

Wyandot County Office of Economic Development

BOARD MEETING MINUTES Monday, September 14, 2020

Attendees: John Barnes, Beth Book, Cassie Carlson, Jason Eibling, Joe Faine, Amanda Fleming, Kathy Grasz, Rex Grasz, Doug Kelly, Brian Kimmel, Kurt Kimmel, Greg Moon, Jessica Moon, Sara Pahl, Steve Seitz, Elaine Tschanen, Tim Vaughn, Laurie Vent, Paul Wagner

Guests: Nicky Bowen, Bright Minds Learning Center Daycare & Preschool

Meeting Called to Order: President, Rex Grasz

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Paul Wagner made a motion to approve the July 13, 2020 meeting minutes and John Barnes made a second. The minutes were approved.

Guest Speaker: Nicky Bowen spoke about the opening of the Bright Minds Learning Center Daycare & Preschool in the Sheriden Subdivision in Carey.

Financial Budget Update: Sara Pahl reported since the last meeting there had been a \$10,000 deposit from Richland County for joining Community Opportunity but there wasn't much else to report. Kurt Kimmel made a motion to accept the financial report and Tim Vaughn made a second. Financial report was accepted.

Old Business

- Wyandot Improvement Network ("WIN")
 - Greg noted the WIN formall received 501(c)3 approval by the IRS.
 - The checking account has been established with the First National Bank of Sycamore. Both the WCOED and Chamber contributed an initial \$500 into that account.
 - Quotes for Directors & Officers Insurance are being secured.
 - Brand / logo designs have been narrowed down to just a couple.
 - One of the large initial challenges will be sustained funding of the new organization. The hope is that at some point there will be some form of combined invoicing where some of WCOED and Chamber members' dues are automatically allocated to the WIN account.
 - For this upcoming billing, adding a \$25 donation to membership invoices (that members can opt out of if they so choose) is being considered. The

- Wyandot Chamber has been using this method for many years now, which they now plan to use to fund the WIN.
- One way WIN could offer some value to the downtown areas is by doing “walk-a-bouts.” This would be to take inventory of what areas have, what they might need or what they wish for. Then that will be coupled with actual market data to put together a gap analysis with action items that could be focused on.
 - The main focus is how to make WIN an asset to the county.
 - Project Updates
 - Sheriden Subdivision Building
 - John Barnes reported that all four units of the new commercial facility are full.
 - Koehler Trust Property Development
 - The WCOED has been marketing this 146-acre property on the north end of Upper Sandusky as the “phase 2” of the Columbus Toledo Midway Industrial Park, but the major issue with the site has been the lack of utilities to its borders.
 - WCOED has been working to leverage the planned investment of the City by using a new state level program called the Ohio Sites Inventory Program.
 - AEP agreed to reimburse the WCOED for a Phase 1 assessment required for OSIP.
 - The Phase 1 was completed by Peterman Associates a few weeks back and found no environmental concerns.
 - The \$4,900 reimbursement check from AEP was received last week.
 - Greg also had communications last week with the RGP who is helping to vet this project with JobsOhio's OSIP and hopes to have a clear picture of what assistance they will provide in the near future.
 - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
 - At the last meeting Greg went through the progress that had been made regarding a new CEDS effort involving a multi-county study including Wyandot, Crawford, Richland, and Ashland counties.
 - A CEDS allows for certain funding opportunities and Wyandot County's current CEDS is out of date.
 - Recent CARES Act funding bolstered planning funds grants for updating or drafting new CEDS from a 50:50 to an 80:20 match.
 - Over the past couple months, WCOED along with the other counties have been compiling the necessary information and documents for the grant application, and it was submitted to the EDA just under 2 weeks ago.
 - If the grant is approved, the 4 counties have agreed to contract with the Center for Regional Development, based out of BGSU, to carry out the CEDS over 2021.
 - Community Opportunity
 - United Way Grant

