



GREENE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 21, 2020, @ 6:30 p.m.

Due to Covid-19, this meeting was held via Zoom Video Conference

CALL TO ORDER

- A meeting of the Economic Development Authority Board of Directors was held via Zoom Video Conference on Tuesday, April 21, 2020. Call to order at 6:47 pm with Mr. Michael Payne, Chairman, presiding.

RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

- **Members in Attendance:** Matt Dillon, Matt Sweetanos, Gretchen Scheuermann, Julia Roberts, James Tsikerdanos, Michael Payne
- **Members not in Attendance:** Whitt Ledford
- **Non-Members in Attendance:** Bill Martin, Jay Willer, Alan Yost, Diana Gamma

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- Minutes from January 21, 2020 were distributed electronically to all board members. Mr. Tsikerdanos moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Sweetanos seconded. Motion Passed.
- Minutes from February 21, 2020 were distributed electronically to all board members. Mrs. Roberts moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Tsikerdanos seconded. Motion Passed.

FINANCIALS

- P & L and Balance sheets for EDA and Tourism were distributed electronically to all board members.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS, COMMITTEES, and the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM DIRECTOR

- **Tourism Finances**
 - **Projected FY P&L** – Mr. Yost reported that everyone has concerns due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Tourism is continually being monitored and has found that regional lodging industries are seeing an 80% decline and through conversation with local transient lodging business owners, Greene's lodging is seeing the same decline. Mr. Yost projected \$46K in expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year [Mr. Yost misspoke; projected expenses are \$40K]. At the end of the fiscal year, there will be \$96K which includes \$46K cash on hand and \$50K set aside for future repairs of the new visitor center. Next year's budget has some big expenses including competitive grant program for \$20K and other sponsorships.

- **Approval of \$5,000 Shenandoah National Park (SNP) Trust Donation** – Mr. Yost explained the fund-raising attempts by the SNP Trust to clean up and renew the overlooks; the cost to do this at the four overlooks in Greene is an estimated \$20K. Susan Sherman of the SNP Trust approached Mr. Yost for a donation; the SNP Trust is contributing \$10K and \$5K is being donated by a private donor. With a donation, Greene County will be named in the interpretive signage at the overlooks. Mr. Yost explained how the SNP is Greene’s biggest asset and noted that the Tourism Council is in favor of the \$5K donation for this project. Mr. Tsikerdanos wondered if this was already budgeted. Mr. Yost explained that it was not budgeted in the original fiscal year’s budget but is accounted for in the remaining \$40K of expenses for the current fiscal year. Mrs. Roberts moved to approve the \$5K. Mr. Tsikerdanos seconded. Motion passed.
- **Update on Visitor Center timeline for transition to new location** – Mr. Yost explained that the process began today with the move. The outside painting is not complete but three quotes from lead certified painters have been obtained. Rick Morris from the County’s Maintenance Department is overseeing this process. The move-in projection cost was \$50K and it appears as though that number may rise to \$59K with unexpected move-in expenses. The Visitor Center will not be open to the public until the Governor say we can open. Mr. Payne asked what issues caused the over-expenditure. Mr. Yost explained these issues (bathroom lights needed to be wired to switches instead of light pulls, purchase and installation of new deadbolts and handles, replacement of all light fixtures, purchase and installation of ceiling fans). Mr. Martin thanked Alan for the report; he asked if the visitor center moved as well and if rent at the other facility has ended. Mr. Yost answered yes to both of these questions. Mr. Martin asked Mr. Yost if he can confirm that the HVAC system heats and cools. Mr. Yost answered yes, that it’s been heating since we took over and that we have been told that it will cool. There is an exterior heat pump motor on one unit which is scheduled to be repaired. Mr. Martin asked to confirm which month the first bond payment is due: October or November? Mr. Yost was not completely sure and could not locate documentation to answer at the time of the meeting. Mr. Payne asked about the sewer. Mr. Yost explained that we are currently on septic but we do have a sewer EDU and are looking into hooking up in the future. Currently, we are paying a minimum sewer fee and EDU service fee. Photos from the interior of the visitor center were shared with the EDA.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

