

**Hardee County Economic Development Council/Industrial Development Authority**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**March 8, 2016**  
**Hardee County BOCC**

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

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

Diana Youmans-P  
Monica Reas-A

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hernandez.

**Visiting:** Bruce Stayer, Leslie Cantu, Charlie Cox, Autumn Blum, Kristin Giuliani, Rhonda Cole, Henry Kuhlman, Sharon Moye, Don Chancey, Grady Johnson, Craig Turner, Jamie Harris and Arnold Lanier.

**County Attorney:** Ken Evers

**County Commissioners:** Mike Thompson, Rick Knight and Russ Melendy

**Press:** None attending

**Staff:** Bill Lambert, Sarah Pelham and Kristi Schierling

**Agenda:** Lory Durrance made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

**Minutes:** Gene Davis made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve the 2/9/16 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

***EDA Update***

Our EDA applications were awarded as well as the Incubator tenants. We go back on the 22<sup>nd</sup> for the grant award approval of the contracts. Sarah Pelham reviewed each of the awards for the EDC and IDA. There were 7 total. EDC Admin Funding (\$150,000), Incubator funding (\$ 90,350), Stream2Sea (\$ 397,000), Debut Development (\$ 294,220), Peace River Paddlesports (not to exceed \$100,000), Bees & Botanicals (\$ 239,575), Corridor Group (\$ 750,000). The budgets and project descriptions will be added in to the final drafts. The Incubator has had some landscaping done to the property. The columns were not included in this grant cycle. We may include those in the next grant cycle. The EDA has seen Stream2Sea's budget and it will be included in the final agreement. The IDA will have individual contracts with each of the Incubator tenants again with this cycle of funds. Peace River Paddlesports has different language than the other contracts. Their amount is not to exceed \$100,000. The EDA decided not to fund the canoe/tourism part this funding cycle. They are only funding the manufacturing of the paddleboards. There will be strong deliverables put into place. The corridor group agreement is for the south end. The EDA agreed to fund Bees & Botanicals if the IDA agreed to administer it. They will be focusing on social media, sales and operations. Debut Development will be assisting them. Their budget was reviewed and approved by the EDA.

### ***EDA Grant Award Agreements- Authorization for Chair to sign***

The agreements were discussed in the tab above.

Diana Youmans made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the EDA grant award agreements for the EDC Admin funding, Corridor Group and the Incubator. Motion passed unanimously.

Diana Youmans made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the EDA grant award agreement for Stream2Sea. Lory Durrance abstained due to a banking relationship. Motion passed.

Gene Davis made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the EDA grant award agreement for Debut Development. Lory Durrance abstained due to a banking relationship. Motion passed.

Monica Reas made a motion and was seconded by Gene Davis to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the EDA grant award agreement for Peace River Paddlesports. Lory Durrance abstained due to a banking relationship. Motion passed.

Gene Davis made a motion and was seconded by Monica Reas to approve and authorize the Chair to sign the EDA grant award agreement for Bees & Botanicals. Lory Durrance abstained due to a banking relationship. Motion passed.

\*Break from 9:58am-10:10am.

### ***Incubator Floor Plan proposal***

A new layout of the Incubator was shown. These are the planned retrofits to the building. The carpet and vinyl machines that were there when we purchased the building need to be moved out. The office has reached out to Home Depot, Lowes and other companies to see if they would be interested in the machines. All said no. We will check with Pacer Marine and see if they are something that they would be interested in.

### ***Project "Agricultural Diversity"***

Director Lambert has great concerns about citrus greening. Loss of citrus income will greatly impact and hurt our economy. Director Lambert has had people approach him about olives. He has met with them, IFAS and growers regarding olives. The Commerce Park grove needs to be pushed. That could possibly become a test plot for the olives. This may require a rezone for Ag use. We would work with IFAS and the County Agent to do the test plot. Olives are currently being grown by Mosaic in a different soil type. The olives leaves would also be able to be used, not just the fruit. We would also be able to grow turmeric. Director Lambert has been in communications with a company in India that has a holistic processing/extraction plant that he would like to go visit and is asking the Board permission for travel dollars to India. Currently, David Royal and the new County Agent may go with him. Autumn Blum spoke about this company. She knows and has worked with him in the past.

Lory Durrance made a motion and was seconded by Gene Davis to approve up to 4 people to travel to India to visit the extraction plant. Motion passed unanimously.

This would be a vetting trip to see if they are appropriate for Hardee County. Director Lambert is also traveling to Georgia next week to visit an olive grower.

### ***Project Updates/Chair Updates***

Hogan Street has not been consummated yet. The survey is not completed. DOT has had meetings with Florida Hospital about service entrances that Florida Hospital would like to have.

The Court has contacted Attorney Evers and is asking for a response related to the Commerce Park rezone.

The Director evaluation was completed last month. Chair Hernandez had said at the last meeting that she would bring back information related to a salary increase for the Director. Surrounding counties were contacted regarding their pay scales for Economic Development Directors. Not a lot of information was received. Hardee County was also contacted and we were given their step plan. This was included in the agenda packet and was reviewed by Chair Hernandez with the Board. Within the last 2-3 years, the County has received a 2-3% cost of living increase. Chair Hernandez went over some of Director Lambert's past benefits. The EDC does not offer its employees retirement. Health insurance, cell phone allowance and vacation time is provided. When Director Lambert first started, in 2007, he was at a salary of \$78,000 and is now around \$83,000. Diana Youmans said that we should do something similar to the County's step plan.

(\*Director Lambert left due to a scheduled meeting)

Lory Durrance made a motion and was seconded by Diana Youmans to approve Director Lambert's increase at the County's 2014-2015 step plan salary grade 40 level 8 which is \$97,709.45 and to adopt the County's step plan structure. Any future salary increases will be based on yearly performance reviews.

Chair Hernandez asked for a roll call vote.

Diana Youmans- Yes

Lory Durrance- Yes

Vanessa Hernandez- Yes

Gene Davis- Yes

Donald Samuels- No

Monica Reas- Yes

Motion passed 5-1.

County Manager Lex Albritton gave an update on FHREDI/FRBA. FHREDI is looking to dissolve and start as a new organization. FRBA has warehouses in Lake Placid and Lake City. Both have equipment still boxed up and on pallets. Some of the equipment will try to be salvaged. FRBA will be filing for bankruptcy.

### ***Financials***

The EDC/IDA financials were accepted as presented.

\*\*The meeting was adjourned at 12:18pm by Chair Hernandez.