**Board Meeting Minutes**

**July 9, 2020**

**Perry County Economic Development Authority**

**Perry County Business and Tourism Center**

**New Bloomfield, PA.**

**Attendees:** Rich Pluta, Patti McLaughlin, Dawn Lowe, John Gerner, Duane Hertzler, Morgan Tressler, Shawna Weller, Kevin Fitzpatrick, Frank Campbell, Brenda Watson, Marti Roberts

**Staff:** Michelle Jones

**Absent:** Jim Fuller, Emery Yoder, Greg Gordon, Mike Lawler, Derek Whitesel

**Excused:** None

**Visitors:** None

**Call to Order:**

The monthly meeting of the PCEDA was called to order by Chair Marti Roberts at 8:02 AM. The meeting was held via a “Zoom” conference call.

**Public Comment:** None

**Secretary’s Report:**

John Gerner presented minutes of our June 11, 2020 board meeting which had been distributed to all board members on July 6th. Kevin Fitzpatrick made a motion to accept the minutes as presented, Brenda Watson 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 June 30, 2020 prepared by Robert Morris & Co., which was distributed to all board members on June 11th. Ms. McLaughlin advised that the report reflects normal monthly expenses, payroll costs, and an invoice for branding activities. John Gerner made a motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report as presented, Shawna Weller seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent.

**Chair Report:**

Marti Roberts reported as follows:

* The deadline for submission of grant requests to the National Endowment for the Arts is in August and she continues to work with the Perry County Council of the Arts on a grant to incorporate an art related component into each borough’s Downtown Revitalization plan/program of activities.
* We have received no updates on the status of USDA and DCNR grant requests we submitted in the past few months.
* Kevin Fitzpatrick reported that New Bloomfield Borough has been in touch with SEDACOG about seeking a grant to rehabilitate the grandstands and park behind borough building. The borough’s earned income tax (EIT) receipts have taken a significant hit due to the stay at home orders in response to the pandemic. Bloomfield now falls within LMI parameters and, therefore, could qualify for SEDACOG funding programs. This project could fall nicely within the borough’s downtown revitalization effort and SEDACOG funding could possibly represent matching funding for any other grants applied for. They are also considering a grant application to DCNR for funds to add a trail component to their park. Mr. Fitzpatrick noted that there is too much financial uncertainty allow the borough to tap into reserves for this project. Marti Roberts thanked Mr. Fitzpatrick for the advance information.
* Morgan Tressler provided an update on our branding efforts. We may still have about 50 “Support Local” signs left at the PCEDA office. We could use more signs in the Marysville and US11/15 corridor. Please take signs to spread about. Our social media campaign has been ramping up. While our webpage has been posted to Facebook, we have not seen it on Instagram. Michelle Jones said she will check into why it is not posting to the other sites. Ms. Tressler urged all Board members to invite people to like us and share our material.

**Staff Report:**

Michelle Jones reported on the following:

* Ms. Jones displayed a screen shot of a spreadsheet she developed that displayed all PCEDA’s sources of revenue (County, DCED1, DCED2, etc.) as bars depicting their inception and duration of availability. She noted that we are still waiting for reimbursement from USDA for the last payment under the LFPP project. Michelle Jones advised, in response to a question from Rick Pluta, that the approximately $14K reimbursement for our participation in the ENGAGE program has not been credited to a specific program account, but is being carried in a general fund category and will be used to cover the “float time” between when a bill is paid and when reimbursement is received from grant funds. In discussion with our accountant at Robert Morris, it was concluded that there really was no simple way to set up a payment “float” account and that this may be the best way to handle the issue at the present time.
* Ms. Jones reported that she used the information gathered during our recent “listening session” with Perry County business owners regarding the impact of the pandemic on their business operations to respond to a DCED information request through Shaun Donovan at PREP.
* The business education classes provided through ENGAGE to local entrepreneurs did not turn out as successful as hoped. It is not likely that we will participate in the program again.
* All necessary data requested by the auditors for their review of our 2019 financial audit has been provided and we are awaiting their report.
* We have been advised to expect only flat funded for PREP programs in the coming year in light of the state legislature’s passage of an interim 5 month budget (July thru November) and a fresh look at state expenses later in the year. We submitted an invoice totaling $844 in PREP funding for expenses incurred in 2019 and we are waiting to hear if they will all be accepted, since we budgeted more for rent against this account than we spent.
* Tripp Muldrow and the PCEV team will be assisting us in hosting meeting with all nine borough representatives on Friday, July 10th beginning at 11:00AM to hear about how the pandemic has affected their communities and to identify issues we need to consider as a part of our Downtown Revitalization program. New Buffalo, New Bloomfield, Marysville, Liverpool, Duncannon will be present. Ms. Jones said she will send a reminder email today, so we may get more participants.
* Ms. Jones participated in a meeting with the County Commissioners regarding broadband service in the county. The presentation ended up being more of a sales pitch by a company interested in providing service in the county. Based on a question from John Gerner, Ms. Jones described the SEDACOG test site in the western part of the county. The coverage area is rather small. Brenda Watson said that expanded broadband service in the county is a high priority for the commissioners. She said that less than half of the county does not meet criteria for even the very lowest coverage speeds.
* Ms. Jones reported that during the last three months she cut her payroll time to 20 hours per week due to the reduced workload and personal needs. She also advised that she will be having shoulder surgery in the near future and this may have a temporary impact on her work time.
* PCEDA has received a request for a letter of support from the Friends of Spring Township for the Shaeffer Memorial Park. They are requesting that the letter be of a general support nature rather than written in support of a specific funding request. Marti Roberts expressed reservations over the requested generalized support letter. She believes that these need to be project specific so that we know what we are being asked to support.
* This discussion then moved into an overall discussion about what seems to be a groundswell of grant applications and how this could be adversely impacting our overall ability to attract grants. Brenda Watson explained that requests for the county’s grant writer’s services are being prioritized and they are trying not to duplicate requests that they hear other groups are going for.

**Old Business/Announcements:**

* Frank Campbell advised that the Fair Board, the engineer, and the water authority met recently and discussed water system design requirements for the new service proposed for the county fairgrounds. Mr. Campbell reported that the meeting resulted in a better understanding of the water supply circuit requirements needed to keep from having stagnant water in the supply lines and a more cost-effective option was discussed. He said that he is hopeful the project can get back on track.

**New Business:** None

**Adjourn:**  Marti Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. John Gerner proposed a motion to adjourn, Frank Campbell seconded the motion, and the motion was approved by a voice vote without dissent at 9:22 AM