**Meeting Minutes**

**January 9, 2020**

**Perry County Economic Development Authority**

**Perry County Business and Tourism Center**

**New Bloomfield, PA.**

**Attendees:** Marti Roberts, Patti McLaughlin, Russ Hoover, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Duane Hertzler, Dawn Lowe, Brenda Watson, John Gerner, Derek Whitesel, Rich Pluta, Frank Campbell, Morgan Tressler, Shawna Weller, Jim Fuller, Michelle Jones

**Absent:** Greg Gordon, Emory Yoder

**Excused:** Mike Lawler

**Visitors:** Jason Finnerty, Perry Stambaugh

**Annual Meeting Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:01 AM

**Election of Officers for 2020:**

Kevin Fitzpatrick nominated the proposed slate of PCEDA Board Officers as follows:

Martha Roberts, Chair

Morgan Tressler, Vice-Chair

John Gerner, Secretary

Patti McLaughlin, Treasurer

Russ Hoover, Assistant Secretary Treasurer

Frank Campbell, At Large Member

Rich Pluta, At Large Member

Dawn Lowe seconded the nominations. Kevin Fitzpatrick commended current officers for their work during the past year. The slate of officers was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

With no other business pending during the Annual Meeting, Chair Roberts closed the meeting at 8:07 AM.

**Call to Order:**

The regular monthly meeting of the PCEDA was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:07 AM

**Public Comment:**

Jason Finnerty reported that the county has received only 3 land development plans so far this year, which is 4 less than last year at this time. The County has submitted its hazard mitigation plan to the Federal Emergency Management Agency beginning the 45 day review period. The plan has already been reviewed by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. Once the 45 day FEMA review period is completed, the county will hold a countywide public hearing on the plan and then send it out to all municipalities with a request for them to adopt the plan. All resolutions for municipalities who choose to adopt must go back to PEMA in one notification. Mr.Finnerty said he met with Tom Guliway (part of PCEV Group) for about half day and went o over general information, such as GIS mapping, that is available from the county, as well as more specific information on individual town and the greenways/parks/open space plans in the county. Mr. Finnerty noted that the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission is undertaking a comprehensive needs survey of the I-81 corridor to identify improvement needs.

**Secretary’s Report:**

John Gerner presented minutes of the December 12, 2019 board meeting which had been distributed to all board members before this meeting. Russ Hoover made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Duane Hertzler seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote without dissent.

**Treasurer’s Report:**

Patti McLaughlin presented the Financial Report for the period ending December 31, 2019 prepared by Robert Morris & Co. Ms. McLaughlin advised that the report reflects normal monthly receipts and expenses and receipt of over $22K in reimbursements from the USDA. Shawna Weller proposed a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report as presented, Kevin Fitzpatrick seconded the motion. The motion was approved by voice vote without dissent. Ms. McLaughlin discussed the need to hire a CPA to conduct the annual audit and suggested hiring the firm of Herring, Roland and Solomon, who performed the audit last year at a cost of $3000. John Gerner proposed a motion to retain the CPA firm of Herring, Roland and Solomon to perform our 2019 audit at an estimated cost of $3000. Frank Campbell seconded the motion. Rich Pluta asked Michelle Jones how this firms was to work with last year and she said they were fine. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**Chair Report:**

* Marti Roberts advised that Arnett/Muldrow and Associates has had to cancel the week of Downtown Revitalization work session they had scheduled for next week, in part due to illness. The PCEDA Steering Committee will meet Wednesday, January 15th at 10 to strategize on how to enhance our coordination with the boroughs on this project. Kevin Fitzpatrick asked to be point person for New Bloomfield.
* PCEDA has been asked to re-present its request for funding from the county in 2020 to the new county commissioners tomorrow, January 10th at 12:30 PM. We are first on the list to make our pitch. We have resent our previous letter request which contained information on how we propose to use the funds. We will publish the our budget publicly after this funding issue is resolved.
* Ted LeBow, from Kitchen Table Consultants, will be here at 8:30 AM to present the LFPP report. The report was well done and represents a year of effort. Ms. Roberts said she expects that, once the report has been forwarded onto the USDA, we will be asked to make a formal presentation of the results at one of their regional meetings. John Gerner wondered if we need to appoint another group, like we have for the Downtown Revitalization project, to oversee this effort moving forward and questioned if we need to revisit the idea of having another non-public entity created to handle the dealings with private businesses. Ms. Roberts said that we are having the Tripp Muldrow team provide some guidance on this topic.

**Staff Report:**

Michelle Jones highlighted the following items:

* Gavin, our website developer, has submitted an invoice totaling $2843.75, that requires board approval. Rich Pluta proposed a motion authorizing the payment of the invoice as submitted, Russ Hoover seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.
* Kevin Fitzpatrick noted that Wednesday, January 29th  beginning at 9AM, looks like the best day to bring the Board members in for the PANO training session. He reminded all board members of the need to view the 90 minute video about the functioning of non-profit boards in advance of the training session. Michelle Jones will resend the link to the video and the ID and password to get onto PANO site to all board members.

**Old Business:**

* Frank Campbell reported that the engineering firm HRG has been engaged to do feasibility study of the fairground to determine the best placement of water and sewer facilities on the site. They will get everyone together to be sure they can all agree on a plan. John Gerner asked if there will be a cost associated with having an architect work on a siting plan. Mr. Campbell said he thinks it will be done gratis by a local individual.

