

# Wyandot County Office of Economic Development

## BOARD MEETING MINUTES Monday, July 13, 2020

**Attendees:** Darrell Baird, John Barnes, Beth Book, Cassie Carlson, Lenny Clouse, Dave Courtad, Scott Dickey, Frank Gibson, Rob McClure, Greg Moon, Jessica Moon, Sara Pahl, Steve Seitz, Elaine Tschanen, Laurie Vent, Paul Wagner

**Meeting Called to Order:** Director, Greg Moon

**Approval of Meeting Minutes:** John Barnes made a motion to approve the May 11, 2020 meeting minutes and Lenny Clouse made a second. The minutes were approved.

**Financial Budget Update:** Sara Pahl reported that not much had changed since the last meeting. Scott Dickey made a motion to accept the financial report and Beth Book made a second. Financial report was accepted.

### Old Business

- Wyandot Improvement Network ("WIN")
  - Greg reported since the last WCOED meeting there have been 2 WIN board meetings, bylaws were finalized, and board members and officers appointed.
  - The structure of the WIN board includes at least 5 members: the Executive Director of the WCOED, the Executive Director of the Wyandot Chamber, an appointed representative from both of those organizations, and at least one other appointed board member.
    - Rick Ekleberry is serving as the appointed member from the WCOED, and Jason Eibling the appointed Chamber representative. Sara Lou Binau, Director of the Visitors Bureau was appointed to the 5<sup>th</sup> board position.
  - The filing for 501c3 status has been submitted to the IRS by Sara Pahl.
  - A checking account is being established with the First National Bank of Sycamore.
    - Both the WCOED and the Wyandot Chamber will be contributing an initial \$500 to the WIN.
  - Work is being done to get quotes for directors and officers Insurance.
  - A brand / logo has been requested from a couple different sources. Once some viable options have been gathered, a survey will be sent out to WCOED members to choose a favorite design.

- One of the big initial challenges is to see how to do a combined membership invoice for the WCOED, the Wyandot Chamber, and the WIN.
  - Figuring out how to provide a benefit to someone who would like to support both organizations and the WIN is a key.
- Project Updates
  - Sheriden Subdivision Building
    - John Barnes reported that the new 4 unit building went up quick and things are going well.
    - Bright Minds Learning Center (Daycare & Preschool) headed by Nicky Bowen will occupy one of the larger units. They are planning on taking occupancy this week. Nicky is currently working on state inspections. They are hoping to open in September.
    - Dan Beach, Edward Jones, and a local chiropractor will occupy another 2 other units.
    - The fourth unit is still available.
  - Kalmbach Feeds
    - Kalmbach Feeds is constructing a 42,300 SF expansion of its warehouse and distribution facility at the MPK plant. 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 worked with Kalmbach Feeds to process an Enterprise Zone agreement for the new project, which after being initially reviewed by the taxing jurisdictions involved will exempt 75% of new real property taxes that would have been incurred for a length of 10 years. The exemption value is expected to be a total of roughly \$104,000 over that 10-year period.
  - Koehler Trust Property Development
    - Late last year, the City of Upper Sandusky budgeted to extend its water and sanitary sewer service to this property similar to what was laid out by Peterman Associates roughly 5 years ago.
    - This would involve the utilities extending beyond the end of Tarhe Trail and under the 4-lane US-23/30 near the cul-de-sac on the far side and is estimated to cost roughly \$360,000.
    - WCOED has been working to leverage the planned investment of the City (\$300,000+) by using a new state level program called the Ohio Sites Inventory Program. This is a grant and loan program to prepare sites with infrastructure or buildings that are in demand.
    - At first the idea was to fund a number of site due diligence studies required to move this site towards a certification, but the idea is to apply for these funds to now offset a portion of the infrastructure costs.
    - The one roadblock we faced to qualify for the OSIP was that the site must have an Environmental Site Assessment Phase 1 completed.

- WCOED worked with Peterman Associates to obtain a \$4,900 quote for that Phase 1, and then worked on how to pay for it.
- Eventually our partners at AEP Economic Development came to the table and agreed to cover the cost of the study.
- The WCOED formally requested the Phase 1 done with Peterman Associates, and then will be reimbursed by AEP.
  - The assessment was completed July 9<sup>th</sup>, and no environmental concerns were found.
- As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Ohio Sites Inventory Program pre-vet application opened, and WCOED has applied for assistance with this site.
- Project Lead Tracking
  - Over the past two months there have been 2 new building leads and 2 new leads for sites.
  - Greg was able to submit the Koehler Trust Property to the site lead Project UFO-T. This was specifically for a new food manufacturing facility that had to be a 20-acre site within 75 miles of Columbus.

## New Business

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
  - Eric Romich started the previous Wyandot County CEDS, and Greg took it over, finally finalizing it in early 2013.
  - The CEDS is a document and process governed by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), and coordinates ED efforts by engaging stakeholders and establishing a strategic blueprint for a community or region.
    - The CEDS includes background analysis, a SWOT analysis, and strategic direction or an action plan.
  - The EDA considers a CEDS plan good for 5 years. Recently the CARES Act bolstered planning funds for updating or drafting new CEDS from a 50:50 to an 80:20 match.
  - Greg reached out to a consultant to update the WCOED CEDS, and the quote was \$50,000. Greg learned that the EDA will no longer provide grant funding for single county CEDS but only regional, or multi-county CEDS.
  - Greg decided to reach out to our partner communities in Crawford, Richland, and Ashland due to their recent partnership working to market the US30 corridor.
  - He then organized a call with the area EDA center at BGSU who advised him they would write the CEDS and the grant application to the EDA.
    - Their proposal for our 4-county CEDS is \$90,000. With the EDA grant it would be \$18,000 as the local match or \$4,500 per community.
    - To further offset that local cost, the group is also looking at newly created planning funds through JobsOhio.
    - Another possibility to help cover our local match would be through partnership with the electric cooperatives serving Wyandot County.

