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FHRC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2024

*Methodist Church Life Center*

*Clay Center, KS*

*and via Zoom*

Present from Board: **Jim MacGregor**, Wabaunsee County Commission, Board Treasurer; **Terry Cook,** Eskridge Mayor; **Bill Flanery,** Chapman City Commission; **David Fox,** Morris County Commission; **Cheryl Grice,** Kansas State University(ex officio); **Karen McCulloh,** Manhattan City Commission; **Bruce Meininger**, Westmoreland City Commission; **Matthew Miller,** Chase County Commission; **Richard Pinaire,** Junction City Commission; **Ken Smith,** Alma City Commission; **Jimmy Thatcher**, Clay Center Mayor.

Absent from Board Voting: **Trish Giordano,** Geary County Commission, Board President; **Dee McKee,** Pottawatomie County Commission, Board Vice President; **Sharon Haun,** Council Grove City Council, Board Secretary; **Ryan Armbrust,** Alta Vista Mayor; **Richard Foster**, Ogden City Council; **Alex Miller**, Onaga City Council; **Teri Naylor**, Harveyville City Commission; **Richard Weixelman,** Wamego City Council.

Absent from Board – Non-voting: **Ben Van Becelaere,** Fort Riley (ex-officio); **Tim Himelick**, Milford, City Clerk; **Susan McKenzie**, White City, City Clerk; **Julie Murphy**, Wakefield, City Clerk; **Kelly Paskow,** Fort Riley (ex-officio); **Matt Stiles**, Hillsboro, City Administrator; **Lou Thurston**, City of Hillsboro, Mayor; **Debi Urbanek**, Herington City Commission; **Perry Wiggins,** Governor’s Military Affairs Council (ex-officio).

Guests Present: **Susan Adamchak,** Manhattan City Commission; **Michelle Campbell**, Westmoreland; **Brad Chauncey,** Homefront Real Estate Group; **Jason Fizell**, Kansas Housing Corporation; **Austin Gillard,** Clay County; **Shanna Goodman**, Pottawatomie County Economic Development Corporation; **Stephanie Imthurn**, Wabaunsee County EDD; **Anne-Marie Kennedy**, Italian Development Group; **Natalie Maruato,** Grow Clay County; **Reed Petty,** Office of Senator Moran; **Janet Wade**, Herington.

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

1. **Welcome / Roll Call / Establish Quorum** Mike Couch, Executive Director

Mike Couch called the meeting to order at 9:10.

Roll call showed a quorum did exist.

James Thatcher, Mayor of Clay Center, welcomed the board to the city and provided a community update.

1. **Approval of April Meeting Minutes** Mike Couch, Executive Director James Thatcher moved to approve the April minutes, and Richard Pinaire seconded the motion. The board approved the April Meeting Minutes.
2. **Review and Approval of Financial Reports** Jim MacGregor, Treasurer

Jim MacGregor presented the financials. Terry Cook moved to approve the financials, and Richard Pinaire seconded the motion. The board voted to approve the financials.

1. **New Business**

**a.** Opening Comments and Westmoreland Update

Mike Couch thanked Clay Center for hosting the board meeting and invited Bruce Meininger to provide an update on Westmoreland, which was recently hit by a tornado.

Bruce Meininger stated that the damage is extensive in Westmoreland, and there was one fatality resulting from the tornado. 15 buildings were lost. Some people are starting to build back already, but four were left without a residence completely. A committee was put together to assist with recovery, and there is a fundraiser to raise money to assist. $160,000 has been raised so far.

Mike Couch introduced the guest speaker from the Kansas Housing Corporation.

**b.** Kansas Housing Corporation Speaker

Jason Fizell spoke about his role at the Kansas Housing Corporation and the grant which are available for application for housing needs. For most of the grant opportunities, a housing analysis is needed to apply. Some opportunities include the MIH program, KHITC program, the Housing Revolving Loan Fund, Hone Loan Guarantee for Rural Kansas, First Time Homebuyer Program, TBRA program, and Weatherization Assistance Program. For more information, visit kshousingcorp.org or email MIH@kshousingcorp.org.

**c.** Grant Requests

Mike Couch provided a description of the grant applications the FHRC has been requested to assist in writing. McFarland and Mission Valley in Wabaunsee County requested assistance in writing hazard mitigation grants for a tornado siren and tornado shelter. Chapman asked for assistance in writing an application for a tornado shelter.

**Vote:** Richard Pinaire moved to approve providing assistance in writing the hazard mitigation and other emergency related grant requests. Terry Cook seconded the motion, and all voted to approve the motion.

Eskridge has inquired into assistance in writing a CDBG park grant.

**Vote:** Jim MacGregor moved and Richard Pinaire seconded to move forward on work for Eskridge on a park CDBG application. All voted to approve the motion.

There have been multiple requests for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant lighting replacement grants.

