



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 22, 2022 Board Meeting

Attendees: Tom Keenan (Chair), Pam Swanner Thomas Callan, Allene Doggett, Steven Steele, Mike Simmons, Stephen Eggleston, Craig Lindholm, Adam Ehlert, and Lee Smith. Quorum Present.

Members not present: Gwen Winters, and Jim Berry

Staff Present: Christophe Trahan, WCEDC Executive Director; Drew Deatherage, Executive Assistant

Others Present: Jim Bailey, Larry Tucker with Wood County Monitor, City of Yantis Alderman Gerald Schmidt.

Call to Order

Chair Keenan called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and established a quorum.

Citizen Comment: There were no citizen comments made.

Consider/Approve of May 25, 2022 Minutes: Mr. Steel made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Smith 2nd the motion; motion passed.

Executive Director Report:

Mr. Trahan discussed the completion of the budget worksheets which were submitted to the Commissioner's Court for review. He also requested a time slot for a budget workshop and is awaiting a date and time to present the budgets to the court.

Mr. Trahan and Mr. Keenan updated the board with the current progress of the Master Planning Initiative. Mr. Keenan announced there is currently one bid for consultation services on the Master Planning Initiative. Mr. Trahan reached out to the firms who declined to bid on the Master Planning Initiative to discuss why they declined and to reestablish communication with their firm. Mr. Trahan also stated the Executive Committee would be reformatting the RFP.

Mr. Trahan introduced to the board the new Executive Assistant for the Wood County Economic Development Commission, Mr. Drew Deatherage. Mr. Deatherage started with the WCEDC on June 1st, 2022.

Mr. Trahan reached out to vendors seeking to acquire hotel occupancy tax compliance auditing services. The County has expressed interest with entering into a voluntary collection agreement with Homeaway Inc. to audit transaction data from short term rentals; Homeaway Inc. is a company who manages a marketplace for short term rentals. According to the drafted voluntary collection agreement, Homeaway would only be compelled to provide transaction data on short term rentals to the county. The county tax assessor collector expressed a need to retrieve location data in order to have more complete data from the audit. Mr. Trahan is researching new firms who could provide a new collection method that would give more complete data on each short term rental.

Mr. Trahan discussed the Local Sales Use & Tax summary which shows the sales tax collection for Wood County and its six municipalities. Mr. Trahan highlighted the city of Hawkins, which had a 60% contraction for the allocation period of June compared to June 2021. Mr. Trahan reviewed a 5-year period and found volatile figures over the course of that 5-year period with Hawkins' Sales and Use Tax. To investigate these statistics, Mr. Steele, Mr. Lindholm, and Mr. Trahan will meet with Hawkins Mayor Susan Hubbard to discuss the sales and use tax for the city.



Administration:

- **Financial Reports:** Mr. Trahan presented the financial summary for the month. The Economic Development Programs line item expenditure of \$60,000 from the UCC funds were spent on a host fee for Bassmaster that was subsequently reimbursed by the Sabine River Authority. Also within the same period, \$6,865 in HOT funds from the Advertising and Legal Notices line item were spent to promote the Bassmaster tournament and other tourism in Wood County.
- **Invoice Report:** Mr. Callan motioned to approve the payment of the previously allocated \$50,000 from UCC funds for Phase 1 of pre-development of the Wood County Health Care Foundation's Center for Memory Health and Education. Mr. Steele 2nd the motion, the motion carried.

Programs:

- **Rural Set Go: Boost Recap:** Mr. Trahan presented a recap of the Rural Set Go: Boost event hosted on June 7th, 2022 at the Instant Offices of Texas in Quitman. Over 50 registrants attended including local governments, ISDs, higher education, and leaders in the healthcare, real estate, manufacturing, transportation, and retail fields. The purpose of this event is to connect business leaders, government officials, and schools with access to workforce resources, and to discuss challenges within the local workforce such as child care and lack of access to transportation or broadband.

