

Wyandot County Office of Economic Development

Board Meeting Minutes Monday, July 12, 2021

Attendees: John Barnes, John Caldwell, LuAnn Cook, Dave Courtad, Jason Eibling, Rick Ekleberry, Amanda Fleming, Frank Gibson, Rex Grasz, Brian Hemminger, Sarah Lenhart, Riordan McClain, Kyle McColly, Cassie Miller, Greg Moon, Jessica Moon, Kendra Noyes, Sara Pahl, Jennifer Rathburn, Jevon Reile, Gary Smalley, Shawn Stober, Tim Vaughn, Paul Wagner, Bob Witt

Meeting Called to Order by Greg Moon at 4:00 pm.

Guest Speakers:

- Josh Mandel, Candidate for U.S. Senate & former Ohio Treasurer, addressed the group with an offering of his platform for candidacy to the U.S. Senate.
- Representative Riordan McClain, OH House District 87, then provided a summary of some items included in the recently passed state operating budget as well as additional legislation he is working on.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Tim Vaughn made a motion to approve the May 10, 2021 meeting minutes and John Barnes seconded the motion.

Financial Update

- Sara Pahl reported that the financials were steady, and the only change that had been made was a new line item to reflect the \$30,000 investment with Edward Jones in Upper Sandusky. Dave Courtad made a motion to accept the financial report and Rick Ekleberry seconded the motion.

Old Business

- Wyandot Community Branding Initiative - "WIN"
 - The branding initiative is well underway and is currently in the public input phase.
 - Greg asked board members to take the survey if they hadn't already as this was their opportunity to provide feedback.
 - He reported the survey filters specific questions to respondents based on where they live and work. The responses will be used to identify the most

common themes that will be the basis for the imaging in the logos created.

- The actual logo creation will be Phase II of this process.
- Project Update
 - Koehler Trust Property Development
 - The 146-acre property on the north end of Upper Sandusky continues to move through the SiteOhio Authentication process.
 - On June 23rd, Greg received notice that the data template and attachments that he submitted moved the property to the next step, which is a further dive into the utilities surrounding the property.
 - Currently he is collecting that required information from our utility partners and hoping this will keep advancing the site through the certification process.
 - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
 - The 4-county CEDS involving Wyandot, Crawford, Richland, and Ashland counties is well underway.
 - The Steering Committee, including Greg and the other economic developers from each county is meeting bi-weekly, and the stakeholder input section of the process just wrapped up with one-on-one interviews of roughly 40 total stakeholders from throughout the 4 counties.
 - There is a meeting Tuesday, July 13 in Mansfield to go through the results, which will be used to inform the SWOT analysis of the 4-county region as well as define our areas of focus moving forward.
 - Greg thanked the 3 electric cooperative members for their funding of Wyandot County's cost share of the CEDS project. This \$90,000+ was covered 80% by a federal grant, and each county then had a \$4,500 share of the remainder. Each Hancock-Wood, Mid-Ohio, and North Central Electric Cooperative donated \$1,500 to completely offset WCOED's portion of the cost.
 - Sheriden Subdivision – Carey
 - John Barns reported that the car wash will be finished next month and that the Senior Villas are about halfway constructed with completion slated by the end of the year.
 - Wyandot Memorial Hospital – Sycamore
 - Kenra Noyes reported that the Sycamore location will be completed by October and the Tarhee Trail location will have an open house later this month.
- Investment Exploration
 - Greg reported that in response to the approval at the last board meeting, \$30,000 of funds held in the WCOED checking account was moved into an all-stock portfolio with Chris Daris at Edward Jones in Upper Sandusky.
 - Sara Pahl completed the necessary steps shortly thereafter to set up our fund and that can be seen on our financial statements.
 - The investment has already begun to see a small return since that time, and updated will continue to be made available via the financial statements.

- Wage & Benefit Survey
 - 21 Wyandot County businesses participated in the large-scale Wage & Benefits Survey, which was the 3rd highest of all the participating counties.
 - Those included Seneca, Hancock, Wyandot, Huron, Erie, Sandusky, and Lucas.
 - The effort was accomplished through collaboration with our Seneca County ODJFS partners who were able to secure state level grant funding to carry out the project.
 - The survey was conducted by Thomas P. Miller and Associates at a cost of roughly \$22,500.
 - The draft report of findings has been completed and the final report will come out before the end of July. When all is said and done, WCOED will have valuable local data for our Wyandot County employers and the larger regional data to compare it to.
- Project Lead Tracking
 - Over the past two months there have been 2 new building leads and 3 new site leads.
 - None were leads that WCOED had applicable product to respond to.
 - Most of the site leads had direct rail requirements and one needed to be located on an airfield.

New Business

- Upper Sandusky Senior Housing
 - Frontier Community Services, who developed the current Low-to-moderate income based senior housing community east of Walmart in Upper Sandusky was awarded tax credit equity by the Ohio Housing Finance Agency earlier this year to build out Phase II of that development.
 - The Phase II will include 50, 1 thru 3-bedroom units and the expansion will be a nearly \$10 million project.
 - For reference, the existing Phase I was half this size at 25 units.
 - Surveying and due diligence studies will be carried out through the remainder of the year with anticipated construction beginning in Q2 2022.
- Project Valencia
 - This is a direct project lead that came to us early this year, fell off, and has come back very strong over the past few months.
 - This confidential company identified a couple suitable sites in Wyandot County that include multiple property owners who are not actively marketing their land.
 - Over the last two months, WCOED has entered into a non-disclosure agreement with the prospect's legal representative and the largest property owner of acreage within both the sites identified.
 - Thus far the WCOED has been responsible for initial outreach to the property owner, their legal representative, and organizing a face-to-face meeting with the prospect's legal representative.
 - Currently the property owners are deliberating on willingness and price per acre for their ground.

- If all continues to progress, WCOED will be engaging the other property owners that constitute the site.
- Annual Student Perception Survey
 - The annual survey effort that WCOED began 2 years ago with area high school Junior & Senior students has been completed and tabulated. The results were sent out with your agenda.
 - Possibly the most interesting data is the changing trends for those students seeking 4-year vs 2-year degrees, and the total who plan to immediately enter the workforce.
- American Rescue Plan Act - Local Funds
 - The Commissioners asked Greg to serve along with the county auditor and prosecutor on a committee to oversee the use of American Recovery Act funds Wyandot County received from the federal government.
 - The county received over \$4 million that can be used to address negative economic impacts, support public health response, replace public sector revenue loss, and make investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.
 - Wyandot County did not see lost revenue as a result of COVID and normal public sector operations were largely unaffected as a result.
 - Wyandot County has the enhanced ability to invest in infrastructure that is largely discussed as part of this group. If anyone knows of a potential project or need involving water, sewer, broadband or some other type of basic utility, the county encourages proposals, as Greg is sure local municipalities will, as all projects are considered before funds are allocated.
 - The county has until December 31, 2024 to incur costs these funds can be used to cover.

Adjourn

- Tim Vaughn made a motion to adjourn the meeting.