tucker County Sewer Feasibility Study 2020S-1925 Resolution #2.

Resolution approving invoices relating to the completion of a sewer feasibility study to assess the wastewater treatment needs/issues in the vicinity of Thomas, Davis, Tucker County Industrial Park and surrounding areas and authorizing payment thereof.

Whereas, the Tucker County Development Authority has reviewed the invoices attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference in relation to the completion of the sewer feasibility study to assess the wastewater treatment needs/issues funded by the Infrastructure & Jobs Development Council (IJDC) and US Economic Development Administration (USEDA) and find as follows:

- a.) That none of the items for which payment is proposed to be made has been requested from another funding source.
- b.) That each item for which the payment is proposed to be paid is or was necessary in connection with the Project and constitutes a Cost of the project.
- c.) That each of such costs has been otherwise properly incurred.
- d.) That the payment for each of the items proposed is due and owing.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved the Tucker County Development Authority hereby authorizes and directs the payment of the attached invoices as follows:

Vendor: Potesta & Associates, Inc. (Invoice #163290)

IJDC: \$5,707.00

USEDA: \$5,707.00

Total: \$11,414.00

Dennis Filler motioned to approve the resolution and the motion was seconded by Robby McClung and passed unanimously.



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Title Search - Industrial Park Property

Steptoe & Johnson has completed the title search for the 60 years. This timeframe is what is typically used by a commercial lender. They only reviewed the surface rights because the mineral rights were separated from the property. Steptoe & Johnson had to search back to 1923 to achieve this task. At the previous meeting, the board requested an estimate to go back to 1850. After further investigation, this would be cost prohibitive.

The outcome of the title search revealed a major issue. When the property was purchased from the West Virginia Power & Transmission Company to the West Virginia State Aeronautics Commission on June 8, 1977, it was transferred with a deed restriction that the property be used as an airport and said airport had to be constructed within five years. If the airport wasn't constructed, WV Power & Transmission had the right to repurchase the property.

On April 11, 1985, the WV Aeronautics Commission explained that although they didn't meet the five-year deadline they still wanted an airport to be built. At that time, WV Power & Transmission signed a release that stated the company did not elect to repurchase the property. Then on December 12, 1986, the property was transferred from the WV Aeronautics Commission to the Tucker County Commission subject to the same restriction - that the property be used for an airport. Then in 1996, the County Commission transferred the property to the Tucker County Development Authority with the same restriction in the deed, that the property had to be used as an airport.

To develop the property, the Tucker County Development Authority needs to secure an appropriate release of the Airport Use Restriction from the West Virginia Power and Transmission Company or its successors or assigns, the County Commission of Tucker County, West Virginia, and the West Virginia Aeronautics Commission, and it should place such releases of record in the office of the Clerk of the County Commission of Tucker County, West Virginia.

Ronnie Beall motioned to have Steptoe & Johnson contact First Energy, West Virginia Aeronautics Commission, and County Commission to try to secure a release of the airport use restriction. Ben Nelson seconded the motion. Dennis Filler questioned if the board needed the attorney to contact the County Commission. Executive Director Leyh stated the attorney will still need to prepare the appropriate document for the County Commission to release the restriction. The motion carried unanimously.



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NTIA's Broadband Expansion Grant Program

As discussed at the previous meeting, there was interest from an internet service provider to expand service to Tucker County using an NTIA grant. The broadband team at Generation West Virginia, Shelia DeVilder with the Tucker County Commission and Development Authority all worked collaboratively to develop a project in a very short timeframe. After designing the broadband buildout, the proposed project map went through an internal technical review. It was determined that many of the areas in the proposal are likely already served, thus not eligible. This created a scenario where the proposed project would not be competitive for this specific NTIA grant. Everyone on the team gave their time and talents and worked hard on this application, and although it wasn't successful this time, it could lay the foundation for the ISP to submit a future application using a different funding source.

New Business

Pro Poly Building Modification & Financial Request

The Development Authority's 6,000 square foot shell building in the industrial park has electric heat. Although there is a gas line to the building, it was never used to heat the building. Pro Poly of America is requesting permission to install a Reznor 150,000 BTU natural gas heater and Honeywell 5000 thermostat for the shell building. Pro Poly has received a proposal from a local heating and cooling company. It will cost \$7,900 to install the new unit. Since the new gas heat will benefit the property, they have asked if the Development Authority would have any interest in cost sharing through another rent abatement for some period.

Dennis Filler made a motion to allow Pro Poly of America to make the modification to the building at their own expense and recoup the cost with energy savings from switching from electric heat to gas heat. Ben Nelson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Consideration of Proposal for 2.5 Acres Industrial Park

This agenda item will be presented at a future meeting.

Consideration of Proposal for .89 Acres Industrial Park

This agenda item will be presented at a future meeting.

Development of Coworking Center

Coworking is a style of work that was created in 2006 and involves a shared working environment. Unlike in a typical office environment, those coworking are usually not employed by the same organization. Typically, it is attractive to entrepreneurs, freelancers,



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and remote workers. If the TAP Room project in Thomas were to be funded, it would establish a small permanent coworking center. However, even in the best-case scenario by the time the building is funded and built, it will be a couple of years from opening. Upshur and Randolph Counties already have these types of facilities.

Based on data, new businesses in Tucker County are largely entrepreneurs who are currently working from home. These people are not likely to rent a commercial office, but instead want the flexibility to drop into a space for a few hours, or only a couple of days a week to get out of the house. Coworking offers a solution to the problem of isolation that many entrepreneurs experience while working at home, while at the same time letting them escape the distractions of home. Coworking is not designed for businesses that already rent commercial space, but instead will help scale businesses that then feed the commercial market. Coworking meets many of the unmet needs of solo workers or startups such as basic space and bandwidth. Participants would opt in to the coworking space by selecting a membership level, which ranges from shared desk, to dedicated cubicle, to full private office privileges. The cost of these membership levels would be tiered and are typically billed monthly.

As a Development Authority, one of the best ways we can support entrepreneurial ecosystem is to gain access to entrepreneurs, freelancers and remote workers who are hidden from view, and connect them to others who can provide mentoring, technical assistance, and funding to help them grow.

Executive Director Leyh has been working with Judge Pearson and NYSF staff to consider utilizing some of the existing office space in the center for a coworking project. We are still working through the details, but the concept has been met with great enthusiasm. The general concept is the Tucker County Development Authority would operate the coworking space. TCDA would collaborate with NYSF to identify and dedicate a specific amount of space at NYSF to be used as the coworking space. TCDA would make a blanket monthly contribution to NYSF for that space. TCDA would operate and market the coworking space, manage members from onboarding to retention, collect monthly membership dues, organize events, etc. Coworking members who utilize the space would also make an educational commitment to share their knowledge with students and other members.

Ronnie Beall motioned to continue exploring the concept, April Miller seconded the motion and the motion carried.



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Public Comment

No public comment.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:38 PM after a motion by Ronnie Beall, seconded by Robby McClung.

The next regular meeting of the Tucker County Development Authority will be held on Thursday, September 16, 2021, at 6 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

Steve Leyh, Executive Director