Mr. Trahan briefed the board on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which funds programs including work experience internships and on the job training. He also mentioned WIOA funds can be used to pay for individuals to receive CDL training. Mr. Trahan identified through BRE visits of the lack of CDL certified individuals within Wood County. Mr. Trahan also mentioned the Local Workforce Development Council is facilitating a county-wide workforce stakeholders meeting that will discuss how money is spent for workforce programs and how local businesses can access this funding. All of the county's ISDs, elected officials, EDCs, and local businesses with 50 or more employees have been invited to participate in these discussions with local and regional workforce representatives.

- **Wood County Health Fair Recap:** Mr. Trahan gave a recap of the Wood County Health Advisory Board's first annual Wood County Health Fair held on June 11th at Jim Hogg Park in Quitman. The estimated number of county residents at the event was between 200 and 250, with 125 county residents participating in the free health screens. Vendors at the event included the Hawkins Chamber of Commerce, Jarvis Christian University, Quitman ISD, and several other businesses involved with healthcare, travel, and manufacturing.
- **Bassmaster 2022 Economic Impact:** Mr. Trahan presented to the board an economic impact model of the Bassmaster Elite on Lake Fork. There were a total of 92 participants; 7 that were non-local anglers (outside of the 3 county region of Wood, Rains, and Hopkins) and 85 anglers from outside of the state of Texas. The participants stayed within the Lake Fork area over a course of 6 days. There were approximately 3,000 spectators; an estimated 2000 were local and 1,000 were non-local. There were a total of 4,358,000 viewers who viewed the event through television broadcast, livestreaming and social media broadcasting. The economic impact to the Lake Fork area (Rains, Hopkins, and Wood Counties) generated over \$2,700,000 with over \$900,000 to Wood County. This model was based on studies conducted by both the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas A&M analyzing spending habits of local and non-local residents and anglers on Lake Fork.



Chairman's Report:

- There was no Chairman's Report from this meeting.

Featured Committee Reports – Additional Reports as Needed

- **Health and Human Services:** Ms. Winters who chairs the Health and Human Services Committee reached out to Mr. Trahan and Mr. Eggleston for advice on how to market the committee's health survey to county residents. Mr. Eggleston recommended working with local healthcare providers and advertising through social media to promote the health survey. Mr. Eggleston continues to work with the Health and Human Services Committee to promote the health survey to residents of Wood County.
- **Marketing:** Mr. Eggleston presented the board with an update from the Marketing Committee. Mr. Eggleston introduced Amanda Shirley (who wasn't present) as the new social media manager to manage the WCEDC's social media pages. Mr. Eggleston noted the progress made by Mrs. Shirley on coordinating the social media presence to promote businesses and the cities in Wood County. He mentioned that Mrs. Shirley is currently working to create a structure to collect content from each community by building stronger communication with them in order to promote their community on social media. Mr. Eggleston also announced that the Marketing Committee is reviewing advertisement packages with Army Bass Anglers and Lakehub.com to promote tourism for Lake Holbrook, Lake Quitman, Lake Hawkins, Lake Winnsboro, and Lake Fork. Mr. Eggleston also discussed the ongoing progress being made with Brynna Williamson to create travel brochures to promote Wood County.
- **Infrastructure:** Mr. Smith updated the board with the progress of the ongoing broadband initiative. An additional vendor approached the county with a proposal to use ARPA dollars for broadband expansion within Wood County. The Commissioner's Court now has three vendors with offers to provide services to expand broadband service in Wood County using ARPA dollars.
- **Public Safety:** Mr. Callen updated the board with a report from the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Callen, Mr. Keenan, and Mr. Trahan met with Wood County Sheriff Kelly Cole to discuss school safety. One of the topics discussed with Sheriff Cole was utilizing the expertise and knowledge of Board Member Adam Ehlert (who is a retired Marine) and connecting him with school safety officials to increase the security presence in schools within Wood County.

Adjournment

Mr. Steele made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:14 p.m. 2nd by Mr. Callan, Motion carried.

Approved by WCEDC Board of Directors

Tom Keenan; WCEDC Board Chair

Approval Date: August 24, 2022

8/24/22