

Wood County Economic Development Commission

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Executive Director: Christophe Trahan

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

WCEDC BOARD MINUTES
THE LINKS AT LAND'S END
285 Private Rd 5980
Yantis, TX 75497

Minutes of September 28, 2022 Board Meeting

Attendees: Tom Keenan (Chair), Jim Berry (Secretary), Craig Lindholm (Vice Chair), Stephen Eggleston, Gwen Winters, Pam Swanner, Thomas Callan, Allene Doggett, Steven Steele, Lee Smith, and Adam Ehlert; Quorum present.

Members not present: Mike Simmons.

Staff Present: Christophe Trahan, WCEDC Executive Director.

Others Present: Larry Tucker with Wood County Monitor, Yantis City Alderman Gerald Schmidt, Quitman Mayor Randy Dunn.

Call to Order

Chairman Keenan called the meeting to order at 12:10p.m.

Citizen Comment:

Mr. Schmidt shared an update regarding tutoring at Yantis ISD. Mr. Schmidt said that there are now 12 volunteers to tutor students, and the program is set to launch within a week.

Consider/Approve of August 24, 2022 Minutes: Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the August 24, 2022 minutes as presented. Mr. Callan 2nd the motion; motion carried.

Executive Director Report:

Mr. Trahan announced that he attended the Texas Society of Association Executives (TSAE) conference in Irving. Mr. Trahan thanked Mr. Berry for his recommendation to attend the conference. Mr. Trahan said that he made connections with tourism bureaus with major metropolitan areas across the state. Mr. Trahan plans to incorporate some of the ideas that he's learned to promote travel to Wood County.

Mr. Trahan learned information about the upcoming 2023 Texas Legislative session through the TSAE conference and will be sharing what he's learned with several groups associated with the WCEDC that are working with state legislators to draft bills for funding for various projects, including funding for the Center for Memory Care and Health (also known as the Memory Care Project), and the Wood County Airport.

Mr. Trahan announced to the board that he attended a special conference at Jarvis Christian University (JCU), and asked Ms. Winters to present those updates: Ms. Winters said that JCU has received funding through the United Negro College Fund (UNCF) for a program known as the "Transformation Initiative", which helps fund JCU's strategic planning for the future. Ms. Winters said that JCU received \$1 million from the UNCF. Mr. Trahan said the JCU will host virtual planning sessions from October 5-7 on the planning project, and is looking for input from the community and EDC.

Mr. Trahan acknowledged that Mr. Callan has researched a new source for information called "City-Data.com". This website acts as a database for information, including crime, demographics, employment, and other essential data that can be useful to board members depending on the focus of their committees.



Mr. Trahan announced that he and Mr. Berry are organizing a county-wide meeting for city chambers of commerce. This will help the chambers and their boards by receiving guidance and training from Mr. Berry and other guests; Mr. Berry has experience and expertise that is beneficial for these organizations. Mr. Trahan hopes to establish regular meetings with the chambers and their boards. Mr. Trahan also mentioned that a new Lake Fork business owner is looking to restart the Lake Fork Area Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Berry's training on how to start a chamber will help her.

Mr. Trahan presented the Sales and Use Tax summary for the month of September. Mr. Trahan said that the county as a whole and all incorporated cities experienced growth in the current fiscal year over the previous fiscal year. Mr. Trahan highlighted the city of Alba for having the highest growth rate compared to the last fiscal year; this was due to a new service station and retail store that opened within the city this year.

Mr. Trahan presented the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) revenue summary for the month of August. Mr. Trahan acknowledged that there was a 0.6% growth for the period compared to August of last year. The county HOT revenue has grown 3% fiscal year-to-date.

Administration:

- **Financial Reports:** Mr. Trahan presented the financial report for the month of August to the board.

Programs:

- **Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Hotel Occupancy Tax Grant Recommendations:** Ms. Doggett presented the Hotel Occupancy Tax Grant Recommendations to the Board.

