



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

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

Minutes of March 23, 2022 Board Meeting

Attendees: Tom Keenan (Chair), Gwen Winters, Stephen Eggleston, Thomas Callan, Allene Doggett, and Steven Steele. Quorum Present.

Members not present: Mike Simmons, Jim Berry, Lee Smith, Craig Lindholm.

Staff Present: Christophe Trahan; WCEDC Executive Director

Others Present: Yantis City Council Alderman Gerald Schmidt

**Call to Order**

Chair Keenan called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. and established a quorum.

**Citizen Comment:** Mr. Schmidt addressed the commission regarding the need for a focus on the personal development of individuals in Wood County in addition to the economic development of the county as a whole. Mr. Schmidt also recommended research into developing a general construction permitting process for the county to serve as a notification process for new development taking place within Wood County.

**Consider/Approve of February 16, 2022 Minutes:** Mr. Callan made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Steele, Motion carried.

**Executive Director Report:**

Mr. Trahan updated the board on two Business Retention Site Visits that were conducted during the month of March. The two site visits conducted were with the Beckham Hotel in Mineola and USA Harness in Winnsboro. During both site visits, the business owners/operating managers indicated a need for an improvement in the quality of the work force in Wood County.

Mr. Trahan also shared with the board progress made on compiling an available commercial property rolodex for Wood County. The WCEDC currently has 32 available properties listed on its EDC website ([woodcountytexas.com](http://woodcountytexas.com)). The properties are listed on a platform that pairs each property with demographic information pertaining to the labor market, occupation data, consumer expenditures, and other information for the community/geographic area that the property is located in.

**Administration:**

- **Financial Reports:** Mr. Trahan presented the financial summaries for the months ended January 31, 2022 and February 28, 2022. Mr. Trahan highlighted the \$50,000 allocation under the Economic Development Projects line item for the board's approved support of the local Memory Care Facility Project.

**Programs:**



- **Regional ACT Work Ready Initiative:** Mr. Trahan briefed the board on a regional workforce initiative shared with Wood County by the Longview EDC (LEDCO). LEDCO is encouraging every county in northeast Texas to work towards achieving the ACT Work Ready Community status by creating a community team focused on workforce development, garnering county and municipal support, applying for the “Work Ready” status, and participating in two, two-day training sessions for the program. The goal of the ACT Work Ready initiative is to quantify each county’s labor market resources, identify issues or needed skillsets in the labor market, and work with local civic leaders and educators to institute programs designed to remedy those issues and build needed skillsets in the labor market. Mr. Trahan informed the board that he would be sharing the prospective initiative with the newly formed Workforce Development Council that was led by Jarvis Christian College to gauge the group’s buy-in to the program and determine whether or not they would like to proceed with opportunity as outlined.
- **Hotel Occupancy Tax Audit:** Mr. Trahan presented data to the board concerning uncaptured hotel occupancy tax revenue in Wood County. For the purpose of the open meeting, the information was anonymized so as not to disclose sensitive taxpayer information, however, Mr. Trahan was able to show that eighteen entities had been identified based on taxable receipts that had been reported to the state and listings found through research that did not reconcile with county hotel occupancy tax records. By applying Wood County’s local hotel occupancy tax rate to the entities that had reported taxable receipts to the state, Mr. Trahan was able to estimate an approximate \$53,676 in uncaptured revenue for the 2021 calendar year. Mr. Trahan informed the board that he would be sharing this information with the county tax assessor/collector and other county leaders to begin discussions on how the leadership will want to pursue that uncaptured revenue.

Mr. Trahan also shared with the board that Homeaway, Inc. had sent over a voluntary collection agreement for the county’s local hotel occupancy tax and that he would be discussing the agreement with the same county leaders to determine if they would want to proceed with the agreement as a means of recapturing tax revenues being lost on short-term rentals facilitated through Homeaway’s online platforms.

- **Wood County Lodging Industry Workshop:** In light of the information uncovered as part of the in-house audit of hotel occupancy tax revenues being conducted, Mr. Trahan asked that the target date for the workshop be moved from late-April into May to allow for additional time to plan and to utilize the information found during the audit to target entities to invite to the workshop that would benefit from a thorough discussion of hotel occupancy tax remittance in Wood County. The board showed general agreement for the proposed new target date.

#### **Chairman’s Report:**

- **Bassmaster Elite at Lake Fork 2022:** Mr. Keenan briefed the board on the progress being made in the planning and production of the 2022 Bassmaster tournament. Mr. Keenan shared that the WCEDC’s marketing team had secured permission from the Bassmaster production team to submit two 15-second and two 30-second promotional videos to air during the televised broadcast of the tournament. Additionally, the WCEDC has the opportunity to produce several two-minute feature videos on local attractions related to Lake Fork that can be aired during the online stream of the tournament. Mr. Trahan shared a demo video with the board of footage taken from around Wood County that will be used for the televised promotional videos. The WCEDC’s marketing team will continue working on producing these promotional content pieces and hopes to have final versions to show the board at the April board meeting.

#### **Featured Committee Reports:**

- **Infrastructure Committee:** Mr. Trahan gave a report to the board regarding the 2022 Texas Aviation Conference that was held from March 2<sup>nd</sup> to March 4<sup>th</sup> in San Marcos, Texas. Wood County was represented at the conference by two WCEDC representatives (Mr. Trahan and Mr. Smith) and the Wood County Airport had four representatives attend. Mr. Trahan gave an overview of the education sessions attended and the continued viability of the Wood County Airport as an economic driver.



- Health & Human Services Committee: Ms. Winters updated the board on the progress of the committee's health outcomes survey for Wood County. The committee has reviewed all feedback from the initial pilot launch for the survey and made certain revisions to questions that feedback indicated as overcomplicated or unclear. The current target date for launching the official survey is set as March 29, 2022.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Callan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Doggett, Motion carried.

Approved by WCEDC Board of Directors

Tom Keenan, WCEDC Board Chair

Approval Date: April 27, 2022