- No Comments

OLD BUSINESS

- None

NEW BUSINESS

- **Chamber of Commerce Radio Advertising Campaign** – Mr. Payne moved this item to the top so that Ms. Bedker did not have to stay for the entire meeting. Ms. Bedker, representing the Greene Chamber of Commerce, is requesting the support of the EDA for the C’ville Radio marketing group. The EDA

currently supports the radio campaign by 50% and the Chamber supports 50% with an end date of June 30, 2020. The Chamber would like to proceed with a continuation of the marketing program from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 and is seeking EDA's support in the amount of \$8916 (50% of the total cost). Mr. Tsikerdanos is impressed with how active the Chamber has been during this crisis and is in favor of supporting the full amount requested by the Chamber. Mr. Payne appreciates the renewed energy the Chamber has brought this past year, particularly these past few months, and the support for the local community; he is happy to see that the radio spots are filled and supports the idea to drive people to support commerce. Mr. Dillon is happy to hear that several new businesses are lined up to take advantage. Mrs. Roberts, for the record, will be abstaining as she sits on both boards. Mr. Payne had asked previously for 50% of the EDA's contribution from Tourism and has not been reimbursed. Mr. Yost did not receive a formal request and believes it was brought up informally in a discussion. If the EDA wants to make a formal request in the future, Mr. Yost could bring it to the Tourism board once TOT numbers calm down in the next quarter. Ms. Scheuermann wondered if Tourism could be approached in the future beyond the next quarter. Mr. Tiskerdanos agrees that a formal request could be made in the future but it's best to hold off on that right now. He feels the EDA can shoulder it right now. Mr. Dillon asked if this would affect the EDA's budget when it comes to small business loans and people who will start reaching out when they are able to start to get their feet under them. He wants to make sure we have the resources set aside for this. Mr. Payne explained that if \$85,000 was allowed to go to a loan program, the EDA would still be left with about \$86,000. Mr. Tsikerdanos understands Mr. Dillon's concerns and feels that the radio program can help those businesses in the short term; he also noted that this might be the last time the EDA is able to support this program. Discussion continued about the longevity of the program. Mr. Tsiderdanos made a motion to approve the ask from the Chamber of Commerce for \$8916 for the radio program. Mr. Dillon seconded. Ms. Scheuermann abstained. Ms. Roberts abstained. Mr. Sweetanos, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Tsikerdanos and Mr. Payne all responded aye. Motion passed.

- **Approval of Final Loan Documents for Step/Site Readiness Loan and Revolving Loan Programs** – Mr. Tsikerdanos moved to approve the loan document as written. Mrs. Roberts seconded. Motion passed.
- **Discussion of Modification of Revolving Loan Program to create micro-loan program to address COVID-19 response** – Lengthy discussion was had regarding loans that need to be secured with collateral versus those with personal guarantees. Personal guarantee was determined to be the best way to get money out efficiently, quickly, and securely. The discussion was tabled with the understanding that board members would review other loans being offered (for instance, Mr. Sweetanos mentioned the Waynesboro and Augusta loans which are specific to rent, utilities, capital improvements and payroll) and convene again in a Special Meeting to determine what is the best fit for this EDA in whole or in part. This meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2020 at 6:30 via Zoom. Mr. Payne mentioned that he has heard from two local businesses regarding loans. One is requesting assistance with rent and cost of a sign; the cost of the sign was identified as a yearly contract in the amount of \$8425. Mr. Payne asked for a copy of the contract and is waiting for it. Mr. Payne asked for thoughts on the request. Mrs. Roberts & Mr. Sweetanos both think that until the loan program is figured out, no

decision should be made so that all businesses can be treated equally. Mr. Yost asked if this could be a potential marketing opportunity for Greene County Tourism. Mr. Payne ended the discussion with a reminder of the May 5 special meeting.

