

**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 8, 2019**  
**Perry County Economic Development Authority**

**Attendees:** Frank Campbell, Greg Gordon, Duane Hertzler, Russ Hoover, June Reisinger, Dawn Lowe, Rich Pluta, Morgan Tressler, Marti Roberts, Shawna Weller, John Gerner, Mike Lawler, Jim Fuller,

**Absent:** none

**Excused:** Brenda Watson, Derek Whitesel, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Patti McLaughlin

**Guests:** Jason Finnerty, Karen Anderson

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:02 AM

**Public Comment:**

Jason Finnerty, the County Planner advised that 55 land development plans have been submitted to the County Planning Commission for review so far this year, which is like the number submitted to this time last year. This includes a land development plan for Merlin Shirk poultry operation in Spring Township which provides for 2 large poultry barns. Mr. Finnerty continues to work with SEDA-COG on their broadband project. The current phase involves measuring the height of structures. Rich Pluta mentioned that he understands that PA.net is planning to offer fixed wireless in Liverpool and Newport from their Millerstown tower. Mr. Finnerty noted that they have identified about 1200 structures that are of significant height for wireless hardware. Mr. Finnerty continues to work on the county Hazzard mitigation plan. The final draft is complete and has been sent to the municipalities for comment. Friday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> is the end of the 30-day review period. It then goes to PEMA, and then onto FEMA. FEMA wants to see one submission from the state. The Tri-County Planning Commission got a grant for \$30K to compile the plans.

**Secretary's Report:**

John Gerner presented the minutes of the July 11, 2019 meeting which had been distributed in advance to all board members with the package of materials for this meeting. Russ Hoover made a motion to approve the minutes, Shawna Weller seconded the motion. The motion to approve the minutes was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Russ Hoover presented the Management Report prepared by Robert Morris & Co. for the period ending June 30, 2019. He advised that the report reflects normal expenses during the month. Frank Campbell made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report, Duane Hertzler seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

Marti Roberts noted that the Bylaw process for approving payments is very detailed, first the costs have to be included in an approved budget, in some cases then bids are taken and a contract with a payment structure is approved, and then we receive invoices for the expenses incurred. In June we received an invoice for the LFPP project that required board approval to

pay just after our June board meeting, so that invoice had to be held for more than 30 days until the next board meeting so that it could be approved by the board. Ms. Roberts expressed concern that many of the small firms we employ normally cannot wait that long for payment and that we might get a bad reputation as a result. She proposed that we may want to ask our solicitor for any suggested language that would modify our Bylaws to provide some mechanism for faster payment. John Gerner said that the payment approval language was last updated less than a year ago when we adopted a new accounting system and that the intent was to ensure the Board knew of and approved of large disbursements before they were made. Russ Hoover suggested we tell businesses that they need to submit invoices before the first of the month to ensure prompt board action.

**Chair Report:** Marti Roberts advised of the following:

- Following discussions with the staff at Kitchen Table Consultants, it was decided that the scoring phase of project will be redone. We will reconvene the panel of ag leaders in September and narrow down the opportunities for diversification from 9 to 5.
- We received two proposals for the technical support of our Downtown Revitalization project. A wide-ranging discussion of the merits and issues with each proposal ensued. Comments included that Eastwick is well connected to the approval process in Pennsylvania but does not seem to be inclined to meet with the communities to work from ground up. They also did not demonstrate their experience with projects like ours. They seem to focus on grant funding approvals rather than on the need to provide a plan that has strong community support and contains a solid local vision for their community moving forward. Frank Campbell said he talked with some of the people in Mifflin County who were involved with the work that Eastwick did there and they said that Eastwick went above and beyond what they said they would do in the contract. The Muldrow proposal provided no specifics on how they would utilize the expertise available through the Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PDC) and their examples showcase towns with more resources than ours. John Gerner said that we probably need to ask additional questions before we can decide. Russ pointed out that Eastwick expressly states they will not meet with communities, and the board agreed that community involvement was critical. Rich Pluta noted that if we have questions, we should ask them - if not, why wait. Marti Roberts noted that we are still waiting to hear about a USDA grant that could pay for the PDC work, since the DCED funding cannot be paid directly to a non-profit organization. We should know by the end of August if we got that grant. Rich Pluta noted the strong support this project appears to have with the local communities based on the newspaper coverage. John Gerner discussed the expense of flying in experts to work with communities, when we could possibly hire the PDC to do that at less cost. Michelle Jones said we sent RFPs to 4 organizations and two replied that they were not interested. Michelle Jones said that New Bloomfield is very interested in making investments in capital improvements and they are eager to participate. When asked how many board members were willing to decide at this meeting - nine hands were raised. Discussion about having the executive committee go back with questions and make recommendations to the board at the next meeting ensued. John Gerner said he would ask Muldrow to clarify exactly how they would reach out to the communities. Morgan discussed

the passion she has seen from the Muldrow group regarding working in our communities and the interest and understanding of our town. Rich Pluta suggested that a committee work with the Muldrow group to create a contract for us to approve by the next meeting. Discussion about what additional information was needed. John wants clarification about exactly how they would utilize PDC in this work. Frank Campbell noted that flood plain issues play into the viability of many of the river communities and how will that be worked into the plans. Rich Pluta proposed a motion to contract with the Muldrow group pending the submission of an acceptable, clarified proposal that has been negotiated. Greg Gordon seconded. John asked that we have them send a revised RFP with the contract. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