**New Business/Announcements:**

* Frank Campbell reported that the career counselors’ advisory committee will be meeting at the Susquenita School District at 11:30 AM on January 20th. John Gerner advised that he heard an advertisement about a career awareness event at York Builders Fair and wondered if something like that could be organized like that during the Perry County Fair?
* Brenda Watson and Frank Campbell were at Susquenita schools as a part of that school’s Junior Achievement program – the only such program in the county. They highlighted the enthusiasm of the students and the fund they had as participants.
* Michelle Jones announced the Financial Reality Fair to be held at the Newport High School on Tuesday, February 25th.
* Rich Pluta provided information on the Harrisburg Regional Chamber’s 2020 Legislative Breakfast scheduled for February 20th . Reservations can be made through the local chamber office and the cost is $40.
* Representative Keller’s Breakfast is set for February 27th at the Ranch House Restaurant.
* Michelle Jones reminded everyone about the Networking event scheduled for 5:30 PM tonight at our office and urged board members to attend if possible.

**Adjourn:**

Patti McLaughlin proposed a motion to adjourn and XXX seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent at 8:35 AM.

Notes on presentation of results of Local Food Promotion Program project by Ted LeBow from Kitchen Table Consultants:

* KTC has been working on this project for about a year. Helen Kollar-McArthur and Noah Munro, who also worked on the project were on speaker phones.
* KTC primarily worked with local entrepreneurs as a part of this project. Approximately 1/3 are farmers, 1/3 in supply chain work and the balance are in economic development and non-government organizations.
* Everyone got a copy of report which details the process and results. Started out with over 30 business options, narrowed those down to 10, then down to 5, and finally down to the three for which detailed business plans were developed. Those three are:
	+ Grain Hub
		- John Gerner asked if a grain hub could be operated as a cooperative – yes it can be but the setting up of the cooperative is time consuming.
		- Rich Pluta asked about the 52 farmers cited in the report, were they all grain farmers? Ted said yes, that’s who would start and there’s much opportunity to grown from that.
	+ Malt House
		- Ted advised that there are 2 businesses already interested in the next step
	+ Hemp Processing Facility
		- Ted acknowledged that there is some risk with this option, but they could not leave it out
* Discussion about process.
	+ Next step is marketing;
		- Community conversations – engage people, support execution, adjust as necessary
	+ Concrete next steps: what are action items for next 6-12 months
1. Make phone calls to 4 entrepreneurs.
* Mark at Malthouse wants first right of refusal for grain hub.
* Two partners from Boston are targeting PA
* Ron ?? wants to do a hemp facility
1. Set up scorecard to identify how to keep moving on this. Revisit annually
* John Gerner asked how important transportation, as in access to four lane highway was to each of these options? We have good road access in eastern part of the county, so does that limit where some of these options can be cited? Execution portion means the entrepreneur needs to do that research on location and volume.
* Do we need to support the investor in any way? John Gerner asked how essential financial incentives are to bringing some of these options to life? Ted said that financing is easiest part of a well done business plan. Huge value in having involved, eager community.

Rich Pluta noted that it’s about relationships. Deer Creek is well-regarded in Harrisburg. Noah said that Mark was the most enthusiastic about participating. Was cautious of his time and energy so that he wasn’t doing the work for a competitor. He’ll need some sort of agreement to do the work with us. He’s also interested in having a co-located grain hub and malthouse. Mark also has ideas about financing (included in resources section).

Rich Pluta asked if we bring an incentive, will we motivate someone to move their three year plan up? Ted said that could be a likely outcome. We have 4 people knocking on your door right now.

John Gerner asked what is our actual next step? Helen said that if we had an enthusiastic person or if we needed to expand business plan we could apply for a value added producer grant, also there are working capital grants if funding is needed to get up and running. It would provide up to $250K as working capital. The deadline for applying for a VAPG is March with funds out in July. Need the applicant to be for an actual producer.

Marti Roberts suggested that we need to go to the farmers and see if they will use/support any of these options. We need to determine what is the viability. The number of farmers (52) came from the Ag Census, we need better numbers.

KTC recommends we to talk to the actual entrepreneurs, expand the business plans and do your homework.

Jim Fuller noted that Tuscarora Processors, in Juniata County, is already a grain hub. That’s where everyone local takes their harvested grains- so we would be competing with them.

Rich Pluta noted that more detailed business plans would find out all of this information. Do we make a contracted agreement with the entrepreneur and then apply for a grant? Ted advised that the general process is:

1. strategic planning (where we are),
2. feasibility assessment - will it work? Take a 95% complete plan to a 99% level of it working 🡨is likely included in our step one,
3. Full business plan detailing location, everything.
4. Implementation. Funding should be separate.

Ted suggested that we start running down the path with all three ideas and then assess who is most excited and then find grants, etc. We could work on funding for more than one if we and the ag community are really excited about them. We need to ask what’s it going to take to get you here?

John Gerner asked if we need to go back to our farmers to offer them the opportunity? Ted said that based on what they heard from farmers was that they really just want to farm, not market or any other thing. Nevertheless, this is an opportunity for our ag committee (the ones who helped put this all together) to talk to these farmers to see if they are interested. Crop Day is January 24th – do we have a table?

Jason Finnerty asked if there is a way to lock someone in to being committed to the county as part of helping with funding.

Short term next steps

* Reconvene ag committee
* Contact the entrepreneurs who have expressed interest.