

Wyandot County Office of Economic Development

BOARD MEETING MINUTES Monday, May 11, 2020

Attendees: John Barnes, Andy Bishop, Beth Book, Cathy Browne, Cassie Carlson, Lenny Clouse, LuAnn Cooke, Chase Eikenberry, Rick Ekleberry, Joe Faine, Amanda Fleming, Amy Frisch, Frank Gibson, Kathy Grasz, Rex Grasz, Mike Jay, Matt Jennings, Mark Johnson, Greg Knestrick, Rob McClure, Greg Moon, Jessica Moon, Sara Pahl, Jennifer Rathburn, Steve Seitz, Elaine Tschanen, Tim Vaughn, Laurie Vent

Meeting Called to Order: President, Rex Grasz

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Amanda Fleming made a motion to approve the March 9, 2020 meeting minutes and Andy Bishop made a second. The minutes were approved.

Financial Budget Update: Sara Pahl reported that WCOED received their quarterly United Way payment of \$350. She also reported that expenses were under budget for the year so far and that she has filed the yearly 990 tax return. Jessica Moon made a motion to accept the financial report and Cassie Carlson made a second. Financial report was accepted.

Old Business

- Wyandot Improvement Network ("WIN")
 - Greg reported at the last meeting WCOED approved moving forward with the establishment of a new umbrella entity to serve as the united front for our countywide development organizations mainly including Economic Development and the Wyandot Chamber of Commerce. The Carey Chamber of Commerce and Wyandot County Visitors Bureau may likely have a part in the organization but a final agreement has yet to be made.
 - Jessica Moon reported that this new entity was not meant to replace the existing organizations but to assist them with obtaining goals that the smaller organizations would not be able to do on their own. They are currently still exploring options as to what would most benefit everyone involved.
 - We have coined the new 501(c)3 organization the Wyandot Improvement Network or "WIN" for short.

- The filing with the Ohio Secretary of State has been done and the organization's bylaws are currently being organized. Following this the next step will be filing with the IRS at which time this organization will be able to receive tax exempt funds.
- In the months ahead the task will be to sort through possible financial and membership scenarios where joint membership possibilities could somehow be offered to those organizations that are part of both the Wyandot Chamber and Economic Development, or that will result in the ongoing sustainable operation of our countywide development efforts.
- Community Branding Project
 - The WCOED and Chamber have also been working with the County, City of Upper Sandusky, and Village of Carey on a comprehensive branding project.
 - Late last year, WCOED developed an RFP that was submitted to 20+ branding firms and during the month of March. The proposals received had been narrowed down to a handful when the COVID-19 crisis hit.
 - Since this program was being funded between the 3 public bodies involved, the effort was suspended due to the fact that all of their budgets are projected to incur a major impact.
 - The plan is to still move forward with the project once things return to normal.
- Project Updates
 - Wyandot Memorial Hospital
 - The WMH expansion project was suspended due to the COVID-19 crisis but was restarted on May 4.
 - The project is behind schedule by a couple of weeks but is still projected to be complete by late fall.
- Project Lead Tracking
 - Thus far YTD, WCOED has had 7 new building leads and 3 new leads for sites.
 - That is about a 30% decrease in leads received last year at this time.

New Business

- New Project – Kalmbach Feeds
 - Andy Bishop reported that Kalmbach Feeds is proposing a 42,300 square foot warehouse expansion to the west end of its MPK facility. This expansion is necessary to support its increased demand for bagged product as the company now has customers in all of the 48 contiguous states, and some of their sales are now taking place through Amazon.
 - Kalmbach Feeds is projecting this \$5+ million project will create at least 20 new full-time positions over the next 2 years, which will account for \$1.2 million in new annual payroll.
 - The WCOED has been working with Kalmbach Feeds to process an Enterprise Zone agreement for the new project, which will exempt 75% of new real property taxes that would have been incurred for a length of 10 years. If approved by Carey Schools, Crawford Township, and the County,