- We received the invoice for the 2018 Audit Report that totals \$3,000 and requires board approval of the payment. Russ Hoover made a motion to approve the payment, June Reisinger seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.
- DCED has sent out a notice that their appropriation funding application software is open and will accept applications. Ms. Roberts said she will begin to enter data tomorrow, but it may take extra time to complete the grant document.
- Branding: Morgan Tressler talked about rough draft of the promotional video that was shot recently. She said she felt that Bob O'Toole, the dairy farmer in the video, needed to view the footage and accept it before it is released - which he did, and he approved it. John Gerner asked if the haze in the river shots could be removed. The consensus is that the video is very good. Marketing materials are on hold pending the development of copy for the individual brochures.
- Board and staff training: Kevin Fitzpatrick absent, no report
- Business services: Greg Gordon talked about the discussion he had with Michelle Jones about what we are already providing to local new businesses. We have had multiple people reach out to us to discuss opportunities. Greg discussed the notion of mentoring people, but not offering financial or business "advice" or opinions. Marti suggested spending some of our money in this category on advertising for cobranding. Gavin has submitted a proposal for creating ad templates.
- JVB had workshops in Juniata and Mifflin about succession plans. Russ mentioned that many farmers think if they've written a will that's good enough. Morgan suggested a committee meeting.

### **Committee Reports:**

- Branding - Morgan Tressler reported that the video work is scheduled for the week of July 18<sup>th</sup>. The website has been framed out and Michelle Jones is working on copy for the content. They are looking for 300-word blog comments about county highlights.
- Professional Development – Kevin Fitzpatrick said that he needs the board members to think and respond with ideas for training. He said that he got few responses from his email last month. John Gerner asked if there are recommendations that the board could consider. He wants to know how boards can move their organizations forward. Marti Roberts noted that it won't always be this group at the table, but how does this board ensure that the next board members will succeed. She suggested that maybe Mary Kuna could help us vision about what EDA's do to be successful – is it microlending? Broadband?

- Business Services - Greg Gordon is absent, but we have money earmarked for this. We are starting to get inquiries from people asking for our help, not necessarily just business plans. Rich Pluta suggested that we have a policy to meet with everyone who reaches out to us and we try to be a resource for them. He suggested that we have a session to brainstorm ideas on how PCEDA can be more of a resource for these prospective businesses. Michelle Jones said she would send out meeting times, if anyone else wants to join us. Rich Pluta suggested we might want to offer a course/seminar on succession planning for local businesses.

**Staff Report:** Michelle Jones reported as follows:

- Morgan Tressler advised that we have received an invoice from the videographer for \$2683 which represents the last cost to be incurred under the USDA RBDG grant. Morgan made a motion to approve payment not to exceed \$3000 for the videographer and Greg Gordon seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**New business:**

- Engage!/South Central Workforce Development contract needs to be signed, which had been discussed and approved at a previous meeting. John Gerner made a motion we approve the contract, Morgan Tressler seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.
- Michelle Jones noted that the lease agreement with the Chamber of Commerce, the terms of which were previously approved by the Board, is now ready for signature.
- Frank Campbell discussed the recent Naloxone training session held in Liverpool where 28 people attended. He noted that another one scheduled for later in August in the western part of the county.
- Frank Campbell noted the not much is happening about bringing sewer and water service to the fairgrounds. PennVest people offered multiple dates to discuss financing, but since the Fair Board is tied up with preparations for the upcoming fair, we will have to work on finding new meeting options.
- Frank Campbell said that he is still waiting for joint meeting with all four school districts.
- Michelle Jones advised that a promotional video for the region has been created by SCPaPrep/CREDC.
- Rich Pluta asked about the status of our project to help the local libraries upgrade their internet access capabilities. Michelle Jones reported that the Blain Library has a new server/backroom system, Marysville Library has four new computers, and we are paying New Bloomfield's cable bill right now.
- Marti commented about the low level of public involvement and participation in so many public roles in our county – the funding problems of our EMS and fire companies, positions unfilled, participants unprepared, lack of cooperation. June Reisinger suggested that we could offer a workshop for newly elected leaders. The County historically stays out of interfering with local control, but if the municipalities are struggling, is there a need for county help?

**Adjourn:**

Morgan Tressler proposed a motion to adjourn, Shawna Weller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent at 9:58am.