- **Discussion of the creation of an online resource** to connect Greene Businesses to sources for reduced rate services and goods as well as to a broader customer market. Mr. Payne spoke with a local website developer who offered to offer discounts to small businesses to help them build an online presence. Mr. Payne opened the discussion on how we can create a Greene Guide or Greene Pages and encourage local businesses to add or develop e-commerce capabilities. Mrs. Roberts noted that the Chamber Chatter included information on alternative ways to get customers. Mr. Yost explained about the Relaunch Greene work group comprised of EDA members, Chamber Board members, Tourism Council members and business community members; this group is working on a campaign for when the stay at home restrictions are lifted. One conversation was to create a website much like Mr. Payne was suggesting. The Relaunch Greene group is trying to see if the current Tourism website could host a community business site that includes links to business websites, links to online sales, links to square accounts, etc. which allows businesses to pivot to this online selling. Mr. Payne thinks the focus needs to be on services and opportunities for discounts. Mr. Tsikerdanos thoughts included a web-centric set of vendors that can help people get online that are willing to give discounts and let the public know about these discounts enabling them to pivot to an online presence. Mr. Payne said that a terms of use agreement or memorandum of understanding for all participants be developed; this would provide a means to remove anyone not adhering to the system. Mr. Payne wants to know how quickly this can get rolling. Mr. Yost would like to get something formalized by the end of the week. Mr. Payne would like this to be moving before Mother's Day to give businesses the biggest boost possible and that Mother's Day should be the primary target for businesses. Mr. Yost will continue to work on this with Relaunch Greene and look for the EDA to give a thumb's up once a plan is ready to enact with official approval at the next meeting.
- **Vote on Declining Right of First Refusal** triggered by an industrial park property being transferred from the lot owner to the same owner's newly created LLC. Mrs. Roberts moved to decline the right of first refusal. Mr. Sweetanos seconded. Motion passed. Mr. Payne indicated that a follow up piece of this needs to be approved as well; the mortgage company needs the EDA to forgo right of first refusal so long as there's a mortgage on the property. Mrs. Roberts is not familiar with this and will look into it; she will get back to the EDA with her recommendation.
- **Vote on approval of Zoom meeting fee structure and adoption of it as a means of communication during the pandemic.** Mrs. Roberts moved to approve Zoom meetings as a means of communication month to month as long as needed. Mr. Tsikerdanos seconded. Motion passed.
- **Vote on Take-Out in Greene sponsorship.** Mr. Yost described the campaign as a success and was impressed with the Chamber's Facebook video promotions. The winner was Ian Judd, a worker laid off during this crisis and the winning restaurant was The 106. Mrs. Roberts moved to pay \$500 for the promotion. Mr. Dillon seconded. Motion passed.
- **Industrial Park**

- Mr. Yost was approached by an Industrial Park property owner regarding his concern of sign clutter and the illegal signs that are not permitted by the county. It is the EDA's responsibility to maintain the park and so Mr. Yost feels it's appropriate for the EDA to reach out to the owners of the illegal signs and remind them of the sign ordinance and ask them to take them down. The owner thought it might be nice to have a directory sign that allows tenants to be listed after the illegal signs are removed. If the EDA is interested in considering purchasing a sign, Mr. Yost would look into the cost of the sign; one suggestion was to have the EDA pay a portion and each tenant pay a portion. Mr. Tsikerdanos believes the sign clutter should be looked into but given the economic climate, a sign is not the most prudent thing to do at the moment. Mr. Sweetanos agrees with Mr. Tsikerdanos and that maybe it could be revisited in the future. Mrs. Roberts questioned why the owner has not filed a complaint with the County. Mr. Payne suggested the EDA file the complaint and let the County handle it through their existing ordinances. Mr. Yost suggested that during this time, we should wait until we get back to normal. Mr. Sweetanos moved that the EDA table this until a later date. Mr. Tsikerdanos seconded. Motion passed.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 5, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- **JSK Update and Terms Review**
- **Enter Executive Session:** Mr. Payne asked for a motion to enter into executive session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (a4) of the Code of Virginia; Mr. Tsikerdanos moved to enter; Mrs. Roberts seconded. Ms. Scheuermann, aye; Mrs. Roberts, aye; Mr. Sweetanos, aye; Mr. Dillon, aye; Mr. Tsikerdanos, aye; Mr. Payne, aye. Motion passed.
- **Return to Public Session:** Ms. Scheuermann moved to return to open session. Mrs. Roberts seconded. Ms. Scheuermann, aye; Mrs. Roberts, aye; Mr. Sweetanos, aye; Mr. Dillon, aye; Mr. Tsikerdanos, aye; Mr. Payne, aye. Motion passed.
- **Certification:** All members certify that only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirement and only such matters as identified by the motion to enter into executive session were discussed. Ms. Scheuermann, aye; Mrs. Roberts, aye; Mr. Sweetanos, aye; Mr. Dillon, aye; Mr. Tsikerdanos, aye; Mr. Payne, aye.

ADJOURNMENT

- Meeting adjourned at 9:14 pm.