



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 August 24, 2022 Board Meeting

Attendees: Tom Keenan (Chair), Jim Berry, Stephen Eggleston, Gwen Winters, Pam Swanner, Thomas Callan, Allene Doggett, Steven Steele, Mike Simmons, and Lee Smith; Quorum present.

Members not present: Adam Ehlert and Craig Lindholm.

Staff Present: Christophe Trahan, WCEDC Executive Director.

Others Present: Larry Tucker with Wood County Monitor, Yantis City Alderman Gerald Schmidt, Lordina Mikesell of Golden.

Call to Order

Chairman Keenan called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

Citizen Comment:

Mr. Schmidt announced that he met with the Yantis ISD Superintendent to discuss available tutoring services for Yantis ISD, and he learned that 40% of Yantis students live with grandparents, or other relatives. Mr. Schmidt put an open call out for volunteers who could tutor students, especially with reading and math skills. Mr. Schmidt also stated that a business owner is looking to open a steakhouse in Yantis and is looking for a restaurateur.

Ms. Mikesell introduced herself as an area business owner with two businesses that deal with disaster assistance and drone operations. Ms. Mikesell expressed interest with becoming involved with communities around Wood County.

Consider/Approve of June 22, 2022 and July 27, 2022 Minutes: Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the June 22, 2022 minutes as presented. Mr. Callan 2nd the motion. Motion passed. Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the July 27, 2022 minutes as presented. Ms. Swanner 2nd the motion. Motion passed.

Executive Director Report:

Mr. Trahan presented the board his Executive Director's Report. On August 23, Mr. Trahan attended a meeting for Phase 2 of the Center for Memory Health and Education at UT Health Quitman. The Wood County Healthcare Foundation is committed to completing the project, and with the successful outcome of Phase 1, Phase 2 will consist of the engineering and architecture of the facilities for the project, finalizing total costs for the project, and fundraising.

Mr. Trahan presented the board with an update on the local Hotel Occupancy Tax Grant Program. There are 23 applications with a total of \$247,688 for funds sought, with a proposed budget of \$120,000. The Review Committee will meet on August 25th, with the recommended funding to be put before the Board for final approval at the September 28th Board Meeting.

Mr. Trahan stated that the WCEDC continues to circulate information about the Texas Travel Industry Recovery grant program to lodging facilities in Wood County. Mr. Trahan said that 31 lodging facilities in Wood County responded and provided contact information so the grant information could be sent to them.

Mr. Trahan spoke with the County Judge and is expecting to receive the annual Unclaimed Capital Credits (UCC) income from the Texas Comptroller's Office in the near future.



Mr. Trahan presented the Sales and Use Tax summary for the month of July. Mr. Trahan noted an increase in the Sales and Use Tax for both the cities of Alba and Quitman. Mr. Trahan believes the increase with Alba is attributed with a new service station that recently opened; he will discuss the Quitman increase with Quitman City Administrator Rodney Kieke. Mr. Trahan discussed the previous increase and decrease of Sales and Use Tax within the city of Hawkins and shared information from Mayor Hubbard that this was the result of an audit conducted within the city.

Mr. Trahan presented the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenue summary for the period. The HOT collected within the period saw a contraction of 25% compared to the last period. Mr. Trahan stated lodging establishments in San Antonio reported higher earnings this quarter than in the 2nd quarter of 2019, and Mr. Trahan reiterated that metropolitan areas are reopening to what they were before the pandemic, therefore rural area travel has decreased. Mr. Trahan also noted the national recession and inflation are affecting spending, leading to lower revenues, however Mr. Trahan stated that HOT collection has been up 3.3% for the fiscal year to date, compared to the same period in the previous fiscal year.

Administration:

- **Financial Reports:** Mr. Trahan presented the financial report for the month of July to the Board.
- **Invoice Report:** Mr. Trahan presented the board an invoice for a full page ad in the Texas State Travel Guide promoting tourism in Wood County. Ms. Doggett made a motion to approve the invoice. 2nd by Mr. Smith. Motion carried.

