



Tucker County Development Authority

PO Box 176

Thomas, WV 26292

(304) 614-8839

tuckercounty@gmail.com

www.TuckerWV.com

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## Minutes

### Tucker County Development Authority - Special Meeting

January 6, 2022 – 6:00 PM

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

#### Board Members Present:

Wayne Smith – President, Dan Dilly – Vice President, Sandra Frank – Secretary, Roscoe 'Ronnie' Beall (*joined late*) – Treasurer, JR Helmick, Robby McClung, Cory Chase, April Miller, Jody Flanagan, Dennis Filler, Gary Roy, Commissioner - Mike Rosenau, Steven Sponaugle

**Board Members Absent:** Ben Nelson, Bruce Kolsun

**Quorum present?** Yes

#### Guests:

Steve Leyh, Executive Director, Tucker County Development Authority  
Lowell Moore – Tucker County Commissioner  
Kathy Knight

#### Call To Order

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

#### Minutes

Robby McClung motioned to approve the minutes from the November 18, regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Dennis Filler. The minutes of the previous meetings were approved unanimously.

#### Communications and Billing

The Highlands Trail Foundation sent their latest print newsletter.

#### Treasurer's Report

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



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### **Executive Director's Report**

#### **Unemployment Rate**

- Tucker County unemployment rate decreased from 3.8% in September to 3.3% in October to 3.1% in November.
- Lowest unemployment rates in the county since records have been kept – 31 years.
- Many businesses reporting staffing issues.

#### **#8 County for New Business Growth in 2021**

- Tucker County ranked #8 out of 55 counties for new business growth in 2021.
- 499 business entities in January 2021, 551 business entities in December 2021.
- 92 new businesses (18.44% growth).

#### **Hardwood Alliance Zone**

- Discussing developing a new marketing campaign.
- Planning to exhibit and promote county/region at:
  - International Woodworking Fair, August 23-26 in Atlanta, Georgia.
  - National Hardwood Lumber Association's Annual Convention, September 21-23 in Cleveland, Ohio.

#### **Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge**

- Visited with Ron Hollis, refuge manager to become more familiar with their conservation efforts, discuss opportunities.

#### **Proposed Solar Project**

- First Energy has announced a proposal to develop a 44-acre solar project on abandoned mine land across Corridor H from the Tucker County Industrial Park.
- This presents an added benefit for the Tucker County Industrial Park because companies are increasingly choosing to locate their facilities where they have access to renewable energy.

#### **Mountaineer Gas**

- Continuing conversations with Mountaineer Gas about their service area.

#### **West Virginia Economic Development Council**

- Scheduled to attend the 2022 WVEDC Legislative Conference virtually on January 18 & 19.

#### **Assisting Small Businesses**

- Continue to counsel and assist entrepreneurs.
- Actively identifying ways to support their efforts and connect them to resources.



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### **Old Business**

#### **Wastewater Feasibility Study**

Executive Director Leyh reported that the study is being finalized. A request has been made to have a representative from Potesta present the wastewater feasibility study at the January 20 board meeting to explain the findings and recommendations and allow for questions. A meeting was also scheduled with elected officials to discuss.

RK&K working on behalf of the Town of Davis, have identified a major inflow and infiltration issue with their wastewater collection system. Perhaps as much as 80% of the water getting into the system is excess water and not wastewater.

#### **Industrial Park Deed Restriction**

The West Virginia Aeronautics Commission held a special meeting at 1 PM on December 28, 2021 to consider releasing the deed restriction on the Industrial Park property. The meeting took place without any notification to the Tucker County Development Authority or TCDA legal counsel. Director Leyh reported that he has been told they voted to release the deed restriction, but no correspondence from the Aeronautics Commission has been received.

Commissioner Moore reported that he attended the Aeronautics Commission meeting and has a copy of the draft resolution that was passed at the meeting. He said the resolution will release the Industrial Park restriction without any conditions.

#### **FY21 Audit**

The FY21 audit was completed and submitted to the state on time. However, upon further review, our accountant disagreed with the numbers for the Deferred Outflow and Deferred Inflows of Resources and thereby the RHBT Expense adjustment. An effort is being made to resolve this matter. A revised audit was received this afternoon but has not been reviewed.

### **New Business**

#### **Unemployment Insurance**

In 2013 an effort was made to set up an unemployment account with Workforce West Virginia for the Tucker County Development Authority. Although the proper paperwork was submitted to the state, the account was not set up. At the time, TCDA opted out of quarterly contributions, but instead decided to be responsible for paying Workforce WV on a reimbursement basis if an unemployment claim were to be made.



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Workforce WV taxes 2.7% on the first \$12,000 of wages. Meaning the total cost for the year for unemployment would be \$324.00 in quarterly payments of \$81 each. Or TCDA could elect the reimbursement method of payment, in which TCDA is required to pay into the Unemployment Compensation Fund an amount equal to the amount of unemployment benefits paid to former full-time or part-time employee. Because we are setting up the account for the first time since renewing our corporate charter the board must decide how it would like to handle the unemployment account.

Dennis Filler motioned to set up an unemployment account making quarterly payment. Sandra Frank seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**Broadband Letters to Senators Manchin and Capito**

Orion Strategies, a public relations firm, requested the Tucker County Development Authority send letters to Senators Capito and Manchin to request the Federal Communications Commission enact nationwide rules for utility pole access to ensure successful broadband deployment.

Cory Chase motioned to approve sending the letters. Dennis Filler seconded the motion and it carried with all in favor.

**Public Comment**

Kathy Knight thanked the board for allowing her to join the meeting.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 PM after a motion by Steve Sponaule, seconded by April Miller

The next meeting of the Tucker County Development Authority will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 6 PM.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

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Sandra Frank, Secretary