- Greg communicated with them a few months ago and received a very positive response to their help in this endeavor.
- Richland County will be joining the Community Opportunity platform, and paying \$20,000 to do so, which will be split evenly between Wyandot and Crawford counties since we established the system.
    - The original plan for the site was to add a 3<sup>rd</sup> county.
    - The hesitation was that a larger county might take over all the content within the site, but the realization is that even though Richland has more students and businesses that may use the site, they are going to generate more traffic for our Wyandot County businesses.
      - The more marketing dollars and efforts Richland takes to drive users and job seekers to the site, the more valuable the resource will be for our local businesses.
  - CIC of Upper Sandusky Area Dissolution
    - A couple meetings ago, WCOED approved the dissolution of the Community Improvement Corporation of the Upper Sandusky Area, a 501c6 that WCOED had taken control of a few years back.
    - After realizing early on this year that the organization was inactive with the IRS, it was determined that dissolving it was the best course of action.
    - To do so, approval was needed from the Wyandot County Court of Common Pleas to distribute its remaining assets of \$6,373.
      - Over the past few months, Greg and the court have gone back and forth on this issue.
      - The Court's opinion was that since this money was originally intended for use in the Upper Sandusky Area, it should go to an applicable cause.
      - What Greg proposed, and they accepted, was that the WCOED create a fund, in which this money could be moved and used only for projects within the Upper Sandusky area.
    - Greg has been working on the formal dissolution paperwork with the Ohio Secretary of State.
    - The Secretary of State paperwork was finally able to be submitted on July 8<sup>th</sup>, and the bank account was closed. Greg gave Sara the check to move the money into the WCOED account today.
  - Ohio EDA – BR&E Course Presentation
    - In mid-June, Greg served as an instructor for the OEDA's 2-hour BR&E course, which ended up being an online, recorded session, and then last week in an hour-long Q&A follow-up with course participants.
    - It was a good opportunity to highlight what WCOED is doing in Wyandot County and some of our projects from the past few years.
    - Greg anticipates that it will continue for at least a few years to come.
  - Upper Sandusky Schools Business Advisory Council
    - Laurie Vent reported that they have been trying to plan the reopening of the schools. They are working closely with Mohawk and Carey schools to

make their plans similar. Because everything is changing so fast, at this point it is just a draft.

- She reported that with sports going on with no social distancing, it has been difficult to know how to proceed and to satisfy everyone. They don't want to take any opportunities away from students yet keep everyone safe, so they are looking at all options.
- Miscellaneous Items
  - Community Center
    - The 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.
    - A private funder is paying for the rent and improvements to the former New Haven Supply building, where the new community center will be located. Initially, it will be open to youth in grades 4 – 8 but is planned to expand over the next few years.
    - Greg has agreed to serve on one of the funding committee, which is one of four committees that are working to have the community center operational by the fall.
    - They are still working on the transportation details.
  - Annual Dinner Planning Committee
    - Greg reminded everyone that the annual dinner is planned for the first Thursday in which is November 5<sup>th</sup> in the Village of Sycamore.
    - Anyone who wishes to be on the planning committed is to let Greg know.
  - Student Perception Survey Results
    - Surveys were presented to junior and senior students at CHS, MHS, USHS
    - Over double the number of responses this year
    - This year there were many more who responded they want to eventually live in a rural area, and 47% said they wish to have a house in the country.
    - But only 20% said they imagine themselves living in Wyandot Co. when starting work.
    - The vast majority recognize Wyandot as both a good place to raise a family and to work.
  - Community Opportunity Business Survey
    - All 16 respondents gave the website high marks
    - None had been able to fill an open position directly through the website, but all said they would continue to post open positions using the website.
  - Wyandot Employment Task Force – Ongoing COVID Impact Survey
    - A short survey came out on behalf of the Wyandot Employment Task Force.
    - There were about 40 respondents:
      - Significantly impacted by COVID-19:

- 43% decrease in sales; 19% said decrease in employment; 14% delayed expansion plans; 27% no significant impact
  - When asked about needed assistance: 11% were looking for assistance in hiring additional staff, 5% in payroll
  - 3 respondents said their business was at serious risk of closing.
- Unemployment Claims
  - Wyandot continuing weekly unemployment claims pre-COVID were steady in the sub-200s.
  - For the week ended May 2<sup>nd</sup>, they hit a peak of 2,305.
  - For the most recent week ended July 4<sup>th</sup>, continuing claims are down to 564.
    - It's expected the unemployment rate for June will still appear reasonably high compared to the rest of Ohio, but if we continue on the trajectory we've been on the past month, our rates are going to quickly return back to "usual" levels.

Updates were given from WCOED members and guests.

Steve Seitz made a motion to adjourn the meeting and a second was made by Lenny Clouse.