Mr. Lindholm made a motion to approve of the Hotel Occupancy Tax Grant recommendations as presented; 2nd by Mr. Smith; motion carried.

Chairman's Report:

- **Annual Appointment of Board Officers:** Mr. Keenan presented his Chairman's Report to the board. Mr. Keenan announced that in this meeting, the board will elect the officers of the board (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary). He also stated that the terms for Mr. Elhert and Ms. Swanner have been set, with Mr. Elhert's term to expire on September 1, 2024, and Ms. Swanner's June 1, 2024. The board re-nominated the current board officers to another term: Mr. Keenan as the Chairman, Mr. Lindholm as the Vice Chairman, and Mr. Berry as the Secretary.

Mr. Callan made a motion to approve of the election of the board officers, 2nd by Mr. Steele; motion carried.

- **Annual Conflict of Interest Policy Form:** Mr. Trahan distributed the board approved conflict of interest policy to each board member present. Each board member signed and returned their signature page which will be filed for record at the WCEDC office.

Featured Committee Reports – Additional Reports as Needed

- **Infrastructure:** Mr. Smith presented the board with an update from the Infrastructure Committee. Mr. Smith announced that the Commissioners Court passed a resolution allocating the \$8.8 million in ARPA funding for projects around Wood County. Mr. Smith mentioned that the first line item on their list was the Broadband Initiative, which received \$2.5 million. The county has sent out requests for proposals to service providers for their proposals to expand broadband. Mr. Smith thanked Commissioner Simmons (who was not present) for his continuous support to get the Commissioners Court to approve of this project.



- Economic Development: Mr. Lindholm presented the board with an update from the Economic Development Committee. Mr. Lindholm requested Mayor Dunn, who is a member of the Wood County Healthcare Foundation to speak of its progress: Mayor Dunn announced that the project is moving into Phase 2, which starts to look for fundraising opportunities and architectural engineering to construct the facility. Mayor Dunn said that he'll be meeting with State Representative Cole Hefner to discuss state level funding for this project through the Texas Legislature. Mayor Dunn also mentioned that United States Congressman Lance Gooden has offered support to obtain fundraising through the United States Congress.

Mr. Lindholm said the Wood County Health Care Foundation continues to seek fundraising for the project. He said that the Wood County Hospital District has committed \$50,000 to help cover some of the costs for the architecture consulting. Mr. Lindholm said that the fundraising committee has gained around \$30,000 in donations for the project within the last few weeks. Mr. Lindholm also said the Memory Care Project's board hired Fitzpatrick Architects out of Tyler; this firm has completed the design for the new University of Texas-Tyler School of Medicine.

- Marketing: Mr. Trahan presented to the board an update from the Marketing Committee. He said that WCEDC social media manager Amanda Shurley hosted a virtual training session for the board on social media. The virtual training allowed Ms. Shurley to demonstrate the work being done with the WCEDC's social media accounts, and show the board how to participate with the organizations' digital marketing platforms.

Mr. Trahan handed out business cards to the board that explain the WCEDC's social media program. The social media program allows businesses who promote tourism or sponsor events in Wood County to provide content to the EDC's social media, and upon approval are posted to the EDC's Facebook and Instagram. Mr. Trahan named a few industries that the WCEDC will target to sign-up for the program such as event and promotional organizations like Winnsboro Center for the Arts.

Mr. Trahan announced that the WCEDC secured a three-month contract with Lakehub and Texas Outside. Both of these companies are marketing channels to help promote tourism to the county's lakes. Mr. Trahan said that the three-month period will help determine whether the program was effective or not, and if the WCEDC wishes to continue advertising through those channels.

Adjournment

Mr. Callan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:21 p.m. 2nd by Mr. Callen; motion carried.

Approved by WCEDC Board of Directors

Tom Keenan; WCEDC Board Chair

Approval Date: October 26, 2022