

# MINUTES

## Hardee County Economic Development Council Hardee County Industrial Development Authority

Commission Chambers 412 W. Orange Street, Room 102, Wauchula, FL 33873 Regular Meeting

7/16/2020 1:30 PM

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### BOARD MEMBERS

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Tommy Watkins, Chairman | Denise Grimsley, Vice-Chairman | Courtney Green | Calli Ward | Gene Davis | Justin Smith | Lee Mikell

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#### 1. Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Tommy Watkins	Chairman	Present	
Denise Grimsley	Vice-Chairman	Present	
Courtney Green	Board Member	Present	
Calli Ward	Board Member	Present	
Gene Davis	Board Member	Present	
Justin Smith	Board Member	Present	
Lee Mikell	Board Member	Present	

**Visiting:** Myles Albritton, Halton Peters, Bruce Stayer, Jessica Newman, and Jim Kelly

**County Commissioners:** Mike Thompson and Noey Flores

**County Manager:** Lawrence McNaul

**EDC/IDA Attorney:** Shannon Nash

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

**Press:** Michael Kelly

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

Item 2.1. Motion to approve the agenda as presented.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Denise Grimsley, Vice-Chairman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Courtney Green, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

#### 3. Approval of Minutes

## Item 3.1. June 2020 EDC/IDA Minutes

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Calli Ward, Board Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Gene Davis, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

## 4. Agenda Items

## Item 4.1. FHERO Funding Request FY 2020-2021

FHERO is a 6 county region. Each EDC contributes dues every year. The request for the 2020-2021 year is \$2500. FHERO submitted their request along with their accomplishments for the 2019-2020 year.

Calli Ward made a motion and was seconded by Justin Smith to approve the FHERO request for \$2500.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Calli Ward, Board Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Justin Smith, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

## Item 4.2. Old Hospital Presentation by Halton Peters

Halton Peters was before the board today with a presentation regarding the old Florida Hospital. He has toured the building and is very interested in it. He would like to turn it into another indoor growing facility like Hardee Fresh. He would like to assist the IDA with overseeing the demo and retrofit of the building. Currently there are 28 employees at Hardee Fresh with 2 open positions. The hospital site could employ 15-30 people. The new facility would be a trellis based system for production of peppers, cucumbers, tomatoes, berries, and other produce with similar form factors. Halton would like to have a distribution line there as well. Some of their back office would be moved here also. Both floors will remain but any non load bearing walls would be removed if needed. The false ceiling on the first floor would be removed so there is more height.

There are two additional requests from Halton. The first request is for the IDA to retire the existing performance based noted and have a new one upon exercise of the purchase option. In doing this, he would have a better chance of outside funding. The second request is to accelerate consideration of Hardee Fresh's job training and professional development grant proposal.

Bill let the board know that the zoning will be changed from C1 to C2. Bill then asked Halton how they have invested in Hardee County and Halton responded with \$15 million.

Bill also brought up that interest has resurfaced in the hospital being turned into a COVID location if needed. Techriver is also another location that may be needed as a COVID location for the surrounding areas since we are centrally located. Denise Grimsley did say that any location could be used as a COVID location.

No action will be taken today. Bill will continue working with Halton.

## Item 4.3. Z Suite Building Discussion

Bill opened up the discussion by asking the board if they want staff to move forward with the building purchase. The appraisal came back at \$110,000. The retrofit of the building is estimated by Bill at \$50,000-\$75,000. Chair Watkins would like for Brent to come back before the board. Justin Smith would like for us to inspect the plumbing before any purchase is made. Brent Stephens would have first right of refusal.

Lee Mikell made a motion and was seconded by Calli Ward to move forward with the purchase of the building at appraised value, develop a budget for the retrofit and come back with a lease purchase option.

Bill is also having Roy Brown's property that is across the street from Utilitech appraised.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Lee Mikell, Board Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Calli Ward, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

Item 4.4. Have Bill come back with a proposal with the anticipation of moving R. Riveter into the building.

Jessica Newman, Main Street Director, came and showed the board renderings and a site plan that Main Street Wauchula funded. Each rendering showed different options on how the building could look. She also said that parking would not be a problem if they relocated there. There would be 70 parking spaces available. Gary Delatorre had met with Bill and said that \$100,000 had recently been spent on roof repairs. We had the building appraised last year and that came back at \$698,000. Bill will have the appraiser look at the building again since improvements have been made. Bill believes that the income produced from the H2A tenants was not taken into consideration in the first appraisal and he will have the appraiser check on that as well.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Denise Grimsley, Vice-Chairman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Courtney Green, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

Item 4.5. Hemp Lease Discussion

We had anticipated growing industrial hemp. During the course of us looking at how we could do it, Bob Clayton and Smidley have come up with a proposal that gives them the ability to lease the property. They would like to do 3 successive plantings to see how the hemp does during the year. They will do it at no cost to us. It will be 2-3 acres and they will pay us \$250 for the leasing of the land. We have the license to grow hemp and currently have sun hemp planted.

Lee Mikell made a motion and was seconded by Gene Davis to move forward with the contract and authorize the Chair to sign.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Lee Mikell, Board Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Gene Davis, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

Item 4.6. Ballard Partners Contract Discussion

They were hired to help us with the heartland expressway that is anticipated to come through this part of the state. Bill has been extremely pleased with their performance. They believe it would be advantageous for us to extend the relationship with them until the report comes out in November.

Denise Grimsley made a motion and was seconded by Lee Mikell to approve the contract extension until November and authorize the Chair to sign any documents.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Denise Grimsley, Vice-Chairman
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Lee Mikell, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

Item 4.7. Dr. Kevin Folta UF- Discussion

Dr. Folta has re-engaged us. The University of Florida is willing to share royalties with us. They have requested \$250,000 from us for the research on eliminating the chill factor gene in olives and are very confident that they can remove the gene. Olives grow very well in this region. The question was asked if Hardee County growers could get the first chance of growing the plants from the tissue culture. Bill said that he could put that in the contract. The trees could be grown here and in Gainesville.

Bill will work on getting a contract together and bring it back to the board next month.

Item 4.8. DRAFT FYE 2021 EDC Budget

The draft budget was given to the board to review. Discussion's had today will cause changes to the budgets. It will be reviewed in more detail at the next meeting.

Item 4.9. DRAFT FYE 2021 Ona Mine Budget

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Item 4.10. DRAFT FYE 2021 IDA General Fund/Special Revenue Budget

The draft budget was given to the board to review. Discussion's had today will cause changes to the budgets. It will be reviewed in more detail at the next meeting.

5. Project Updates

Item 5.1. July 2020 Director's Report

Bill read through his report in detail.

6. Financial Report

Item 6.1. June 2020 Financials

Calli Ward made a motion and was seconded by Justin Smith to approve the financials as presented.

<b>RESULT:</b>	<b>ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]</b>
<b>MOVER:</b>	Calli Ward, Board Member
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Justin Smith, Board Member
<b>AYES:</b>	Watkins, Grimsley, Green, Ward, Davis, Smith, Mikell

7. Announcements/Other Business/Public Comments

8. Adjournment