- Greg applied again for a grant from the United Way to offset the \$1,800 annual site maintenance costs incurred for Community Opportunity.
 - Last month he received notification that the UW of Wyandot County was awarding WCOED \$1,400.
 - This marks the 3rd consecutive grant award from the UW for this effort.
 - Richland County
 - Officially joined the Community Opportunity platform
 - They paid \$20,000 to do so, which was split evenly between Wyandot and Crawford counties since they established and built up the system.
 - Richland's area workforce board is heavily supporting the program and has already put forward over \$9,000 worth of advertising.
- Project Lead Tracking
 - Over the past two months there have been 3 new building leads and 1 new site lead.
 - The new site lead, Project Silver, was for a food manufacturing facility searching for either 20+ acres of land or an existing 240k SF facility. Greg submitted the Upper Sandusky Large Development Site.
 - Greg did learn that one of the site leads he had submitted a property for back in June, Project UFO-T, was rejected 2 weeks ago by the site selection consultant. The fact that no utilities yet exist on the site threw the submission out of the running.

New Business

- Annual Dinner
 - Thursday, Nov. 5th at the Sycamore Event Center.
 - This year's speaker will be Jim Robey, Director of Regional Economic Planning Services, W.E. Upjohn Institute. He is an economist who has done consulting for the Federal Reserve, and he does contract work for the RGP.
- Wyandot Small Business Relief Program
 - A couple months ago, it was realized that federal CARES Act dollars that were allocated down to local political subdivisions through the state could be used to support private businesses.
 - Local leaders and WCOED were quick to join the discussion, and with quick approval from the county commissioners developed their own Small Business Relief Program.
 - After attending a City of Upper Sandusky council meeting, they also allocated money to the program that would hopefully allow us to cover about 20+ grant awards.
 - The program was put into place in early August the grants up to \$5,000 for businesses who met certain guidelines, including: greater than 50 employees, greater than \$1 million in annual revenues, and who

experienced a 25% decrease in revenues for the period of March-May 2020 vs 2019.

- The reimbursement grant can cover eligible business operation expenses.
- The deadline for applications is September 15.
 - Currently there are 19 applications submitted accounting for over \$85,000 in requested funds.
- This is the first time since Greg has been in this position that the local level has had the ability to grant public dollars directly to private sector businesses. The CARES Act funds we currently possess locally that are not used within the next few weeks are returned to the State so all of our local public leaders were on board to use these funds while we could to support small businesses.
- This was a great way to show how the WCOED can be an asset by informing our local leaders of this ability and organizing and facilitating the process to bring it to our community.
- Ohio EDA - Wyandot Marketing Video
 - For this year's OEDA Annual Conference, WCOED teamed up with the RGP to conduct a session on Economic Development success in Wyandot County through the speculative development in the Village of Carey.
 - To do so WCOED conducted video interviews with Mayor Jenn Rathburn, John Barnes, Greg, Chase Eikenbary with the RGP, and Tom Charnesky of Hanon Systems. There was also footage shot around Arrowhead Commerce Park, which will be edited into a nice featurette for the session.
 - The OEDA's conference is virtual this year but will still have over a thousand attendees who will see the video. It will be a nice reminder of the success WCOED has had in Wyandot County, and can continue to serve as a marketing piece well into the future that was produced with no direct cost.
- Upper Sandusky Schools Business Advisory Council
 - Laurie Vent reported that pre COVID, the school was on a roll with their release program, the job placing of students and job shadowing thanks to many involved in the WCOED.
 - Laurie explained there were still students to be placed through the Work Based Learning program asked anyone interested in helping this year to contact her or Scott Emerick.
 - The college and careers class still plans to have guest speakers through ZOOM and hopefully have live guest speakers later in the school year.
 - Laurie also asked members to think about what changes in job skills or job marketing needs were brought about by the COVID and report them to her so that the school could adjust to those changes.
- Miscellaneous Items
 - 2021 WCOED Officers
 - During November and December WCOED is required to put out nominations for officers.
 - Specifically Vice President and Treasurer.
 - Unemployment Claims

- Wyandot's most recent unemployment rate, for July, has fallen again to 5.8% (the 4th lowest rate in the state (9.1% statewide).
- Wyandot continuing weekly unemployment claims pre-COVID were steady in the sub-200s.
- For the week ended May 2nd, they hit a peak of 2,305.
- For the most recent week ended September 4, continuing claims were down to 376.

Updates were given from WCOED members and guests.

Amanda Fleming made a motion to adjourn the meeting and a second was made by Sara Pahl. Meeting was adjourned.