Programs:

- **County-wide Workforce Stakeholders Meeting Recap:** Mr. Trahan presented the board a recap of the Workforce Meeting that took place in Mineola on August 2nd, and thanked Commissioner Simmons for taking part as a representative of the county. Mr. Trahan said that \$58,200 were allocated under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to Wood County for workforce programs and development last year; he stated that only 15% of the allocated funds were spent during that period. For the current fiscal year, \$62,225 were allocated for Wood County, with around 30% spent as of August 2nd. As a result of this meeting, 3 additional WIOA applications were sent to Workforce seeking their assistance as well as site visits planned with Ozarka-Blue Triton and Christus Mother Frances Hospital in Winnsboro.
- **Master Planning Initiative:** Mr. Trahan announced that the WCEDC has reached out to the firms with an updated memorandum who are interested with the request for proposal (RFP) for Phase 1 of the master planning initiative. He mentioned that the first round of notices was unsuccessful, with many firms rejecting the RFP as several components were out of their area of expertise, however the updated memorandum was sent out to the firms, with items like land use and development that were considered a priority. The updated memorandum allows firms to choose key components and firms who have expressed include Insyteful and DADCO.

Chairman's Report:

- **By-laws update for the Executive Committee:** Mr. Keenan presented the board a draft of the proposed changes to the by-laws, which includes changes to the Executive Committee structure and scheduled Executive Committee meetings. Mr. Keenan stated with the addition of Mr. Ehlert and Ms. Swanner to the WCEDC Board, the Executive Committee could add another member to reach its maximum of 6 committee seats, however this sixth seat will be a rotating position. Each Board member will be given an opportunity to sit on the rotating position for a term of six months. In addition to the changes made with the structure of the



Executive Committee, Mr. Keenan stated that the Committee will meet on the third Wednesday of each month at noon, a week before each monthly board meeting.

Mr. Callan made a motion to approve of the changes to the board by-laws, 2nd by Mr. Steele; motion carried.

- **Conflict of Interest Policy:** Mr. Keenan presented the board with the proposed Conflict of Interest Policy which will act as a policy to ensure the WCEDC Board and staff conducts itself ethically and with integrity, with all third parties they do business with. Each board member and staff person will sign the Conflict of Interest form annually, as part of the Board's annual meeting.

Mr. Callan made a motion to approve of the Conflict of Interest Policy, 2nd by Mr. Smith; motion carried.

Featured Committee Reports – Additional Reports as Needed

- **Marketing:** Mr. Eggleston briefed the board on the Marketing Committee's projects. Mr. Eggleston mentioned Army Bass Anglers (ABA) and Lakehub are interested with promoting tourism to the county's lakes, however the committee had to withdraw from Army Bass Anglers because of a three-year minimum commitment contract. Mr. Eggleston and Mr. Trahan will meet to discuss how to utilize the remaining Marketing funds before the end of the fiscal year.

Mr. Trahan showed the board reports on the EDC tourism website and social media pages. Mr. Trahan applauded Amanda Shurley's work with the EDC's social media pages to promote businesses and tourism to Wood County. Mr. Trahan presented the website growth report, which showed a significant spike in traffic to Love Wood County. In addition, Ms. Shurley continues to connect with tourist businesses who are not listed on Love Wood County as they're reaching out to be listed on the website. Mr. Smith suggested that Mr. Trahan coordinate a board-wide Zoom meeting with Ms. Shurley so she could showcase her work and engage with the WCEDC board about social media.

Mr. Trahan announced that the WCEDC continues to work with Holt Hackney to schedule monthly press releases that are sent out to the media. The previous press release included articles highlighting Wood County and the city of Mineola as some of the best places in Texas to retire to, with stories reaching regional, national, and international news organizations.

- **Public Safety:** Mr. Callan presented the board with an update from the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Callan presented crime statistics from the city of Winnsboro. Mr. Callan noted that the statistics left out reports on narcotics related arrests and cases and he will do further research on this matter.

Adjournment

Mr. Callan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:20 p.m. 2nd by Mr. Simmons, Motion carried.

Approved by WCEDC Board of Directors

Approval Date: September 28, 2022

Tom Keenan; WCEDC Board Chair