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**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**WWDA Board of Directors**

**June 5, 2024**

**9:00 A.M.**

**2855 Forest Drive**

**Waycross, Ga 31503**

**Board members present: Staff Present:**

James Willis Jason Rubenbauer

Dan Good Chase McDonald

Christopher Kovacs

Stephen Burse **Board members absent:**

Thomas Wesley Candice Moody-Rice

Rusty Hall Michael Angelo-James

**Guests present:**

Hillary Stringfellow

(via telephone)

1. **Call to Order**

The regular meeting of the Waycross-Ware County Development Authority was called to order by Chairman James Willis at 9:11 A.M.

1. **Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance**

Rusty Hall provided the invocation and led the pledge of allegiance.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

Dan Good made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Rusty Hall seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

1. **Approval of Minutes**

* April 3, 2024

Dan Good made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 3rd, 2024, meeting as presented. Rusty Hall seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

1. **Approval of Financial Reports**
   * March 31, 2024
   * April 30, 2024

Stephen Burse made a request to have the financial reports color-coded for legibility. Jason Rubenbauer agreed to adjust the financial reports going forward. Rusty Hall made a motion to approve the financial reports of both March and April. Christopher Kovacs seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously 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

Pete Snell, Vice-President for Economic Development at Coastal Pines, gave an update on enrollment at Coastal Pines Technical College, announcing that there has been a 10% YOY increase. Taylor Hereford, Director of Advancement at South Georgia State College, extended an invitation to the board to the Nursing Simulation Lab to demo the newest technology for the nursing program at South Georgia State College.

1. **Old Business**

* Presentation of USACE results on wetlands determination

David Ferrell and Lamar Branley completed a study and received wetlands determination from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Lamar Brantley began the presentation by showing appreciation for the WWDA board and the work they do both individually and as a committee. Mr. Brantley then briefed the board on a recent Supreme Court ruling and its potential impact on the Development Authority due to the ruling pertaining to the USACE’s power and jurisdiction.

David Ferrell then presented the findings of the USACE relating to the Norton property. Mr. Ferrell detailed the distinctions between jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional lots within the property, and how the Authority can or cannot use the properties given the current determinations. Mr. Ferrell detailed the differences in the USACE determinations from 2018, compared to the determinations completed in 2024. Mr. Ferrell also emphasized the importance of beginning property development in the property, due to the five-year expiry of USACE determinations. Jason Rubenbauer asked for clarification regarding excavation of a recognized wetland, and Mr. Ferrell and Mr. Brantley acknowledged the requirement of a Surface Mining Permit for the task. Stephen Burse asked for clarity regarding the amount of work necessary to circumvent another USACE determination in five-years at the property. Mr. Ferrell and Mr. Brantley offered a few ideas of projects that would be efficient in both time and money, in order to have the non-jurisdictional parts of the land be considered as such indefinitely.

Mr. Ferrell then walked the board through the letter sent by the USACE, explaining the reasonings for their determinations, specifically in reference to the Supreme Court ruling. Mr. Ferrell assured the board that he and Mr. Brantley are working diligently to allow The Authority to develop the Norton property with as little delay as possible. Dan Good suggested the idea of mitigation on the property, and Mr. Ferrell offered information regarding the possibility and process of mitigation on the property. Jason Rubenbauer mentioned the $25,000/acre pricing of mitigation on a different property in the past, and Hillary Stringfellow corroborated. Mr. Brantley clarified identification methods for the jurisdictional sections of the property, and any potential development restrictions regarding that jurisdiction.

Mr. Ferrell and Mr. Brantley ended their presentation by exchanging appreciation with the board for each other’s work and mentioned their thankfulness for the opportunity to work alongside The Authority.

1. **New Business**

* Discussion and request for action on Logo Proposal
* Administrative Assistant Progress Report
* Discussion and request for action to participate in the WCHS Summer Internship Program

Chase McDonald presented a proposal for a new logo to the board, citing the branding challenges the current logo presents and how a new logo might address those issues. The board offered constructive feedback on the design and plans to see a new design during next month’s meeting.

After the logo presentation, Chase McDonald gave an update on the progress made on a few of our social media platforms, our website traffic, and its correlation to an increase in prospects that have browsed our site selection in search of property.

Jason Rubenbauer then discussed the Ware County High School internship program and a potential candidate that both Jason and Chase have interviewed separately. The board unanimously agreed to participate in the program and to pursue the candidate. A vote was deemed unnecessary.

1. **Attorney’s Items**

* Hillary Stringfellow – Gilbert, Harrell, Sumerford & Martin, P.C.

Hillary Stringfellow gave an update on a title acquisition that is being delayed due to a pending quiet title action. James Willis asked about the transfer of ownership for another property being acquired by The Authority, and Hillary informed the board of an issue with the incorrect conveyance of a piece of property, wrongfully granting more land than is accurately the current owner’s. Hillary is working to get in touch with the owners so she may correct the situation. Jason Rubenbauer and Hillary also updated the board on the memorandum of fees and charges, with Jason noting the difficulty in getting quotes for rail usage.

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

Jason Rubenbauer gave a report, explaining the WCHS externship program, and reminding the board of the industry appreciation night being hosted at the Waycross Memorial Speedway Racetrack on June 8th.

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

James Willis did not present a report to the board.

1. **Executive Session**

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

Dan Good motioned for the board to enter executive session to discuss land/lease acquisition matters pursuant to O.C.G.A. 50-14-3(b)(1)(B). Thomas Wesley seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0 at 10:30 A.M.

Rusty Hall motioned to enter regular session once again. Dan Good seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0 at 12:18 P.M.

Following recommendation from Hillary Stringfellow, the Authority’s attorney, Thomas Wesley motions that the Board reaffirms its existing policy to lease for sale or lease all real property owned by the WWDA that is not subject to a current lease or other property agreement. Dan Good seconds the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

1. **Adjournment**

Dan Good motioned to adjourn the meeting. Christopher Kovacs seconded the motion. All present members voted aye, and the motion passed unanimously by a vote of 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 12:22 P.M.