Waycross and Ware County Development Authority

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2018 at 10:00 A.M.

Members Present: Jimmy Brown, Dr. William Clark, Alex Cornelius, Pam Hart, John Knox, James Willis

.

Members Absent: Daniel Morris, arrived at 12:10 P.M., Dr. Yolanda Rivers arrived at 10:30 A.M.

Staff: Jana Dyke, Janet Wood

Guests: Raphel Maddox, Sloan Fountain, Peggy Grady, Elizabeth Hill, Pete Snell, Hillary Stringfellow, Commissioner John Threat

1. **Call to Order**

The Waycross and Ware County Development Authority Board of Directors met at City Hall in Waycross on January 18, 2018. Dr. William Clark called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. A quorum was present, and the meeting was held after proper notice was given to the public.

1. **Invocation**

Mayor John Knox gave the invocation.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

The January 18, 2018 agenda was approved with the addition of Elizabeth Hill giving a report on Tourism. Alex Cornelius made the motion to approve; second by Pam Hart; unanimous vote 6-0.

1. **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the November 16, 2017 meeting were approved as presented following a motion from Alex Cornelius; second by Jimmy Brown; unanimous vote 6-0.

1. **Chairman’s Report**

Dr. Clark stated that the WWDA has had so many opportunities to further economic development in Waycross and Ware County over the last two months. He reminded the Board and others that Executive Director, Jana Dyke had joined the WWDA 1 year ago and that she has done an outstanding job. Dr. Clark reported that the GA Chamber of Commerce continues to highlight our part of the state. He remarked that the Eggs and Issues was successful and thanked everyone for their participation. Dr. Clark stated that Okefenokee Swamp Park had been highlighted on the front page of the Authentic Georgia website.

1. **Executive Director’s Report**

Jana Dyke stated that while at the Okefenokee Occasion, she and our Board Members that attended toured GA Power and the GA Center of Innovation. Both entities have thanked us for the visit and eagerly offered any assistance to WWDA that we might need. Jana stated that Georgia Power offered to assist the community through identifying parcels for development; however, for Georgia Power to do this the utilities needed to be uploaded into the ESRI program. She stated that once this information is loaded into the system it will allow Georgia Power and the board the ability to identify the developability of the property.

Jana reported that the Coastal Plains Coalition is asking WWDA for a continuation of the investment that we made last year. Jana explained that our participation in this has given us exposure that we would not have had otherwise.

Jana stated that she and CSX representative Aubrey Brown recently met with the St. Mary’s West Group. Aubrey was helpful to them offering information on real estate and un-used rail. She remarked that they had the highest ratings possible for a short line railroad.

Jana said that she has recently met with the owner of two rail served sites in the Industrial Park area. Both have possible availability. There is a client that is interested in one of the sites.

Jana announced that the website progressing and is almost complete. She asked for any feedback from Board Members. There will be a new host once the website goes live and new e-mail addresses will be issued to Board Members.

Jana met with GA Chamber of Commerce recently and discussed the opportunity to participate in the Authentic Georgia Program. She stated that this is a unique opportunity offering an additional spotlight to showcase Southeast Georgia. We are the only community in South Georgia other than some of the coastal communities that have received an offer to participate.

Jana announced that Dan McCrea will hold a Sidebar Conference in Waycross at Coastal Pines in August. This will be a good marketing opportunity for us as it will bring Economic Development Executives, Board Members and City and County officials to Ware County. Dan McCrea also has a large web and internet site.

Jana stated that Leadership Waycross Business and Industry Day will be on June 12. She asked for Board Member support. Pam Hart and James Willis will check their schedules.

Jana informed the Board that the Chamber of Commerce was looking for Rise and Shine and Business After Hours sponsors.

SDG is currently renting a property in our Industrial Park. They are interested in purchasing that property and would like to know if we can offer them any other incentives. They are specifically interested in getting the drainage problem taken care of. Jana met with Michael Brooks, Public Works Director about the drainage issue which is in process of being repaired. Our GA Power representative produced an implan. Jana asked the Board to allow Dr. Clark and her to develop a budget for enhancing the SDG project to stay in Industrial Park. They will return a plan to the Board before moving forward. James Willis made the motion to allow; Jimmy Brown second; Dr. Rivers had arrived by this time. Unanimous vote 7-0.

Dr. Clark made the recommendation for Pam Hart start writing publications for the local Paper. Mayor Knox said that he wants a reputation that WWDA is willing to cooperate with interested parties.

Jana announced that we have a local sign company working on double sided signs to put up at the Corporate Park.

**VII. Finance Report**

Daniel Morris had not arrived at the meeting yet. He had asked that the Financial Report be moved to a later time in the meeting.

**VIII. Pending Business**

There were no reports from the Chamber of Commerce or DWDA due to being absent with the flu.

Mainstreet Director, Peggy Grady reported that two local businesses, Karma and Rockin' Robin would be moving downtown soon. Peggy said that she had recently met with the owner of the Bunn Building and talked about Urban Redevelopment. She has gotten 10 new members to join Mainstreet. She was given information to contact a local Doctor who is interested in opening a downtown coffee shop. Mayor Knox reported that local owner of many properties in Downtown Waycross, Jack Lott said that every building he owns is occupied. Peggy also reminded the Board that the Annual Swamp Fest is coming up April 6-7

Jana reminded Board members to get their bio's in for the web site.

