

VENANGO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2018

Courthouse Annex Room 100

1174 Elk Street

Franklin, PA

Present:

Bonnie Summers

Bill Moon

John Stiller

Rod Griffin

Tim Brooks

Chip Abramovic

Vince Witherup

Staff: Emily Lewis

Guests:

Jason Ruggiero, VCRPC

Ashley Smith, VCRPC

Jim Meyer, The Derrick

Deb Kapp, Resident

Rich Winkler, Authority Solicitor

Absent: None

- I. Call to Order – Commissioner Brooks
 - a. Monthly board meeting called to order by Tim Brooks at 10:03 A.M.
- II. Approval of Minutes
 - a. 1/23/2018 Regular Meeting Minutes
 - i. Approved with two corrections:
 - Section V item D. a note was made that the minutes should read “Commissioner Brooks asked for a motion to ratify the appointment of Emily Lewis as Executive Director of the Authority”
 - In section VI, time B. was added to reflect that Bonnie Summers requested the Authority’s involvement in working with Cranberry Township on the development of the Cranberry Mall
- III. Public Comment on Agenda Items
 - a. None
- IV. Special Purpose Matters
 - a. Adoption of Bylaws
 - i. Motion to adopt the bylaws by Bonnie Summers; seconded by Bill Moon.
So moved.
 - b. Election of Officers
 - i. Tim asked the board if there were any volunteers for Vice Chairman. Rod Griffin volunteered.

1. Motion to nominate Rod Griffin as Vice Chairman of the board by Vince Witherup; Seconded by Bill Moon. So moved.
- ii. Tim asked the board if there was any opposition of keeping secretary and treasurer as one position. No one opposed.
 1. Motion to nominate Chip Abromavic as secretary/treasurer of the board by Vince Witherup; Seconded by Rod Griffin. So moved.
- c. Ratification of Bank Account & Designation of Signatories
 - i. Tim explained to the board that the authority will be using the same bank as the county. Chip mentioned the county uses First National Bank of Pennsylvania. Tim spoke about requiring two signatures (Chairman & Vice Chairman) on all drafts and checks.
 1. Motion to require two signatures on checks and drafts by Vince Witherup; Seconded by Bill Moon. So moved.
 - d. Adoption of Mission and Vision
 - i. Emily requested the board's input on which mission statement best embodies the authority's goals. John suggested the third option:

"To foster a diverse county economy and quality of life through strengthening the regional infrastructure, workforce, recreational and cultural amenities to create a compelling climate for the growth of new and existing businesses."

 1. Motion to adopt the mission statement by Bonnie Summers; Seconded by Bill Moon. So moved.
 - ii. Emily requested the board approve one of the two bullet options for the vision of the authority. John suggested the second option:

"To create an attractive and inviting destination for businesses and individuals, through the development of a unifying entity that will serve as the first contact and front door to existing and perspective businesses."

 1. Motion to adopt the vision statement for the authority by Rod Griffin; Seconded by Bill Moon. So moved.
 - iii. Emily asked the board to read over the outlined priorities of the authority.
 1. Tim requested that the board that there is no need to motion on the priorities since they are ongoing and will dynamically change.
 - e. Lead Economic Development Agency Designation
 - i. Emily explained how the designation is created by the county commissioners for an agency that is the lead economic agency, and that is a symbolic stature. Vince explained that the "lead" is the first door for the overall scope. Tim requested a motion to name the Venango County Economic Development Authority as the Lead Economic Development Agency.
 1. Motion to name the Authority as the Lead Economic Development Agency by John Stiller; Seconded by Bill Moon. So moved.

V. Ongoing Projects

- a. Cornplanter Square Project
 - i. PHMC Grant
 - 1. Max state funding request of \$100,000. This could possibly be funding for the roof. Application due March 1st.
 - ii. NPS Grant
 - 1. In the process of identifying our eligibility. The application is due tomorrow. Funding limit of \$500,000 with a dollar to dollar match.
 - iii. Tim asked the board if they want to vote to direct Emily on grants or if they would like her to email and notify everyone when she is looking at these grants. Emily added that traditionally as a county employee she would go to a planning work session once a month and inform the commissioners of the opportunities to get a feel from them. Tim invited the board to these session meetings held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 8:30am.
 - iv. Tim is working on getting the county commissioner board to donate the Cornplanter Square building to the authority to use as an asset. Once the authority owns the building, he would like the board to be involved in the development going forward.
- b. PREP & ENGAGE
 - i. Prep Update
 - 1. Approximately \$10,000 in funds will stay with the ORA this year since the PREP contract started in June of 2017. After the authority is named the Lead Economic Development Agency, the authority will be able to obtain the PREP funds beginning with next year's contract.
 - ii. Engage Award
 - 1. This is a program through the state that Chip brought to Emily's attention that is similar to PREP. Venango County was awarded \$13,000. Those contracts are in the process of being drafted. It is a program to help the machine shops that had changes caused by the Joy ownership switch.
- c. Fiber Optic Network Development
 - i. City of Franklin & Sandycreek Township Expansion
 - 1. Funding stream through the legislative pre-disaster mitigation funding rescope to expand the fiber line from the airport to the Sandycreek Industrial Development and down Bully Hill. Tim wants to request the option that the county, city, and FIDCA pass fiber line control over to the Authority. Tim mentioned that Juniper is a company that is publishing a case study about us and bringing high speed internet to a rural area.

VI. Staff Report

- a. Tim mentioned that Hudson Group that was working on the senior living area in Cranberry is interested in seeing what is available for development in the Emlenton river area. This is in the very preliminary planning phases.
- b. Emily had a phone call from Chad Findlay from Cranberry Township about issues with the senior housing center plan. Hudson Group wants to develop 3.8 acres and needs an option of sale to apply for some of the grants becoming available. Chad has asked if we would be able to step in and come to an agreement that the property be transferred to the authority to keep the project on the outlined timeline.
 - i. Rich mentioned that the only issue he can see with this is that once one entity takes over ownership the liability goes with it. Chip asked if this would be easier to go to the land bank with this. Tim mentioned that we have done agreements similar to this before with the exchange building downtown.
- c. Emily spoke about the airport resources like exploring options to create a business area that is pre-permitted either shell buildings or shell building sites. John asked if there was any potential from the cracker plant that we can explore which Emily responded that we do not want to miss out on any opportunities.
- d. Emily has continues to use a time tracker and is happy to share a copy of it with the board for transparency with the board.
- e. Emily has been speaking with Deb from FIDCA about getting a prenegotiated rate for office spaces. Emily spoke about the dream of creating a site to reduce search time with different layers of zoning options for different types of businesses looking at coming to our county.
- f. Emily has been doing research on Linden Point, an incubator campus in Hermitage, and eAcademy, an entrepreneurship program for high school students. They have shown interest in Venango County, and Emily plans on meeting with the superintendents of the school districts locally to talk about this option.

VII. Public Comment – General

- a. None

VIII. Adjournment

- a. Motioned by Vince; Seconded by Bill @ 11:20 AM