

Pike County Economic Development Corporation

Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes

Pike County Farm Bureau Conference Room

September 25, 2017

Attendees

Jim Brown, Brenda Middendorf, Kaye Iftner, Patrick Conley, Jeff Hogge, Blake Roderick, Diane Vose, Casey French, Larry Fischer, Andy Sprague, Robert Wood.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Patrick Conley, Chairman at 5:30pm. Meeting agenda and June 2017 Quarterly Meeting minutes were provided via email to members and were available for review.

Minutes

After review, Blake Roderick made the motion to approve the minutes as written, second, Casey French. Motion carried.

Financial Report

Brenda Middendorf summarized the Balance sheet as of June 26, 2017. Total Liabilities & Equity \$63,895.38. Profit & Loss January 1-Sept. 20, 2017: Program Income from Membership dues \$30,102.00, Brenda noted the new member, Hickory Ridge Landfill at the Premier level. Program Income from Program service fees \$18,990.00, Total Program Income \$49,092.00. Total Expense \$29,45.52. Net Income \$20,014.62. Jeff Hogge made a motion to place the financial report on file, Robert Wood, second. Motion carried.

Director's Report

Director Brenda Middendorf reviewed the written interim director's report for September 2017. Brenda reported that the IL AG 990 had not been received by the Attorney General's office even after faxing. The report will be resent using Registered mail with receipt required. Hope to have late fees waived since it was mailed on time. The Rural Business Enterprise Grant through USDA Rural Development was not funded for technical assistance to small businesses. Rural Development received 32 applications and were only able to fund 6.

Quarterly Committee Updates

Business Retention & Workforce Development:

To date, we have awarded 351 Work Ready certificates from the four high schools. Rollouts of the Work Ready program have been completed at all area high schools. The next Business Education Roundtable will be Oct. 16th. During this roundtable, we will be discussing how to increase support by local businesses of the Work Ready program, hosting a Virtual Job Fair at the high schools, and implementing the Second & Third Year Work Ready certificate requirements, as well as hearing updates from all partners.

Community Needs/Municipal Issues:

Just held an Elected Officials meeting, one of our more productive meetings. Mike Roseberry talked about Code Hearing, Jane Johnson from the Health Department talked about nuisance issues. Fred Ruzich was there and we will be working with Fred to develop a Solar Toolkit to provide access to permitting, planning and zoning details for local government to navigate the solar adoption process with ease.

Small Business/Entrepreneurship:

Currently planning a Small Business Institute for Nov. 3. About 15 to 16 classes for small businesses will be offered with the option to pick 4 that day. Also, open up with some resources that are available through different agencies. Hosted at JWCC Southeast Facility.

Renewable Energy/Telecommunications:

The Illinois Supreme Court has agreed with Illinois Farm Bureau and others that the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) shouldn't have issued a 2014 order allowing Rock Island Clean Line (RICL) to construct, operate and maintain a 500-mile, high-voltage transmission line. In its 20-page opinion issued Thursday, the state Supreme Court unanimously affirmed the Appeals Court decision that the commission erred in determining RICL is a public entity. "The company does not qualify as a public entity under Illinois law, and was ineligible for a certificate of public convenience and necessity from the commission," the opinion reads. The ruling ends a lengthy court battle over RICL's proposed \$2 billion transmission line in Illinois and Iowa.

IFB has also appealed the ICC's approval of a project filed by RICL affiliate, Grain Belt Express, and argued that Grain Belt does not qualify as a public utility. This case remains pending before the 5th District Court of Appeals.

Promotion/Marketing/Membership

Committee members will be visiting new potential members in the next few weeks using our new membership brochure. Premier members will have signage displayed at PCEDC events.

Old Business

New Business

Highway 54 Corridor Group Update

Highway 54 Corridor Met last week and Brenda will be contacting the City of Pittsfield for meeting dates in October. They would like us to host the November meeting which would fall on Nov. 16th at 10:00 am. They are in the process of revising a handout to share with Councils.

County Board Funding

At the last County Board meeting, the minutes of the County Administrator SubCommittee included wording to the affect that they were looking for ways to fund the County Administrator position and one they were reviewing was the amount of money they gave PCEDC. Brenda prepared a response to Amy Gates, chair of the committee, outlining what we are doing for the county and asked them to not consider cutting our funding. Brenda reported receiving a positive response from 3 members of that committee.

Pike County RLF Status

As of Sept 7, the Pike County revolving loan funds are no longer available for loan. In the early 1980s the State of Illinois began administering a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program for local communities capitalized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. At the peak of the RLF program, there were over 170 local funds. In 2013, HUD issued a monitoring letter to DCEO finding there was a "failure to demonstrate eligible use of Revolving Loan Funds by Units of General Local Governments (UGLG)." HUD's finding referenced two primary issues: 1) the State could not document the funds were administered according to federal regulations, and 2) the funds were not being actively disbursed, i.e. too large of a percentage of the funds remained in banks, jeopardizing future CDBG funding. The 2013 monitoring finding remains unresolved.

DCEO has proposed to HUD that the Entities that had been given a grant for RLF prior to Oct. 1, 1992, get to keep their monies. The remaining 65 RLF, one of which is Pike County's, will be closed as of January, 2018. Bank balances will be returned to DCEO as of the end of the year and outstanding loans will be assigned to contracted third party administrators for collection of future payments.