Jana stated that Next Step has requested property flyers and solicitation packages from us. She will provide updates about the NextSite Progress. Jana reported that we had received payment from the County and DWDA for their share of the NextSite expense but had not received payment from the City yet. City Manager Raphel Maddox asked us to re-send the invoice for payment from the City.

Dr. Clark reported that there is a new GA Power Representative, Jason Colley. He is replacing Scott Purvis and will be helping us with Economic Development.

Dr. Clark commented on the recent Eggs and Issues trip. He stated that he has committed to create next year's schedule that begins with the Grand Gavel Reception on Tuesday night and the Eggs and Issues Breakfast Wednesday morning and ending with the Okefenokee Occasion on Wednesday night for all those interested in attending from Waycross.

Jana read an overview form the Strategic Plan provided by GA Power. Economic Developer Scott Purvis provided us with follow up from the Strategic Planning meeting. Jana stated that it gives us a guideline as to how WWDA can move forward in the next year.

Jana contacted the Economic Group who sponsored a door prize that she won for a $20,000 gift certificate for consulting services. She recently won this while at a SEDC Conference. Scott Purvis advised Jana that the Consulting Services would be best used to help us develop our business contention plan, expansion plan and incentives plan. Jana said she would get this information into a format and provide to Board Members soon.

Dr. Clark welcomed the re-appointment of Vice-Chairman James Willis for 4 years. Hillary Stringfellow gave details of appointment terms. Dr. Clark asked Hillary to draw up defining documents detailing appointments for Board Members.

Tourism Report was given by Elizabeth Hill. The first Waycross Tourism Breakfast is planned for February 13, 2018 at 7:45 in the City Auditorium. Resource Development from GA Department of Economic Development will join us and guide us on how to enhance existing attractions, bring in new attractions and help us to build Waycross.

Elizabeth stated the new Recreation Director will start on Monday.

A viewing platform for the railroad was discussed.

Steps for Corporate Park completion was discussed.

1. **New Business**

Hillary Stringfellow asked City Manager Raphel Maddox if he wanted WWDA to follow the same letter procedure for city appointments. He declined by remarking that the city commission brings their own recommendations and they select from those. Hillary asked if he would like a letter to let him know whose term is expiring and if they are eligible for reappointment there by triggering the process. He agreed.

Mayor Knox introduced new Commissioner John Threat.

Hillary stated that Carolina Skiff submitted a fourth modification of their deed to secure debt. She requested, and Alex Cornelius motioned to authorize the Chairman and the Secretary to execute the loan modifications; Dr. Rivers second; Unanimous vote 7-0.

Utilico, a company in Corporate Park, had a pilot payment in lieu of taxes lease agreement with WWDA which expired in 2015. They have requested the property be deeded to them. Utilico has paid full property taxes 2016 & 2017. Hillary requested, and Alex Cornelius motioned to allow the Chairman and the Secretary to execute a deed to Utilico returning the property to them that they are owed; Pam Hart second; unanimous vote 7-0.

Stewart Candy had a pilot payment in lieu of taxes lease agreement with WWDA. They have requested the personal and real property be deeded back to them. Hillary requested, and Pam Hart motioned to authorize the Chairman and the Secretary to execute that deed to Stewart Candy; John Knox second; unanimous vote 7-0.

Hillary informed the Board that MCRX had entered into a 5-acre land transaction with OADA. There was an oddity with the property and ½ acre was deeded back to OADA. There was a mistake in the legal description. She has worked with MCRX and this issue is resolved.

**IX. Executive Session**

James Willis made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:33 A.M.; second by Dr. Rivers; unanimous decision 7-0; for:

1. For discussion of land lease and acquisition pursuant to 50-14-3(b)(1)(B)
2. Privileged consultation with legal counsel pertaining to pending or potential

litigation, settlement, claims, administrative proceedings, or other judicial actions

brought or to be brought by or against the agency or any officer or employee or

in which the agency or any officer or employee may be directly involved pursuant to 50-14-2(1).

The open meeting resumed at 12:16 P.M. following a motion from Jimmy Brown to exit Executive Session; second by Dr. Rivers; unanimous vote 7-0.

**X.** **Finance Report**

Treasurer Daniel Morris arrived and led the review of the financials, went over the balances in each WWDA account. Mr. Morris announced that the audit is almost complete, and the auditors have asked for information that we are having to locate. Mr. Morris motioned to accept the financial report; James Willis second; unanimous vote 8-0.

Mr. Morris motioned to send out an invitation to bid on WWDA financial services to local accountants; James Willis second, vote 7-1. Alex Cornelius voted no.

Dr. Clark requested that SPLOST balance be put on the financial report. He commented that the yearly budget would be prepared by the next meeting.

**XI.** **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 12:33 P.M.

Submitted By: Janet Wood, Executive Assistant