

Hardee County Economic Development Council/Industrial Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 9, 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-P
Monica Reas-P
Diana Youmans-P

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hernandez.

Visiting: Jim See, Jessica Newman, Charlie Cox, Pam Belflower, Grady Johnson, Sheriff Lanier, Robert Cole, Rhonda Cole, Jim Estes and Abel Hernandez.

County Attorney: Ken Evers

County Commissioners: Mike Thompson

Press: Michael Kelly

Staff: Bill Lambert, Sarah Pelham and Kristi Schierling

Agenda: Gene Davis made a motion and was seconded by Dottie Conerly to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes: Donald Samuels brought up that the minutes related to the staffing discussion were not what they should be. No changes were suggested or made.

Gene Davis made a motion and was seconded by Dottie Conerly to approve the minutes as presented.

Donald Samuels voted no. Motion passed.

Community Redevelopment Agency Draft Agreement

Jessica Newman, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) Coordinator, was back this month with a draft agreement between the CRA and the IDA. Jessica Newman noted that there is an edit to be made. The very first whereas should state "whereas, the CRA a Dependent Special district of the City of Wauchula, Florida, a municipal corporation created under the laws of the State of Florida, was created to eliminate slum and blight within the boundaries of the CRA". The CRA board/City Commission has already reviewed and approved the agreement. Attorney Evers has also reviewed this. It was mentioned again that the Urgent Care facility will be in Dr. Fallon's current office and the Diagnostic Center will be on 7th and Bay.

Donald Samuels made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve the agreement with the change being made to the first whereas. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of Job Description

Kristi Schierling announced that the position has been advertised with the Herald Advocate, Lakeland Ledger, Monster.com, Career Source Heartland, FEDC, News-Sun, EDC Facebook page and on our website. Sarah Pelham plans on making her switch sometime this month. Director Lambert has talked with Hackney & Ames to help with the bookkeeping and segregation of duties. Director Lambert has a meeting with them this week. This could be our interim solution until we get someone hired. The job

description was included in the agenda packet. Changes were made based on previous month's discussions.

Monica Reas made a motion and was seconded by Dottie Conerly to approve the job description and to make any changes/revisions when needed. Motion passed unanimously.

Jim See legal fees reimbursement

Before any discussion was had Lory Durrance abstained due to his employer and himself having a professional relationship with Mr. See and it may be construed to be a conflict. A form was filled out and is on file at the EDO. Jim See is submitting all of his costs related to the ethics charges that were filed against him while he was an EDC/IDA board member. A total of 16 were filed. Of those, 11 were dismissed and 5 were questionable. 2 of the 16 were entered into a joint agreed upon stipulation. Jim See feels that he was not given adequate training for this board and recommends that the BOCC give training to all of its appointed board members. Donald Samuels asked if he remembered correctly that we had a speaker a couple of years ago to give training on ethics. Chair Hernandez said that Robert Pritt did come and give a presentation but it more geared toward public records and sunshine law. She also said that we should look into having another presentation like that again. Attorney Evers recommendation is consider paying 60% of the fees as a starting point. Donald Samuels feels that this is discrimination if we pay this because he says that he was told by the board that his legal fees would not be covered in the lawsuit that he is currently involved in with the IDA board. Commissioner Thompson recommended to the board to pay this at 100% because if the BOCC is not willing to stand behind their volunteers he fears for their ability to recruit volunteers for the boards. Director Lambert told Donald Samuels that if he was to go out and hire an attorney, he doesn't know why he wouldn't be afforded the same opportunity to come before the board to make his appeal like Jim See did.

John O'Neal made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to pay the reimbursement request in the amount of \$5,670.99. Donald Samuels voted no. Lory Durrance abstained. Motion passed.

During public comment Pam Belflower read Attorney General Opinion 78-97 stating that legal fees cannot be paid with public funds unless statutorily stated. Attorney Evers would like to take a quick break to review that opinion. The break was had from 9:48am-10am.

During the break Attorney Evers read the opinion that Pam Belflower read from and he also found Attorney General Opinion 85-51 that modifies the previous opinion by saying that it is ok to for public entities to pay fees of this type.

IDA lawsuit briefing

There isn't too much of an update. A stipulation in circulating. The next case management hearing is June 26th at 9am.

Director's Comments

There are three new projects under confidentiality. Project Crocodile, Project Relocation and Project Unnamed. The CO for Florikan should be issued this month. PFM is getting in shipments and building motors. Florikan has a target of 80 employees. Pacer Marine is at 100. Scosta has about 25-30. The Incubator is in production. Stream2Sea and Peace River Paddlesports will be at the EDA meeting this week to give an update. The IDA has paid the BOCC the \$500,000 allotment of the Mosaic money. Caresync is now paying rent at \$6 sq/ft. They will eventually need a larger space.

Financial Report

Charlie Cox was here to review the budget amendment. \$200,000 was allocated out of the Mosaic fund for the CRA agreement that was voted on.

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

Director Lambert mentioned that staff would be working with Wicks, Brown to start preparing for the budget hearings.

Sarah Pelham reviewed the EDC and IDA financials from the previous month.

A motion was made by Gene Davis and seconded by Doug Jensen to approve the EDC and the IDA financials. Motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Chair Hernandez mentioned that Utilitech is currently putting on a technology class out at Techriver. Commissioner Thompson and Chair Hernandez also mentioned that we should put on a class or workshop for the younger people who are graduating high school so they can work on their soft skills.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:51am by Chair Hernandez.