

Hardee County Economic Development Council/Industrial Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 16, 2015
Hardee County BOCC

Vanessa Hernandez- Chair-P
Gene Davis- Vice Chair-P
Dottie Conerly-P

Donald Samuels-P
John O'Neal-P
Lory Durrance-P

Doug Jensen-A
Monica Reas-P
Diana Youmans-A

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hernandez.

Visiting: Charlie Cox, Jessica Newman, Vicki Rogers, Kenny Lambert, Keith Rupp, Bill Carlson, Darren Richards, Guy Hagen, Rich Mullins, Wendall Smith, Robert Cole, Denise Grimsley, David Royal, Terry Atchley, Sharon Moye, Lex Albritton, Don Chancey, David Kiessling, Nelson Kirkland, Eric Stevens, David Greenburg, Neda Cobb and Brent Thompson.

County Attorney: Ken Evers

County Commissioners: Mike Thompson and Russ Melendy

Press: Michael Kelly

Staff: Bill Lambert, Sarah Pelham and Kristi Schierling

Agenda: We will change item 5 to Discussion of Project Crocodile and the other items will be moved down one.

Gene Davis made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve the agenda with the addition. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes: Dottie Conerly made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Draft Budget Presentation

Charlie Cox, EDC/IDA accountant, reviewed the draft IDA budget first. The General Fund was reviewed first. There are no new EDA grants currently in the draft budget because the EDA has not had a cycle this year. If they decide to advertise and we apply, the budget will be amended. The carry forward will be more accurately reflected in the draft budget when we get closer to our year end. The EDA grant that we currently have for \$1M is allocated for Project Relocation. There is a transfer out to the EDC for \$64k to help the EDC balance its budget. Each Special Fund column was reviewed as well. There were some project appropriations included. There is \$250,000 proposed to be allocated for the Incubator since the EDA grant cycle has not happened yet. This will be used for the development of the food processing area. This will be the first time the IDA has put any money into the Incubator. Project Crocodile was approached about them moving to Highway 17. The \$2MM will be split up. \$1.3M will be for the relocation costs of Florida Hospital and the \$700,000 will be for the City of Wauchula's expenses. The old hospital will not be torn down. We could possibly take it and turn it into something.

Project Malinda- We are in competition with two other counties for this business.

Project Julius Caesar- US 17 property that has 9 acres and an existing 40,000 sq/ft building on the property. This will be discussed more in a later item. We would like to get an appraisal on the building and there is a sample option agreement in the agenda packet.

Sarah Pelham reviewed the draft EDC budget. We have the BOCC funding at 150k this year. There is no EDA income budgeted. She also reviewed the expense categories as well.

Project Crocodile

This project will now be known as Florida Hospital Relocation. Eric Stevens, Florida Hospital Heartland Division President/CEO, and Denise Grimsley, Florida Hospital Wauchula Administrator, are here today for any discussion. The hospital is a critical access hospital. To keep this status it has to stay within one mile of where it is currently located. If they move outside of this one mile area they would be opened up to a certificate of need and would open a large debate of why that should happen or not. They also have to show that they are continuing to meet the criteria for critical access status. They are prepared to stay on their current site but moving to the new site gives them room to grow in the future. The old hospital could be used for an assisted living facility or training center. We could do a feasibility study on what to do with the area/building. The next question is how we deal with the existing building. Do we want to retrofit it ourselves or put in on the market? The old building would be deeded from the hospital to the IDA for \$1. There is asbestos in the building that would need to come out.

John O'Neal made a motion and was seconded by Lory Durrance to approve the \$2MM appropriation in the FYE 2016 IDA budget. Motion passed unanimously.

