



WCEDC Mission Statement: *To Improve Wood County's Quality of Life by Promoting Economic Development*

WCEDC BOARD Minutes
WOOD COUNTY VOTING ANNEX
200 W. Bermuda St.
Quitman, TX 75783

Minutes of June 16, 2021 Board Meeting, at 12:00 pm

Attendees: Tom Keenan (Board Chair), Jim Berry, Gwen Winters, Lee Smith, Allene Doggett, Tom Callan, and Commissioner Mike Simmons. Quorum Present.

Members not present: Vic Savelli, Neal Duncan, Craig Lindholm, and Greg Hollen,

Staff Present: Christophe Trahan; WCEDC Executive Director

Others Present: Mineola Chamber of Commerce Board Member Mary Boone, Larry Tucker with Wood County Monitor, Kent Huffman, Sheila Haynes with Winnboro News, Yantis City Council Alderman Gerald Schmidt, and Improvement Recommendation Program Champion Steve Straznicky.

Call to Order

Chairman Keenan called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. and established a quorum.

Citizen Comment: Public comment was given by Mr. Steve Straznicky who gave a summary update on the ongoing Wood County Improvement Recommendation Program.

Consider/Approve of May 19, 2021 Minutes: Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. 2nd by Ms. Winters; Motion carried.

Executive Director Report

Mr. Trahan notified the board of the progress of the 2021/2022 fiscal year Hotel Occupancy Grant program. The WCEDC began accepting applications on May 24 and would be continuing to accept them through June 28. The Grant Review committee is set to convene on July 7th to review applications and hear presentations from applicants and issue their funding their recommendations to the WCEDC Board.

Mr. Trahan detailed a meeting that he held with representatives of the East Texas Council of Governments at their headquarters in Kilgore, TX. Mr. Trahan briefed the board on the programs that he discussed with ETCOG that are available to new and existing businesses in Wood County as well as services that ETCOG has and will be making available to the WCEDC.

Mr. Trahan gave the board a regular update on Sales and Use Tax collection figures for governmental bodies around the county and highlighted these figures use as economic "barometers" for the economies that make up Wood County.

Administration

- Financial Report: Mr. Berry presented the WCEDC Board with a Financial Summary of the General Fund and HOT fund budgets as of May 31, 2021.
- Invoice Report: Sightline Creative: Website Design Creative Services Proposal – Mr. Berry made a motion to approve the invoice. 2nd by Mr. Smith; Motion carried.



Marketing

- WCEDC Website Improvement Update by Kent Huffman: Mr. Huffman presented a strategy to the board for improving the WCEDC's web presence. The objective of the strategy was to design and develop two "Sister" websites for Wood County—one site to deal strictly with economic development content and one to function as a site with content and features relevant to Wood County residents and tourists to the county. The board showed consensus approval of the development strategy laid out by Mr. Huffman.

Programs

- Wood County Rural Set Go Employer Forum Summary: Mr. Trahan presented a summary of the Rural Set Go Employer Forum that was held on May 20, 2021 to the board of directors. The Forum was successful in bringing in over 30 business leaders and elected officials to hear from Texas Workforce Solutions about support programs for small businesses in the county and engage in an open discussion regarding the challenges that the county's business owners face. Following the forum, WCEDC aggregated information from the event regarding resources for local businesses and disseminated that information to businesses and community partners around the community.
- Goldstar Tribute Wall: Mrs. Doggett introduced Owen Tiner as the new Marketing Director for the City of Mineola and gave Mr. Tiner the floor to discuss the Goldstar Tribute Wall that would be coming to Mineola in August. Mr. Tiner shared with the board that the Wall is a traveling display that seeks to honor fallen military personnel. The wall will be in Mineola for 4 days from August 6-9 with a short ceremony to be held at 10:00 a.m. on the 7th to honor the families of the fallen and veterans.
- Wood County Chapter 381 Program: Mr. Trahan presented to the board a draft resolution to be presented to the Wood County Commissioner's Court that would establish a Chapter 381 Incentive Program for Wood County. The Program would allow for Wood County to consider providing direct economic development incentives on a case by case basis to aid in the stimulation and expansion of economic development in the county. Development projects considered by the program would have to have measured economic benefit for the county, such as expanding the local tax base, creating permanent full time employment opportunities, and making contributions to further economic development. Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend the draft resolution to the Wood County Commissioner's Court. 2nd by Ms. Winters; Motion carried.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Keenan introduced the Wood County Economic Development Commission's newest board member Steven Steele to the group. Mr. Keenan detailed that, while Mr. Steele was unable to be present to this meeting, he was extremely enthusiastic about serving on the board. Mr. Keenan added that Mr. Steele would be formally welcomed and installed at the board's next meeting.

Mr. Keenan also detailed as part of his report, the goals that the WCEDC Board would like to accomplish before the end of the fiscal year. These goals included establishing regionalism agreements with surrounding counties, installing adequate planning and zoning regulations for Lake Fork, and the development of adequate strategies for addressing real estate needs within the county for attracting new residents.



Featured Committee Reports

Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Report: Mr. Smith gave the board an update on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee's broadband initiatives to bring new funding to Wood County for the purpose of developing broadband infrastructure. Mr. Smith notified the board that he, Mr. Trahan, and Mr. Keenan would be meeting with ETCOG and their assigned contractors to hear detailed reports and discuss next steps for the broadband projects that have been submitted for Wood County.

As the chairperson for the WCEDC's Transportation & Infrastructure committee, Mr. Smith detailed his committee's commitment to establish a Wood County Broadband Coalition, that would be a body of stakeholders from around the county that would pursue resolutions from stakeholders from around the county in support of the coalition and stating that improving broadband access around Wood County is the most important initiative for them to pursue.

Adjournment

Mr. Callan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:04 p.m. 2nd by Mr. Smith; Motion carried.

Approved by WCEDC Board of Directors

Approval Date: July 21, 2021

Tom Keenan; WCEDC Board Chair