



Athens Economic Development Corporation

Board of Directors

Monthly Board Meeting

August 16, 2022

The Board of Directors of the Athens Economic Development Corporation (hereinafter referred to as AEDC) held a monthly board meeting on Tuesday, August 16, 2022, at 10 am in the Derek D. Daniels Room of the Athens Partnership Center located at 201 W. Corsicana Street, Athens, Texas.

Directors' present: John Trent, Randy Jones, Donna Meredith, Danny Tidmore, Joe Mike Murphy, Mark Ferrell and Cliff Bomer

Staff Present Joanie Ahlers, Executive Director and Valerie Franklin, Office Manager

Ex-Officio: City Manager Elizabeth Borstad, Mayor Toni Clay, Councilmen Aaron Smith and Mark Carroll

Guest: Debra Deas, Tim Perry, Jeff Wilson, Tommy Nichols, and Billy Robinson

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a. m. by President John Trent for all agenda items. A quorum was present.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None.

Public Communication

None.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding the approval of minutes from July 19, 2022, monthly board meeting

Donna Meredith made a motion to accept the July 19, 2022, minutes as read, and the motion was seconded by Mark Farrell. The motion carried unanimously.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding the approval of July financials

Executive Director Ahlers stated sales tax is still increasing. We had a 12.27% year over year. Under summary it shows outstanding commitments and Oakwood Place in already included in the budget this

year to date spent.

Cliff Bomer made a motion to approve the financials and Danny Tidmore seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding quarterly reimbursement to the City of Athens

Executive Director Ahlers explained the City's Finance Director Mandie Quigg prepares this document which shows the fee paid to the finance department administrative expense and payroll. There is a copy of the agreement which we will review at our next meeting for next year.

Danny Tidmore made a motion to approve quarterly reimbursements to the City of Athens. Donna Meredith seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider discussion and possible action for Business Assistance Grant for Alliance Towing

Executive Director Ahlers explained the grant committee met last week to review the application. The grant request was \$12,500. The project cost is a little over \$32,000. This is to pave his lot. They are an existing business in Jacksonville and Palestine and are now expanding into Athens. They are now on the Athens PD rotation for wrecker service. They have received all required zone review, but it did come up that the lot needs to be paved because of a city ordinance.

Cliff Bomer made a motion to approve the business assistance grant for Alliance Towing. The motion was seconded by Mark Ferrell and the motion carried unanimously.

Consider discussion and possible action to amend the performance agreement with Henderson County Performing Arts Center exhibit B to include replacement of water heaters

Executive Director Ahlers explained a community development grant was approved for Henderson County Performing Arts Center. They had an old well that had rust water in it. It ruined all their sinks, toilets and faucets. When they built their scope of work, it did not dawn on them the water heaters needed to be replaced. We would like to add the water heaters to exhibit B. We are not changing the amount of grant they are getting but just allowing them to reach the amount of money they were to spend. Pictures have verified they the heater have been replaced.

Mark Ferrell made a motion to approve the amendment to exhibit B to include water heaters in the performance agreement with Henderson County Performing Arts Center. It was seconded by Randy Jones and the motion passed unanimously.

Consider discussion and possible action regarding Athens Municipal Airport Study

City Manager Elizabeth Borstad stated we have talked about a potential airport expansion. Where we are now is to provide an airport operations assessment report which would be done by a consultant. TX Dot has submitted a lot of information. They are now requiring an additional survey to justify the expansion because our current operations are under their threshold. This will determine if we qualify for an expansion or not.

Executive Director Ahlers reminded everyone that the AEDC owns three hundred acres and have a vested interest in the airport expansion.

Tim Perry, who is the Public Works Director for the City of Athens explained that the airport operations have minimum funding and is subsidized from the general funds to make it through the year. We are no way near the number of counts required by TXDOT to expand.

The cost of the study would be \$20,000. Randy Jones made a motion to split the cost of the study with the City of Athens. The motion was second by Cliff Bomer and the motion passed unanimously. There would be a 60–90-day turnaround.

Review spec building

Tommy Nelson gave a presentation on the spec building. There is to be dock doors on the west side of the building. The south side of track is difficult to build on. There was discussion regarding the driveway/street on the east side of the property regarding if it is a public street. There was continued discussion on the side wall height currently priced at 16'. Director Danny Tidmore requested 24'. This was discussion on what is included in the price per square foot in both the warehouse and office space. Utilities and fire system were discussion.

Director Ahlers summarized what was discussed concerning the fire sprinkler system and the side wall height at \$75 per square foot.

Review criteria for startup grant

Executive Director Ahlers introduced the criteria for a startup grant program. The purpose behind it is to encourage some of those home-based businesses to come out of their homes and start to take up some vacant commercial space. The program is initially designed as a micro grant program, three to five thousand, but at the board's discretion, it could be as much as ten thousand. The total budget for this grant will be fifteen thousand. She stated board member Mark Farrell summed it up by saying "this is a small bet for potentially a big reward." There are very risky, but one in five small businesses make it past five years. We would build the application to make sure it fits the criteria. The grant committee would consist of the same makeup as our original that reviews community development and business assistance grants. It would consist of the city manager, ED director, three EDC board members and one city council member and add the SBDC director because that is what they specialize in is small business development. The interim director is excited and does not want to have to vote. It was explained the board would make a recommendation. She asked that the document be reviewed, edited, and come back to vote on it in September. There was a discussion on this being a grant or loan and it will be a grant.

The board moved into executive session as 11:10 a.m.

Executive Session: Economic Development Negotiations

Pursuant to the Texas Government Code: Section 551.087 – Deliberation Regarding Poseidon Productions, Inc. DBA Extreme Engineering

Executive Session: Pursuant to the Texas Government Code: Section 551.072 – Deliberation regarding real property for the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property

The board reconvened in open session at 11:42 a.m.

Consider discussion and possible action concerning items discussed under Agenda item #12

No action was taken on this item. The board asked that Executive Director Ahlers get more information concerning Extreme Engineering

The board will consider the possibility of land purchase.

Director's Update

Cain Center Performance Agreement

Executive Director Ahlers stated we had verbally committed \$100,000 per year for five years to the Cain Center. It is that time of year and we will bring forth the agreement at a public hearing at our next meeting.

Shop Small Saturday

The Independent Small Business Alliance and the Chamber of Commerce are gearing up for Shop Small Saturday to encourage the community to shop local. They have asked us to sponsor with coffee and donuts to kick off the event. That will cost about \$500 of our marketing budget.

Board of Directors' request for future agenda items

President John Trent reminded the board that September will be his last meeting as he is terming off the board. The board must find a replacement and elect officers. We are asking council to let us know how many names they want recommended.

Board member Randy Jones asked for updates on the solar farm.

Adjourn

Without any other business to discuss. The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 am.

Donna Meredith, Secretary

John Trent, President