**Minutes of Annual Board Meeting**

**January 14, 2021**

**Perry County Economic Development Authority**

**Perry County Business and Tourism Center**

**New Bloomfield, PA.**

**Attendees:** Russ Hoover, Rich Pluta, Dawn Lowe, John Gerner, Shawna Weller, Marti Roberts, Duane Hertzler, Frank Campbell, Kevin Fitzpatrick,

**Staff:** Michelle Jones

**Absent:** None

**Excused:** Patti Finnerty

**Call to Order:**

The Annual Meeting of the PCEDA Board was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:30 AM. The meeting was held via a Zoom conference call.

**Election of Officers:**

Kevin Fitzpatrick made a motion to nominate the slate of officers as follows as presented in the meeting agenda:

Proposed Slate of Officers:

Martha Roberts, Chair

Morgan Tressler, Vice-Chair

John Gerner, Secretary

Patti McLaughlin, Treasurer

Russ Hoover, Assistant Secretary Treasurer

Frank Campbell, At Large Representative to Executive Board

Rich Pluta, At Large Representative to Executive Board

Dawn Lowe seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

Chairperson Marti Roberts adjourned the Annual Meeting.

**Call to Order:**

The January meeting of the PCEDA Board was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:35 AM. The meeting was held via a Zoom conference call.

**Public Comment:**

Jason Finnerty, the Perry County Planner, advised that 16 land development plans have been submitted for review to the County Planning Commission already so far this year, which is 11 ahead of last year at this time. Two poultry barns are being proposed in Juniata Township. A new school building is proposed to be built in Saville Township, likely a private Amish school. Mr. Finnerty said he is expecting to see additional land development plans to be filed in the western end of county. The Talmudic University has submitted a residential land development plan for 4 lots on a portion of their land in Center Township (1) and New Bloomfield Borough (3). The county has received approval of its DCED planning toolkit update. Solicit info about areas of need in townships. Finally, he said that the survey forms for the upcoming county comprehensive plan update are nearing completion and he hopes they will be ready for release very soon. Marti Roberts offered PCEDA help to get the surveys out.

**Secretary’s Report:**

John Gerner presented minutes of the December 10, 2020 board meeting which had been distributed to all board members in advance of today’s meeting. Kevin Fitzpatrick 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:** Russ Hoover, presented the Financial Report for the period ending December 31, 2020 prepared by Robert Morris & Co., which was distributed to all board members in advance of today’s meeting. Mr. Hoover advised that the report reflects normal monthly expenses and payroll costs. Kevin Fitzpatrick made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented, John Gerner seconded the motion. Rich Pluta noted that the Finance Committee has proposed the reallocation of some expenses that had been categorized for payment out of County funds to be paid with DCED grant funding, specifically staff salary. Kevin Fitzpatrick struck his motion to accept treasurers report as presented. Marti Roberts advised of her apprehension about asking DCED for an extension of the time for use of these grant funds because of the pandemic impacts on delivery of our revitalization project. In addition, the county’s grant writer, Jason Fitzgerald, has already applied for DCNR grants for land and waterway trails, which require matching funds. We have very little match (unrestricted) funds to use. Rich Pluta explained by switching the funding source as proposed by the Finance Committee would free up the limited amount of unrestricted funds we have. Kevin Fitzpatrick proposed a motion that the yearend statement would be revised to reflect salary expenses being taken out of DCED1 funding rather than out of County funding and that the Treasurer’s Report would be accepted with this revision. Rich Puta seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**Chair Report:**

Marti Roberts reported as follows:

* Based on previous discussions with our solicitor we were advised that our recent bylaw revision regarding the number of members on the Board (from “21” to “up to 21”) was not consistent with the PCEDA Articles of Incorporation (AI) on file with the PA Department of State and that we would have to amend those AI’s accordingly. A 2015 change to the AI amended number board members from 6 to 21. Upon closer examination of the wording of the 2015 amendment, it seems the wording is ambiguous enough to encompass “up to 21”. Ms. Roberts would like some board action to define our next step in this matter. John Gerner asked if we have anything in writing from our solicitor regarding this interpretation. Michelle Jones said we do have an email from our solicitor that states this interpretation. Mr. Gerner went on to remind the board that the county commissioners have the right to nominate as many as they choose, up to 21, even if we do not nominate new members. Ms. Jones advised that there was some public questioning at the last commissioners meeting about the number of resignations. Ms. Jones said she provided some insight into the reasons provided for the requested resignations and that the commissioners accepted that explanation. Kevin Fitzpatrick asked if we should the commissioners the option to appoint new board members. Michelle Jones advised that the Executive Board has had some discussions about the difficulty in finding and bringing on new board during the pandemic and for leaving space for candidates who come to light during the revitalization project. No formal board action was taken on this matter.
* We have been asked by the county’s grant writer that DCNR has requested two documents - a letter attesting to our willingness to provide matching funds up to $34,000, and a formal board resolution authorizing the submission of the grant request. Kevin Fitzpatrick made a motion to authorize Marti Roberts to send a letter committing to providing up to $34,000 in matching money for the project. Russ Hoover seconded the motion. Rich Pluta asked if this is a state grant and was advised that it was. The motion was approved by voice vote without dissent. Russ Hoover proposed a formal board resolution authorizing the submission of recreational trails grant application in the amount of $195, 500 to the PA DCNR and authorizing Marti Roberts to sign all documents on behalf of the Board. John Gerner seconded the motion. Rich Pluta noted that the resolution would be numbered 2021-1. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent. Michelle Jones advised that all the grant application are on file in the Dropbox/Grants/GTRP.
* Ms. Roberts advised that PCEDA and the Chamber of Commerce are continuing their consideration of office space revisions focusing on obtaining more functional furniture and the provision of additional office space for PCEDA’s Downtown Coordinator. An office design consultant has been working on furniture and layout options. The desire is to retain the reception and display areas while providing more flexible meeting accommodations. We expect a quote from the furniture company in the next week.
* PCEDA is the recipient of a $150K Keystone Communities grant by way of a state budget appropriation. Marti Roberts and Michelle Jones participated in a phone call with the DCED staff person in charge of this program to discuss possible uses for this money and the application process. While Keystone Communities funds normally require a dollar-for-dollar match, these are appropriated funds that will not require matching funds for their use. Nevertheless, these funds normally are for physical projects for which detailed planning has already been completed. Michelle Jones has assembled the state’s program guidelines and will forward that information out to all board members. The funds are available for use through June 2023. Ms. Roberts suggested an internal brainstorming session to identify possible best uses for the money. John Gerner asked if we had a long lead-time to submit the funding application and, therefore, had time to develop the projects. Ms. Roberts indicated that it was not a hard deadline, but we should plan on having something in within 6 months. Rich Pluta suggested going to big three boroughs in search of good projects that could be ready within the allotted time. Early successes in these projects could serve as a stimulus for the other boroughs to become more active. Kevin Fitzpatrick advised that the borough revitalization group has a meeting coming up and asked if he could share this information with that group. Duane Hertzler asked if this initial effort would be limited to big three boroughs. Rich Pluta suggested we discuss this with Tripp Muldrow. We can reach out to the boroughs. Should we create a working group to work on this? Ms. Roberts said she felt we should consider some protocols/guidelines internally before we send out notices to the boroughs. A goal could be that by our next board meeting we will have our approach to boroughs hammered out.
* Jason Fitzgerald suggested that we should consider federal Economic Development Administration grant possibilities. He said we should look identify what projects might qualify for federal EDA funding. Marti Roberts said she recently met with a resident who wants to bring a grain processing business to Perry County and needs rail access. Would funds be available to help build a rail spur or rehabilitate an existing one? This type of project would be a good fit for that EDA funding. She suggested that the water and sewer improvements to the county fairgrounds might also be a good candidate. It is possible that PCEDA could earn fees for bringing grant/loan funds to projects like this.

**Staff Report:**

Michelle Jones reported as follows:

* She signed up for New Manager for our downtown program through the PA Downtown Center, set for January 25-28, 2021. The cost is only $50.
* She also signed up for grant training, each Tuesday morning from 9:00 to 11:30, March 2, 9, 16, 30 and April 6, 13, 2021 (no class in March)
* She announced that CREDC will be offering its annual economic overview as a part of its Harrisburg Regional Economic Forecast in a “virtual” format on February 9th beginning at 9:00 AM. There is a $50 fee to be a part of this session.
* On Wednesday, February 3rd at 2:00 PM, the school districts, Perry County Literacy Council and Workforce Development will make a presentation to businesses regarding the workforce development efforts underway throughout the county, what these groups can offer businesses and how businesses can help develop the future workforce.
* On Wednesday, February 17th beginning at 8:00 AM PCEDA will be hosting a presentation to construction industry leaders and local supply chain companies on workforce development activities underway in the county and funding opportunities for training new employees. PCEDA is putting on this presentation as part of our information gathering efforts under the ENGAGE program as discussed during our December meeting. Ms. Jones said she is currently working on list of construction entities to invite and the best ways to get session information to them. Mail costs to send 330+ invitations to this virtual construction trades session could run up to $184.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business/Announcements:**

* Rich Pluta noted the conference call with our US Representative, Fred Keller, yesterday (Wednesday). Mr. Pluta that members of Congressman Keller’s team have a favorable impression of the work PCEDA is doing and likely will support our grant efforts.
* Harrisburg’s annual legislative forum with state Representatives is scheduled for Tuesday, February 26th beginning at 9:00AM. It will be a “virtual” session and  
  PCEDA members interested in participating can register using the Chamber of Commerce code to get the member rate.
* Russ Hoover advised that the historical society had a “virtual” meeting with the 911 Memorial Trail committee. The historical society is trying to get Millerstown, Newport, and Duncannon as points of interest on the trail. Mr. Hoover agreed to share contact information for PCEDA’s trail initiative.
* John Gerner asked is anyone has heard if the Nature Conservancy had been able to raise the funds they needed to purchase the woodlands back in the Cove south of Duncannon. Russ Hoover said he thinks they has purchased the land since the Conservancy has been in to talk about the Clarks Ferry Tavern project.
* Duane Hertzler asked if there has been any word regarding the purchase of the Tannery property in Landisburg and its conversion to a farm and bed and breakfast operation. Someone said they think the sale has gone through and grants are being sought for rehabilitation work.

**Adjourn:**

Russ Hoover proposed a motion to adjourn the meeting and John Gernerseconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved by a voice vote without dissent at 10:08 AM.