**** A short break was taken. Monica Reas left during the break.****

Communications, Marketing and Promotional Services presentation

Central Florida Media Group and Tucker/Hall were the 2 respondents to the RFP that was put out. They are both here to give presentations. Central Florida Media Group went first. They gave a brief background of their business. They do have a background in working with different EDC's. They work on inbound marketing. This is potential leads finding us instead of going out to get them. We need to drive traffic to our website. They also do press releases, blogs, content creation, website development, social media marketing and other items for clients. One of their works that we see locally is the Central Florida Ag News magazine. The top three areas they think we should target is ag, phosphate and healthcare. David Kiessling and Nelson Kirkland both gave their background. A copy of their presentation is on file at the EDO.

Tucker/Hall presented next. They are a public relations/strategic communications firm. They help tell our story to the right audience by using a wide variety of tools. Each member present gave their background. They can help define our brand and market, build our visibility and increase their awareness of Hardee County among other things. To achieve our goals they would sit down and meet with key people in the County and work on a plan. They were also asked what our top 3 immediate areas to focus on are. They said that it would be our brand, look within our targeted business and what to do with our targeted business. A copy of their presentation is on file at the EDO.

Director Lambert recommends ranking the 2 companies. We also may be able to utilize them both. Both companies have great qualities.

John O'Neal made a motion and was seconded by Gene Davis to direct staff to have discussions and negotiations with both firms and bring back a recommendation to the board. Motion passed unanimously.

Donald Samuels left the meeting

Option to purchase sample for SMM Wauchula, LLC

The owners cannot take less than \$500k for the property. We will do an appraisal and move forward with the purchase of the property. We do anticipate a confidential project to go into this building. There are many opportunities with this building. The purchase negotiations will depend on the appraisal. The appraisal will be broken out into segments. The portable and canopy on the property are optional to purchase. We are most interested in the building and the acreage.

John O'Neal made a motion and was seconded by Lory Durrance to move forward with the appraisal and purchase at the appraised value. Motion passed unanimously.

Option discussion of Brown property

This property sits on Hogan St. between north and southbound 17. Mr. Brown is amenable to sell at appraised value. The reason for us getting this property is because it ties directly into the proposed entryway of the relocated hospital. Bill is looking for authorization to appraise the property and come back with a plan to purchase it and deed it to the City. The road extension may run between 400,000-500,000 dollars. This is not currently budgeted and does not have to happen this year. The building that is currently on the property will most likely have to come down.

Dottie Conerly made a motion and was seconded by Lory Durrance to allow Director Lambert to procure an appraisal and come back to the board with an option to purchase. Motion passed unanimously.

Staffing discussion

Chair Hernandez gave an update on the status of the Economic Development Coordinator position. We have been receiving resumes and talking with Career Source in screening the applicants. Some are qualified and some are not. There are some local applicants and some are not. Sarah Pelham has reduced her work hours. We have engaged Hackney and Ames on an emergency basis to assist with some our duties.

We have talked about reevaluating job descriptions. When Sarah's job description changed, it increased some of Kristi Schierling's (office manager) duties. The office manager responsibilities have increased substantially. Chair Hernandez would like to propose increasing the salary for this position. Any other increases for the employees will be dependent on the employee evaluations that will be implemented. The office manager salary grade will be increased by \$5,000.

Dottie Conerly made a motion and was seconded by John O'Neal moved to approve the salary increase for the Office Manager position effective immediately. Motion passed unanimously.

Matt Reichel, Hackney and Ames, has been putting all of the building expenses together and helping in any areas needed with Sarah's cutting back of time. They will be paid at the same rate we are paying Wicks, Brown. They are helping with the segregation of duties.

Financial Report

Charlie Cox was here to review the budget amendment. It was for the legal and professional fees. This was not transferred out to the EDC as previously presented. It stayed in the IDA budget to pay for the legal expenses.

Dottie Conerly made a motion and was seconded by Lory Durrance to approve the budget amendment. Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah Pelham reviewed the EDC and IDA financials from the previous month. We did receive the yearly payment from Mosaic.

A motion was made by Gene Davis and seconded by John O'Neal to approve the EDC and the IDA financials. Motion passed unanimously.

**The meeting was adjourned at 11:54am by Chair Hernandez.