

Habersham County Development Authority
Thursday, May 9, 2024 @ 3:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523

The Habersham County Development Authority held a regular meeting on Thursday, May 9, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. in the Executive conference room in the Habersham County Administration Building located at 130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA, 30523.

Members Present: Jim Butterworth, Bryan Ferguson, Allen Whitener, Jeff Bruns, Sidney Roland

Members Not Present: Gail Thaxton

Others Present: County staff, Members of the Public and Media

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Jim Butterworth.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance were led by Jim Butterworth.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Sidney Roland, seconded by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2024, Regular Meeting.

Monthly Activity Report

The next financial update will be at the June 13, 2024 regular meeting. This will be a quarterly update.

Old Business

- a) Airport Business Park Update – Charlie Fiveash said he feels that there is stability in Phase I, with the exception of collecting money for the common area expenses.
- b) Business Park Streetlight & Landscaping Billing Update – Patti McLarty gave the update. She has created the invoices for 1st Quarter 2024, which include all past due amounts owed. Patti gave the invoices to Wade to distribute. Charlie offered to help Wade distribute the invoices. As of the date of this meeting, only two owners have paid for the 3rd and 4th quarter of 2023. Jim asked the board if they want to have a letter drafted to attach to the current invoices? Wade asked if the board would give him the opportunity to speak with the owners before sending a letter and they agreed.

- c) Courthouse Redevelopment Update – The IGA between Habersham County and the Development Authority to transfer ownership of the courthouse will be handled under new business.
- d) Phase II Business Park Update – Charlie Fiveash informed the authority that we are officially under contract for 15 acres in Phase II. The main question right now is do we go ahead and annex the property into the City of Baldwin, or do we permit and build through the county and annex when the project is completed. The prospect is in the poultry business but will not compete with Fieldale. Charlie has reached out and spoken with the President of Fieldale about the prospect and let them know this is not a competitor for business or jobs. The new company will create about 30 new jobs. Hall County has made it clear that they don't want any more poultry companies, so Habersham County was an obvious choice for the prospect. We are receiving more per acre for this site than the sites in the original business park, without the responsibility of grading. The prospect will also pay for the surveying. The property will be sold as-is for \$55,000 per acre. This prospect may build an upgraded building on the site. This project will be an approximately \$10 million investment in our community. This sale will be the last that Wade Rhodes will handle for the Development Authority, as his contract has expired. This property was listed while Mr. Rhodes' contract was still in effect.
- e) Bond Update – Charlie Fiveash explained that the bond we are responsible for is for the new hotel in Cornelia, which should be completed by late August or September. The Development Authority agreed to a 10-year abatement. The bond must be managed by the Development Authority, the Board of Tax Assessors, and the Tax Commissioner. There are many reporting requirements related to the bond. Alicia has begun training Tim Sims on managing the bond.
- f) LOST Update – Alicia met with Victor Anderson about re-introducing the bill regarding LOST at a later date. However, Alicia said the county plans to move forward with the plan to go for the flex penny option and she will be speaking with City officials in June regarding this very complicated process.
- g) Marketing & Brokerage Services Update – None

New Business

- a) Review/Approve Tim Sims' lease agreement to provide bond management services to the Development Authority – Alicia Vaughn explained that the lease agreement also includes language which defines Tim's role in managing the financials for the Development Authority, which he has been doing, and also spells out the duties of bond management for the fee of \$1,500 per bond, per year. Alicia stated that hiring a bond attorney to manage this and future bonds would most likely cost between \$18,000 to \$36,000 per year. MOTION by Sidney Roland, seconded by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to approve Tim Sims' lease agreement to provide bond management services to the Development Authority.
- b) Review/Approve IGA for transfer of old courthouse to the Development Authority – The BOC voted on April 15, 2024 to transfer the courthouse to the Development Authority. The date in section IIIa should be changed from March to May. MOTION by Sidney Roland, seconded by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to approve the IGA to transfer the old courthouse from the BOC to the Development Authority, with suggested change to IIIa.
- c) Review/Approve MOU for old courthouse redevelopment project – City of Clarkesville has added language to the MOU that no "apartments" will be allowed. It was confirmed through Jim Woodward and Parkside Partners that they will be including residences for sale, not

apartments for rent. Charlie added that at least five attorneys have thoroughly reviewed the MOU for this project and there is no question of the legality or legitimacy of the project. He also reminded the authority that a committee involving all parties was formed to evaluate both letters of intent received for the project, and that Parkside was far and above the most qualified regarding experience, knowledge, and qualifications to handle this type of project. The other company was asked to submit more documentation and information regarding their plan for the project and they did not meet the Development Authority's deadline to receive the information. Jim Butterworth added that the Development Authority is set apart from the county commission through legislation as far as rules for RFPs and bids, because the intent of the Development Authority is to create jobs and a solid tax base for the community. The Development Authority is not legally obligated to follow the same process as the county commission. Sidney Roland asked if Parkside was clear on the fact that they don't get the county's corner of the property where the gazebo and KIA memorial are located. Alicia Vaughn assured the board that Parkside is very clear on what parcels are included in their offer, which does not include the gazebo or memorial. MOTION by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Sidney Roland, and voted unanimously to approve the MOU for the old courthouse redevelopment project.

- d) Review/Award bid for Engineering Services – Tim Sims presented the results of the bid tabulations for the Engineering Services bid, and recommended the award go to Rochester & Associates. There was a review/scoring committee which consisted of the Public Works Director Jerry Baggett, Assistant Public Works Director Jared Beaudoin, and Planning and Development Director Mike Beecham. Rochester & Associates scored almost 5 points higher than the number two bidder. Charlie added that our incumbent engineer James Irvin chose not to submit a bid. Rochester will bill the Development Authority on a task order basis, and Tim approved Charlie to approve task orders up to \$25,000. MOTION by Bryan Ferguson, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted unanimously to award the bid for Engineering Services to Rochester & Associates.

Other Reports

Patti McLarty offered to help the authority members set up their new county e-mail addresses. Jim Butterworth added that in his mandatory training last month, he learned that it is wiser to use a county e-mail address rather than a personal e-mail address due to open records policies.

Sidney Roland invited the board members to the grand opening of the new Traditions Bank in Clarkesville on May 15th.

Public Comment


None

Next Meeting

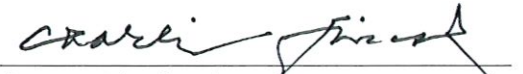
The next regular meeting is Thursday, June 13, 2024, at 3:30 p.m.

Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:27 p.m.



Bryan Ferguson, Vice Chair
Chairman, Jim Buttenworth



Attest: Charlie Fiveash