A non-competitive CDBG program for former RLF communities will be established. Each community will have non-competitive access to CDBG grant funding for up to two projects in the amount of the community's final RLF bank balance that is transferred to the DCEO in January 2018, plus the total of the community's outstanding RLF loan portfolio minus the total

of the amount of RLF funds lost through default, bankruptcy, write offs, et. al. from October 1, 1992, through the closing of the fund.

Each community will have until December 31, 2020, to enter into grant agreements for the two allowed projects in the non-competitive CDBG program for former RLF communities. The range of CDBG-eligible projects will be expanded from the normal program. Acceptable projects will include:

- i. Public Infrastructure projects in low-to-moderate income areas without regard to threat to health and safety, including Design and Activity Delivery elements.
- ii. Housing Rehabilitation similar to the regular annual program.
- iii. Economic Development projects, no leverage required.
- iv. Street improvements including street and storm drains, curb and gutter work, installation of street lights or signs in low-to-moderate income areas.
- v. Sidewalks including improvements and installation of trash receptacles, trees, benches or lighting when part of a streetscape project in low-to-moderate income areas.
- vi. Other rehabilitation – Publicly or privately owned commercial/industrial improvements of a commercial building (including façade) or correction of code violations.

Any amount not placed under contract by a community via a grant agreement by December 31, 2020, will be returned to the state's pool of CDBG funding and made available to recipients statewide in DCEO's annual competitive program. We cannot use the grant funds for demolition of an existing building and we cannot use the funds for a building for government purposes. The project will have to meet LMI qualifications and an economic development project will have to meet the job creation/retention qualification.

Support for Heartland Lodge ATV Grant

Heartland Lodge was awarded over \$1.2 million in grant funds in Sept. 2015 to expand their AVT park but have never received the funds. These funds come from an Illinois law that requires an annual OHV usage stamp be purchased to develop public access trails. Funds generated through the OHV Usage Stamp are normally between \$700,000-\$800,000 per year. Heartland needs these funds to honor their commitment to buy additional property for the expansion. Approximately 10,000 additional visitors to Pike County are being lost because the park cannot be expanded. Members were encouraged to contact Rep. Davidsmeyer and Sen. McCann to express support that these funds be found and awarded.

Peace Corp Fellowship

Our application was accepted and it's possible that we may be conducting interviews as soon as Oct. 11th. Because they did not receive their annual grant from USDA Rural Development, we will need to revisit the costs of participating in the program. These are students who are completing their Master's Degrees and would be available for 37.5 hours/week for 11 months. Some have stayed with the organization after the internship.

Chairman's Comments-Patrick Conley had no comments.

Visitor Comments- Larry Fischer reviewed a project he had worked on with the New Horizons Committee several years ago and how that could have benefited Pike County. He shared a promotional brochure that was used at the time. He encouraged PCEDC to have someone from DOT Foods to share how we could entice warehousing. He stated that Pike County is ripe for development with rail, transportation and water resources. He had talked to former students in the Pearl & Milton areas who are discouraged. He is surprised at the level of complacency with the conditions in Illinois. We should expect more and demand more. JWCC is here to help with educational needs and the college needs to do more. He encouraged PCEDC members to expect a lot from JWCC. He said to make sure to elect County Board members who are aggressive in economic development.

Member Updates and Comments

Kaye Iftner- Assisted with the Groundbreaking for Ace Hardware and ribbon cutting for Haymakers. Nov. 2 is the next Girls Night Out event. Nov. 25th is Small Business Saturday. The Let's Say Thanks program to show appreciation for veterans is in its 8th year. The Jeepers had two successful events and will be meeting next month to give out their charitable donations.

Casey French- no comments.

Robert Wood –City of Pittsfield is working on two new streets; Ace Hardware and JWCC. Higbee has been torn down and new housing for 55+ will be constructed with 12 units.

Blake Roderick- Cass Communications has installed fiber in the Farm Bureau building and the southwest corner of the building will be remodeled for commercial office space.

Diane Vose- Enrollment at JWCC Southeast facility is up from 64 last year to 109 this year. They are working on the Spring programs. They currently are hosting the CEO class and will be hosting the Small Business Institute on Nov. 3.

Andy Sprague – Expressed his appreciation for the partnership from JWCC to be part of the solution here in Pike County. He also commented on the Workforce Development customized training options. The success of the program at Timewell Tile is an encouraging example.

Jeff Hogge-Apple Festival is this weekend.

Brenda Middendorf- Commented on how nice the west edge of Pittsfield is looking with the Haymakers, Doug Daniels remodeled buildings and Ace Hardware going in. Going into deer season and has not received any answers from IDNR as to funding for Pike County. Will be seeking donations for the program. Christmas Lodge Tour is filling up on Tuesday.

Adjournment

With business concluded, a motion was made to adjourn by Kaye Iftner, second, Robert Wood. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:43pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Kaye Iftner/Brenda Middendorf.

Next Executive/Voting Meeting-Monday, October 23, 2017.

Next meeting: Quarterly Meeting-Date to be determined by County Board