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**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WWDA Board of Directors**

**April 3, 2024**

**9:00 A.M.**

**2855 Forest Drive**

**Waycross, Ga 31503**

**Board Members Present: Staff Present:**

James Willis Jason Rubenbauer

Dan Good Chase McDonald

Chris Kovacs

Stephen Burse

**Present via Telephone: Board Members Absent:**

Mayor Michael-Angelo JamesRusty Hall

Thomas Wesley Candice Moody-Rice

**Guests Present:**

Hillary Stringfellow

1. **Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Waycross-Ware County Development Authority was called to order by Chairman James Willis at 9:04.

1. **Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Stephen Burse provided the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Dan Good made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Stephen Burse seconded the motion. All present members voted aye. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 6-0.

1. **Approval of Minutes**

Mayor Michael-Angelo James made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 13th, 2024, meeting as presented. Stephen Burse seconded the motion. All present members approved by a vote of 6-0.

1. **Approval of Financial Reports**
   * January 31, 2024
   * February 29, 2024

Michael-Angelo James made a motion to approve the financial reports of both January 31, 2024, and February 29, 2024. Dan Good seconded the motion. Stephen Burse asked for an opportunity to gain deeper insight into the financial report, and Jason Rubenbauer offered to set a date to further discuss the financial report. All present members then approved by a vote of 6-0.

1. **Community Reports**

* Waycross-Ware County Chamber of Commerce
* Downtown Waycross Development Authority
* Waycross Convention & Visitors Bureau
* Coastal Pines Technical College
* South Ga. State College
* Ware County Board of Education

Taylor Hereford gave an update on the Chamber of Commerce’s Rise and Shine breakfast event hosted at South Georgia State College’s campus on Tuesday, April 9, 2024. He then offered general support and backing on behalf of the interim president of the college, Dr. Tanner.

1. **Old Business**

* Personnel Update

Jason Rubenbauer gave an update on the staff at the Waycross-Ware County Development Authority, introducing Chase McDonald as the administrative assistant/social media coordinator.

1. **New Business**

* Discussion and request for action on Appraisal services for the rail spur for GATX
* Jason Rubenbauer opened the floor for action regarding the appraisal services for the rail spur that-which GATX is interested in purchasing. After discussion, Compass South Appraisals (Travis Lee Avant) was awarded the bid selection. Mr. Avant’s proposed cost is $3,275.00 with no additional legal retainer, but an hourly rate of $300.00 if those services are necessary. Stephen Burse motioned to accept the proposal. Dan Good seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 6-0.

* Discussion and request for action on annual mowing contract.
* Jason Rubenbauer opened the floor for action regarding the Annual Mowing/Maintenance of 110.8 +/- acres of land in Industrial Park. After detailed discussion of each company’s bid including details of business licensing, insurance coverage, and equipment being used, Lawn Hoppers was awarded the bid after recommendation from Jason Rubenbauer, contingent on their supplying of proper documentation including their business license and worker’s compensation paperwork by EOD Friday, April 5th, 2024. Lawn Hoppers’ proposed cost is $9,150.00 annually, or $3,050.00 per mowing cycle for three (3) cycles. Dan Good motioned to accept the proposal. Stephen Burse seconded the motion. Hillary Stringfellow asked for clarification if Lawn Hoppers is unable to provide the proper documentation, and after brief discussion, Dan Good amended his motion to include the secondary offering of the proposal to L&D Land Clearing and Excavation, LLC. L&D’s proposed cost is $21,600.00 annually, or $7,200.00 per mowing cycle for three (3) cycles. Stephen Burse seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

1. **Attorney’s Items**

* Hillary Stringfellow – Gilbert, Harrell, Sumerford & Martin, P.C.
  + Hillary Stringfellow informed the board that there are two (2) items awaiting completion by Jason Rubenbauer to complete the annual fees and expenses report for 2024. There will be a follow-up during the meeting scheduled for May 2024.

1. **President’s Report – Jason Rubenbauer**

Jason Rubenbauer began clarifying that the progress report for the month of March will also include the report for the month of February. Mr. Rubenbauer explained that he had recently made several trips to Atlanta for various meetings with industry leaders to attempt to introduce and recruit new sectors to Waycross.

Jason Rubenbauer then addressed his concerns with the local workforce and pleaded a case to make efforts to find cultural solutions to increase employment viability and reliability for both employees and employers. Stephen Burse contemplated whether average pay could be contributing to the issues surrounding unemployment, to which Jason Rubenbauer refuted with data extracted from JobsEQ indicating that the average wage in the industrial sector is $43,550/year. Mr. Rubenbauer’s proposed solution is centered around the encouragement of developing skills in the community that will fill roles that are currently in demand at local industrial businesses and organizations.

After discussing all of Jason Rubenbauer’s efforts in meeting with local businesses, industrial leaders, government officials, and persons currently seeking employment opportunities, Stephen Burse thanked Jason Rubenbauer for his hands-on approach in maintaining visibility and activity in the community.

1. **Chairman’s Report – James Willis**

There was no report presented by Chairman James Willis.

1. **Executive Session**

* For discussion of land/lease and acquisition matters pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(1)(B)

Michael Angelo-James motioned to enter Executive Session to discuss land/lease acquisition and associated matters pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(1)(B). Stephen Burse seconded the motion. All members present unanimously voted aye to enter Executive Session by a vote of 6-0.

The board entered into executive session at 9:33 AM.

Michael Angelo-James motioned to enter Regular Session once again. Dan Good seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed by all present members by a vote of 6-0.

Regular session was opened back to the public at 10:21.

**Adjournment**

Stephen Burse motioned to adjourn the April 3rd, 2024, meeting. Dan Good seconded the motion. All present members unanimously voted aye to adjourn the meeting by a vote of 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 A.M.