**Vote:** Richard Pinaire moved and Ken Smith seconded to move forward on applications for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant for the communities of Wabaunsee County, Herington, Eskridge, and McFarland. All voted to approve the motion.

The Flint Hills Metropolitan Planning Organization has asked FHRC to support them in an Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment planning and design grant. This grant would fund the planning, public engagement, visioning, and outreach for public input into a trail plan. The grant includes conceptual and preliminary engineering. The purpose of the project is to provide safe and connected active transportation facilities in an active transportation network or active transportation spine connecting schools, workplaces, businesses, recreation community areas connecting two or more communities or metro regions. The lead applicant is the Flint Hills MPO. Flint Hills Regional Council has been asked to be the grant administrator. Regional partners include the cities of Ogden, Junction City, Manhattan, St. George, Wamego, and the counties of Geary, Riley, and Pottawatomie.

Richard Pinaire said he does not know enough information about the project and would like concrete info regarding the trail before moving forward. He suggested having the MPO speak to the FHRC to provide more information. Matthew Miller stated that the planning phase which would be funded by the grant will result in more information and input from the communities. Mike Couch stated that the deadline for the grant is June 17, so time is an important factor in a decision to support the MPO on the application.

**Vote:** Karen McCulloh made a motion to move forward with supporting the MPO on an application for a planning grant, and Matthew Miller seconded the motion. The board had a roll call vote. Terry Cook, Jim MacGregor, Karen McCulloh, Matthew Miller, Ken Smith, and James Thatcher voted yes. Richard Pinaire voted no. The motion passed six to one.

**d.** Executive Director Report

Mike Couch reported that KARDO (Kansas Association of Regional Development Organizations) has been revitalized and could bring value to the region. K-State 105 will possibly present at the next board meeting in June. FHRC received the $1.5 million grant for brownfield properties.

1. **Old Business**

**a.** EDA grant update

The grant is for $70,000 per year for three years. Mike Couch said the application should be fully completed and submitted next month.

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

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfield Grants

Current grant 2022-2024: Janna Williams presented that the Eskridge Downtown Corridor planning will begin June 20.

Office of Local Defense and Community Cooperation (OLDCC)

Janna Williams presented that the 2024/25 OLDCC grant next step is to meet with the technical committee. The MOU with Fort Riley is being updated.

Other Grants

The KDOC Pilot Micro-Grant selection committee met this week and had 15 applications. To receive one, entrepreneurs must complete an entrepreneurial class. The grants will be in amounts of $500 to $2,000. The KDOC Entrepreneur Convening regional RE101 class had its kickoff meeting. The first task is to create a curriculum and draft a timeline.

**c.** CDBG and EDA Disaster Grant Updates

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Update

Holly Boice reported that Alta Vista will be signing a contract with the engineering firm to do the design work for the CDBG park project. The small size of the project allowed for waivers for audit and BABA (Buy America Build America).

EDA Disaster Supplemental Update

Holly Boice reported that the Kansas State University/Kansas Forest Service project grant application was officially submitted. The final budget was just over $5 million. The team received feedback that EDA might choose to fund the construction portion of the project only, which accounts for about $4.5 million of the project budget.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

Holly Boice reported that she is working with Wabaunsee County and Herington to apply for funding to replace old inefficient lighting in those communities. Other communities have also asked for assistance, so she is gathering more information to assist in applications.

1. **Community Updates**

**Alma** – Ken Smith

Alma’s pool has been filled, and the tennis courts are fixed.

**Chapman –** Bill Flanery

Bill Flanery stated that Chapman appreciates FHRC’s support of the city.

**Chase County –** Matthew Miller

Hazard mitigation funding has been applied for. The 86th annual rodeo will be May 30, 31, and June 1. River Suite Dinner & Music on the Bridge is happening in Cottonwood Falls on June 7.

**Eskridge** – Terry Cook

The Unbound Bike Ride is coming through Eskridge on Saturday, June 1. There will be a speaker a memorial grave sites on May 25.

**Herington** – Janet Wade

Expansion of the park is mostly completed. Office meeting space will open up at the hospitality center. The city-wide garage sale will be on June 8.

**Junction City** – Richard Pinaire

Richard Pinaire said he is in favor of expanding main street from 10th St. to Grant Ave. Expansion of the Main Street program is needed. It is important to improve the front door from Fort Riley to Junction City.

**Manhattan** – Karen McCulloh

The city mayor resigned after he was driving under the influence and drove into a liquor store. The Parks and Rec Director is aggressive and making things happen. Be cognizant of a group that is targeting people by sending false information to their mailboxes in the form of flyers that talk about an increase in property taxes.

**Westmoreland** – Bruce Meininger

Bruce Meininger reiterated information about the need for assistance and rebuilding due to the tornado damage. Michelle Campbell stated that there will be a ceremony at the cemetery for Memorial Day.

1. **Adjourn**  Mike Couch, Executive Director

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55. The next meeting will take place on June 21.