- the exemption value is expected to be roughly \$104,000 over the 10-year period.
- Greg has also been working with JobsOhio to find assistance from the state level for Kalmbach Feeds' potential investment.
 - 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 CTMIP, but the major issue with the site has been the lack of utilities to its borders.
 - Late last year, the City of Upper Sandusky did budget to extend its water and sanitary sewer service, similar to what was laid out by Peterman Associates roughly 5 years ago, that would involve the utilities extending beyond the end of Tarhe Trail and under the 4-lane US-23/30 highway.
 - Greg is working to leverage the planned investment of the City by using a new state level program called the Ohio Sites Inventory Program. This is a grant and loan program (anticipated to be \$35,000) to prepare sites with infrastructure or buildings.
 - The hope is that the utility extension investment can be leveraged to obtain grant funding to pay for needed site assessments including: Environmental Site Assessment Phase 1, Geotechnical Study, Wetlands Delineation, Archaeological Study, and Endangered Species Analysis.
 - Cost estimates are being obtained to have all of these completed, and WCOED is building out the necessary state project request information.
 - Having these studies done will also move this site over the large remaining requirements necessary to make it a certified site within the state of Ohio.
 - County Promotional Efforts
 - Community Opportunity Posts
 - WCOED and the Crawford Partnership contracted with a marketing firm out of Mansfield to create paid advertisements for Community Opportunity throughout 2020.
 - These targeted posts feature local companies and organizations that have used and advocate for the Community Opportunity System with a testimonial. Those Wyandot County organizations that were featured included Kimmel Cleaners, First Citizens National Bank, Mohawk Local Schools, and Vaughn Industries. Their 4 posts received over 15,000 online impressions.
 - Promotional Video
 - The Attraction group of the Wyandot Employment Task Force and Wyandot County Young Professionals have been working on the production of a promotional video for Wyandot County for some time.
 - The video was released online 2 weeks ago which features and targets the younger, family type individuals that we envisioned would be more apt to the benefits of and mobile enough to visit or possibly relocate to Wyandot County.

- This video is called “This is Why-Wyandot County, Ohio” and can be found on YouTube and the Wyandot County Young Professionals Facebook page.
- Upper Sandusky Schools Business Advisory Council
 - Laurie Vent reported that there was not much information to report because of COVID-19. She thanked the businesses who hired high school seniors which helped some of them meet graduation requirements.
 - She also reported that this year Upper will be having a drive-thru graduation ceremony on May 21st and that almost all of the graduating seniors will be participating.
- Miscellaneous Items
 - Imagination Library
 - Greg reported that this is a free book gifting program that provides age appropriate books mailed monthly to any child 5 and under.
 - WCOED worked to assemble a group of local partners early this year, and organized dialogue with staff from the Ohio Imagination Library Program.
 - Wyandot was among the minority of counties in the state that had yet to implement this program. Under DeWine, Ohio Imagination Library covers 50% of the cost.
 - This program went live on May 1st. Local funds are being held at the Wyandot Community Foundation. Some local funding organizations include Rotary, Kiwanis, Young Professionals, as well as First National Bank of Sycamore and Vaughn Industries. It is estimated that the first year will cost roughly \$6,000 with the cost increasing as the program grows.
 - Amanda Fleming reported that there are currently 185 kids registered with more registering every day.
 - Community Center
 - WCOED does serve on the Wyandot Mentoring Program steering committee, and the Director of that program has ventured out to establish a new community center in Upper Sandusky.
 - The idea for this center partially came from the need to alleviate the large number of youth that would go to the library after school.
 - A private funder is paying for the rent and improvements to the former New Haven Supply building.
 - This center will initially be open to kids in grades 4-8 and they are considering means to transport kids from Carey and Mohawk.
 - COVID-19 Actions
 - There has been a lot going at the WCOED surrounding COVID-19:
 - Creation of a Business Resource Page
 - Survey conducted and results released in late March to show how the COVID-19 crisis affected local businesses.
 - 2 regional SBA webinars & 1 local financial assistance webinar were conducted

- Greg also mentioned the First Federal Bank joint offering a new lending program in partnership with JobsOhio.

Updates from Members and Guests

Lenny Clouse made a motion to adjourn the meeting and a second was made by Jessica Moon.