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FHRC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 16, 2023

*The Dealership*

*Council Grove, KS*

*and via Zoom*

Present from Board: **Richard Weixelman,** Wamego City Council, Board President; **Susan Adamchak**, Manhattan City Commission; **Terry Cook,** Eskridge Mayor; **Richard Foster**, Ogden City Council; **Trish Giordano,** Geary County Commission, Board Treasurer; **Sharon Haun,** Council Grove City Council; **Jim MacGregor**, Wabaunsee County Commission; **Karen McCulloh,** Manhattan City Commission; **Dee McKee,** Pottawatomie County Commission; **Susan McKenzie**, White City, City Clerk; **Bruce Meininger**, Westmoreland City Commission; **Kelly Paskow,** Fort Riley (ex-officio); **Angela Schnee**, City of Ogden, Zoning Administrator; **Ken Smith,** Alma City Commission; **Matt Stiles**, City of Hillsboro, City Manager; **Lou Thurston**, City of Hillsboro, Mayor.

Absent from Board Voting: **Ryan Armbrust,** Alta Vista Mayor; **David Fox,** Morris County Commission; **Cheryl Grice,** Kansas State University(ex officio); **Alex Miller**, Onaga City Council; **Teri Naylor**, Harveyville City Commission; **Jimmy Thatcher**, Clay Center Mayor; **Debi Urbanek**, Herington City Commission.

Absent from Board – Non-voting: **Ben Van Becelaere,** Fort Riley (ex-officio); **Julie Murphy**, Wakefield, City Clerk; **Perry Wiggins,** Governor’s Military Affairs Council (ex-officio).

Guests Present: **Michelle Campbell**, Westmoreland; **Janet Wade**, Herington; **Stephanie Imthurn**, Economic Development Director, Wabaunsee County; **Tracy Henry**, Executive Director at Greater Morris County Development Corporation; **Ryan McDonald**, Owner, The Dealership; **Janet Wade**, Herington; **Zoey Bond**, Executive Director at Council Grove Area Chamber of Commerce; **Nicky Tiffany**, Morris County Business Owner.

Present from Staff: **Holly Boice**, Grant Specialist; **Mike Couch**, Executive Director.

1. **Welcome / Roll Call / Establish Quorum** Richard Weixelman, President

Board President Richard Weixelman called the meeting to order at 9:15.

Roll call showed a quorum did exist.

1. **Council Grove Presentation** Sharon Haun, and guests

Sharon Haun, Council Grove City Council, and guests Ryan McDonald, Nicky Tiffany, Zoey Bond, and Tracy Henry spoke about life and economic development in Council Grove and Morris County and welcomed the board members to the area.

1. **Approval of January Meeting Minutes** Richard Weixelman, President

Dee McKee moved to approve the January minutes, and Terry Cook seconded. The board approved the January Meeting Minutes.

1. **Review and Approval of Financial Reports** Trish Giordano, Treasurer

Trish Giordano presented the financials. Terry Cook moved to approve the financials, and Lou Thurston seconded the motion. The board voted to approve the financials.

1. **New Business**

**a.** Executive Committee Action Update

Richard Weixelman updated the board that the executive committee approved adding Mike Couch and Janna Williams as signatories and also approved the RPQ for auditor selection.

**b.** 2024 Nominating Committee Report of Elections

Jim MacGregor presented the executive committee’s list of nominations for 2024:

**President:** Trish Giordano, Geary County

**Vice President:** Dee McKee, Pottawatomie County

**Treasurer:** Jim MacGregor, Wabaunsee County

**Secretary:** Sharon Haun, Council Grove

**At Large:** Karen McCulloh, City of Manhattan

**At Large:** Richard Foster, City of Ogden

**Past President:** Richard Weixelman, City of Wamego

No other nominations were brought forth at the meeting. Jim MacGregor moved to suspend Bylaw Article 3, Section 4 line that states that members must be present in person to count toward a quorum. Terry Cook seconded the motion, and the board voted to approve the motion.

Jim MacGregor moved to approve the slate of officers for 2024. Dee McKee seconded the motion, and the board voted to approve the motion.

**c.** Approve Resolution to designate newly elected

Lou Thurston moved to approve the newly elected president and treasurer as signatories for the FHRC. Terry Cook seconded, and the board voted to approve the motion.

d. EDA Grant Support Approval

Mike Couch provided an update on the EDA grant he is working on. He continues to rally support and is still searching for financial and in-kind support for the match of the grant.

e. Executive Director Report

Mike Couch presented a report on the work he is doing with the EDA grant and in his first couple of weeks as director. He said he reviewed the region’s CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) to help direct the staff and board on how to best implement the strategy in the region. His focuses include learning how best to assist our region’s communities, providing updates, and building relationships with stakeholders, identify strengths, review procedures, and establish a culture of excellence, among others. He told the board that there was a new individual hired in his previous position, allowing him to put all his focus on his new full time job with the council.

1. **Old Business**

**a.** EPA Brownfield and OLDCC Grant Updates

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Grants

Holly Boice presented that the EPA Brownfield grant for 2024 passed its threshold, and awardees will be announced in April.

Office of Local Defense and Community Cooperation (OLDCC)

Holly Boice presented that the new OLDCC grant is in progress and will be submitted in March.

