

Pendleton County Economic & Community Development Authority

Place: Pendleton Community Center, Franklin, WV
Date: June 9, 2021
Time: 7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Joan Ashley, Laura Brown, Kristin Dingess, Jeremy Harper, Bill Hartman, Carl Hevener, Bob Horan, Bill Loving, Carl Warner, Laura Brown, Director, Kim Ruddle, Administrator and Dayne Davis via zoom

Guests Present: Shawn Stinson of the Pendleton Times, Debbie Turner and Bob Milvet of Grant Memorial Hospital, Robert Butler of Spruce Knob Seneca Rocks Telephone and Brandon Mitchell

Members Absent: Ryan Boggs, Brianna Bruns and Kenneth Harper

I. Call To Order

Chairman Kristin Dingess called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Kristin Dingess welcomed Laura Brown as the new Executive Director for Pendleton County Economic & Community Development Authority

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. *Approval of the April 20, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes*

Joan Ashley **moved** to approve the minutes. Bill Hartman **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** with a unanimous vote.

III. Approval of the Financial Statement

A. *Financial Statements for the period ending April 30, 2021*

B. *Financial Statements for the period ending May 31, 2021*

Joan Ashley **moved** to accept the financial statements for both months. Bob Horan **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** unanimously.

IV. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

V. Old Business

A. *Grants Program*

This item was moved until after Grant Memorial Hospital and Brandon Mitchell in order that the guests may leave if they do not want to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

Laura Brown noted a change in the grant program from last year on page 4 in the scoring. Based on last years applications, she feels that the marketing scoring should weigh more and decreased the scoring for increased employment. She is going to approach local business(s) to get a matching amount. Through a cooperative effort with the CVB Kim Ruddle has secured a \$650 grant to use in this program to help a tourism related business.

Kristin Dingess and Carl Warner will be on the grant committee.

VI. New Business

A. Grant Memorial Hospital

Bob Milvet, CEO of GMH, informed the board that they hope to have the new Cancer Center open with three months. Their research indicated that there were 77 people in the Tri-County area driving 1-1 ½ hours one way to take chemotherapy every day. Being a cancer survivor, he found this unacceptable. They currently are affiliated with WVU Hospital and have an oncologist coming from WVU medicine to see patients. A nurse practitioner trained in chemotherapy who gives the treatments. Their research also shows there are 750 new cancer patients in the Tri-County area each year.

The hospital is also undergoing a lot of renovations. The Special Care unit will reopen in July. Telemedicine is available including specializing in cardiac care and psychiatric care.

They need more nursing staff.

B. Brandon Mitchell/Allen Moats

Brandon Mitchell is with the Sugar Grove Lions Club and Allen Moats is with the Sugar Grove VFW. The two groups are collaborating to build a park in that area. They have looked at the bleachers at Hanover and one set is repairable. They would like to purchase it. Laura Brown commented had discussed this with Kim Ruddle to find out that a group had asked for them in the past and the Board had offered to donate them to that group, but they never picked them up.

Joan Ashley **moved** to donate the bleachers for this park. Bill Loving **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** with a unanimous vote.

Brandon elected to stay for the meeting.

C. Broadband

Laura Brown met Monday with JP Mowery, Charles Hedrick, Gene McConnell, Becky McConnell and Rick Gillespie regarding broadband expansion in the County.

Another meeting will be held on June 29 with these people and Robert Butler.

The ARDOF funding for broadband for Pendleton County has been given to Frontier.

D. Website

Our current website is just an add on to the Chamber of Commerce site. A stand-alone site would be more effective. Ryan Pace Communications has given an estimate of \$1,000 to build the site plus an annual website hosting fee of \$515 per year. This would include four pages. Mr. Pace estimates he could have it up and running in 2-3 weeks.

Bill Loving **moved** to accept the estimate and proceed with developing a new website. Jeremy Harper **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** unanimously.

E. Business Roundtables

Carl Hevener has suggested to Laura Brown that the EDA should hold business roundtables. She has talked to Jeff and Teresa Munn who are willing for the first one to be held at Loafer's Glory & Dry Run Spirits on July 14, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. She would like to hold another one November 10, 2021, at the Pendleton Community Building.

Bill Hartman stated that it would be a good time for the EDA and businesses to find out their needs and how they can help each other.

Jeremy Harper mentioned knowing of a similar group in Morgantown which is a benefit to those businesses.

Robert Butler asked how this would differ from the Chamber of Commerce's After Hours. Kristin Dingess stated that for this, the businesses did not have to be Chamber members. Also, the After Hours is more of a member appreciation than an exchange of ideas.

Joan Ashley **moved** that the EDA host the July 14th Roundtable and possibly one in November. Bob Horan **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** unanimously.

Laura Brown noted that the Roundtable in July will be informal and the others more structured.

F. Spruce Knob Tower

Carl Warner stated that a lot of visitors to Spruce Knob are coming away disappointed because the trees have grown up around the tower obstructing the view. From previous experience in the past, to get on the Mon Forest 10- or 15-year plan, talks must begin before the plan is made. When they ask for public comment, the plan will not be changed. Kim Ruddle tried to get more information regarding the new plan but was transferred several times and left messages which were never returned. Kristin Dingess suggested Laura Brown and Ciara Lambert of the Chamber/CVB work on this together. Laura suggested

that perhaps the WV Department of Tourism also get involved. Carl Warner suggested the national representatives as well.

Jeremy Harper stated that the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center was not being maintained properly either. There are dead weeds around the edges of the parking and sidewalk areas and the flower bed has nothing but weeds and grass.

Kim Ruddle stated that the trails also need maintenance.

Laura Brown stated that Gene McConnell and Daniel Taylor were working with the USFS regarding mountain bike trails.

G. Land at the Industrial Park

Laura Brown informed the board that there is a party interested in purchasing a lot in the industrial park for residential use.

Bill Loving moved to go into executive session. Jeremy Harper seconded the motion. The motion carried and Kristin Dingess declared executive session.

VII. Office Report

The office report was presented as attached.

Kim Ruddle pointed out that the DMV is no longer allowing the Franklin DMV to process dealer work. It is all going to Charleston and eventually to be completed online by the dealers. In addition, the written part of the driving test has an online option and so does driver's license renewals. The Commissioner of the DMV had stated earlier this year that all the DMV Field Offices would be closed within ten years. The Franklin DMV lease is up for renewal next year. This office processes a lot of dealer work and has customers from Pendleton, Grant, Pocahontas and Randolph Counties on a regular basis because of the friendly, helpful staff. There is business from other counties on a less frequent basis.

Kristin Dingess thanked Kim Ruddle for her nearly fifteen years of employment with the EDA. Kim has accepted an offer of employment elsewhere.

Carl Warner **moved** to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters. Joan Ashley **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** unanimously, and Kristen Dingess declared executive session.

Upon exiting executive session, Joan Ashley **moved** to accept the county handbook as the EDA handbook. Dayne Davis **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** with a unanimous vote.

Joan Ashley **moved** to advertise for an administrator with June 30th the deadline for applications. Bill Hartman **seconded** the motion the motion **carried** unanimously.

Joan Ashley **moved** to accept the job description for administrator. Jeremy Harper **seconded** the motion. The motion **carried** with a unanimous vote.

VIII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

IX. Adjournment

Carl Warner moved to adjourn the meeting. Bill Loving seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Chairperson Kristin Dingess adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.