**c.** CDBG and Kauffman Updates

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Update

Holly Boice reported that the Kansas Department of Commerce has a list of competitive CDBG grant categories on the commerce website and encouraged communities to look at them and consider application. She reported that the CDBG Roadshow event in Junction City on Feb. 2 went very well with good attendance. 44 signed up, which was around double the number last year.

Kauffman

Holly Boice reported that the Kauffman Cohort in Kansas City this week went well. The FHRC/JCMS team continued to learn about how to approach adaptive challenges and accountability among other activities to assist in most effective application of the grant. The action plan continues to be updated for Junction City Main Street to best use the funds awarded. Holly Boice said that Junction City Main Street is holding its community forum event in Junction City at The Eagles building at 203 E 10th Street from 5:30-8:30 p.m. on March 18.

**d.** EDA Disaster Supplemental and BIL Updates

EDA Disaster Supplemental Update

Holly Boice reported that the Kansas State University/Kansas Forest Service project grant application is in the final stages, and the application will be submitted by the end of February.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Update

Holly Boice reminded communities to utilize the Community Needs Assessment website which is accessible through the FHRC website front page or via fhrcneedsassessment.org. Holly Boice reminded members that Jennifer Colton continues to be a good resource to find BIL grants. Her email is [jcolton@wittobriens.com](mailto:jcolton@wittobriens.com)

**e.** Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program Graduation

Holly Boice stated she graduated from the Flint Hills Regional Leadership Program on February 2, among 20 other graduates from the region. The program took place over the course of about 5 months, with sessions primarily taking place in the counties of Geary, Riley, Pottawatomie, and Wabaunsee. The program provided the opportunity for new relationships in the region, collaboration, and knowledge in the Flint Hills region. Holly Boice thanked the council for sponsoring her application to the program, which benefitted her both professionally and personally.

1. **Community Updates**  Richard Weixelman, President

**Alma** – Ken Smith

Alma held a ribbon cutting for the new daycare center/senior center. It is going well so far, and the city continues to work on other projects.

**Council Grove** – Sharon Haun

The city is doing well.

**Eskridge** – Terry Cook

Coby Brothers has built and is already doing a lot of business in Eskridge. They stock promotional materials in the city to save time transporting long distances. The city is working with K-State Extension to help correctly dispose of diseased trees near the lake. There will be a community meeting about daycare at Mission Valley High School at 7pm on Feb. 20.

**Fort Riley** – Kelley Pascow

The second brigade is training in gunnery at Fort Riley, and the aviation brigade is still deployed. This year is the Year of Victory for Fort Riley. Building 500 is getting fixed so Kelley Pascow said their office has been moved for the time being.

**Geary County** – Trish Giordano

Geary County is doing well, and Junction City will have rejoining the FHRC back on the agenda at the next commission meeting.

**Herington** – Janet Wade

Janet Wade said she is hopeful the city of Herington will designate a commissioner to the FHRC board, but if not, she will continue to serve as the representative from Herington.The new Casey’s in the city is still being constructed. It will be a new feature out near the highway and will be open in March tentatively. There is a new electronic vehicle charging station by Hwy 77 sponsored by the visitor’s bureau. She encouraged people with electronic cars to charge near Herington. Some buildings in the city are going to rehabilitation including an old restaurant. The Convention and Visitor’s Bureau is setting up an office space shared with a used book shop. Progress is being made at the gold courses in the city which is funded by a Kansas Tourism Development grant.

**Hillsboro –** Matt Stiles

There are people in the city working on container homes. The city is helping them walk through how to do that process. There are new duplexes, also. The city has received funds for a childcare center through a CDBG grant and is getting that process started. The construction should take about 12 months. A church was donated for remodeling for the center. There is a 1 megawatt solar farm going in. The city is hosting the 2024 Cal Ripken 10U Baseball State Tournament also known as the Midwest Plains Regional. Teams from North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Colorado will compete in Hillsboro the weekend of July 18-21 for the opportunity to go to the World Series in August.

**Manhattan** – Karen McCulloh

On the agenda for Manhattan is a new city manager, since the city’s long-term city manager is retiring. The concerns that were stated at the Flint Hills Regional Leadership Retreat last month are similar to concerns heard all over the region, including childcare and housing. The city is pursuing ideas on early childcare. Karen McCulloh said she is looking forward to getting to know everyone now that she is on the council board.

**Ogden –** Richard Foster

Richard Foster said he is thankful to be a part of the FHRC and is looking forward to working with the FHRC.

**Pottawatomie County** – Dee McKee

There are many events going on in Wamego, so come out and see what is going on.

**Wabaunsee County** – Jim MacGregor

The county is in the process of looking for solutions to the lack of childcare in the area. Many of the roads are damaged due to recent bad weather. The Governor declared a disaster, but the state may fall short of requirements for assistance, so Jim MacGregor encouraged people to collect pictures of the bad weather and speak to their emergency management service to help. Stephanie Imthurn said the county is doing neighborhood revitalization and residential rehabilitation.

**Wamego** – Richard Weixelman

Wamego is doing well.

**Westmoreland** – Bruce Meininger and Michelle Campbell

The fire department received a grant for radios that have now been ordered. Bruce Meininger is eager to welcome the council to Westmoreland during the board meeting next month. Michelle Campbell said two more small businesses recently popped up in the area, contributing to Westmoreland’s quality of life and economic development.

1. **Adjourn**  Richard Weixelman, President

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37. The next meeting will take place in Westmoreland on March 15.