

Habersham County Development Authority
Thursday, June 13, 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, June 13, 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, Allen Whitener, Jeff Bruns, Sidney Roland, Gail Thaxton, Mike Franklin

Members Not Present: Bryan Ferguson

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. Dr. Mike Franklin was introduced and welcomed to the Development Authority.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

The invocation was given by Sidney Roland and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jim Butterworth.

Approval of Agenda

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

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Sidney Roland, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2024, Regular Meeting.

Quarterly Financial Report

Habersham County Manager Tim Sims presented the Quarterly Activity and Financial report dated May 31, 2024. Salary supplement for Patti McLarty to provide administrative services has been posted to the financials. May 2024 YTD represents 91.7% of the Fiscal Year. Current revenues are 51% and expenditures are 96%. Total account balances equal \$1,171,303. Charlie Fiveash asked about the status of the payment for grading of Pad 10. Tim replied there is still an active investigation going on by the Sheriff's Office. Janney Sanders added that the county, Development Authority, and the vendor have agreed to a pre-litigation mediation to be scheduled soon. MOTION by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Gail Thaxton, and voted unanimously to approve the financial reports as presented.

Old Business

- a) Airport Business Park/Phase II Business Park Update – Charlie Fiveash gave the update. The Higgins building is still vacant. Charlie stopped by and had a conversation with Mr. Higgins regarding his intentions to move forward and there appear to be none. Hopefully there will be a prospect to show up that will be interested in his building. Charlie had a tour yesterday with a group based in Alabama, who is a supplier to a major brick company nearby. They were brought in by Wilson Hutchinson and there is a possibility the prospect will purchase either pad 5 or pad 7 from Wilson Hutchinson. If that happens, Charlie said we need to look at the one-year timeline that was given to Wilson Hutchinson to build on pads 5 and 7 and decide how to handle that if they sell the lots. Would that timeline start over? The prospect wants to fence the entire project and there are some outside storage needs as well. The covenants do not have any restrictions on fencing, but there are some requirements for outside storage listed in the covenants. They will also have silos that are quite tall (75'), so they will need a spot that won't interfere with airport operations, and the project would need to be approved by the FAA. The prospect asked Charlie about the permitting process and how long it would take. Charlie told him it would be at least 3 months and Charlie gave City of Baldwin Administrator Emily Woodmaster's contact information to the prospect. Charlie gave an update on the sale of the 15-acre site in Phase II of the business park. The contract is progressing. This poultry user is not a competitor with Fieldale and Charlie has spoken with Fieldale about the prospect. This company will provide 30-40 jobs. Gail Thaxton mentioned there had been discussions about whether to annex the property before or after the building is constructed, and asked what the status was. Charlie said it is up to the prospect and their contractor to decide which way they want to go. Mike Beecham said if the prospect decides to annex after going through the county for the construction, the detention pond and other things will need to be built to Baldwin's standards. Wade and Charlie went through the business park and met with the owners regarding their past due payments for the streetlights and landscaping. Jim asked Charlie if the owners have formed an owners' association to take over responsibility for the utility and landscaping bills. Jim thinks we should give a "drop-dead" date of forming their association. Sidney stated it would be difficult to market properties with no lighting and bad landscaping. Jeff Bruns asked if the Development Authority currently has any ownership in Phase 1 of the business park. We do not, other than helping to market Mr. Higgins' building. Patti added that now that many or most of the pad owners are now paying, the billing part will not be very time consuming, and those customers will continue to pay. She feels like there are a few on the list that will not participate, such as Windstream, OK Foods, etc. Patti suggests waiting another 90 days before threatening to turn the streetlights off. During this time, we could send another letter to the owners regarding the forming of an owners' association with a deadline of January 1, 2025, to turn the utilities over into the association's name.
- b) Business Park Streetlight & Landscaping Billing Update – Patti McLarty gave the update. Two more owners have paid in full – SteelCell and TBD Southern Enterprises.
- c) Courthouse Redevelopment Update – Jim Butterworth stated that the Development Authority has received a \$50,000 earnest money payment from Parkside Partners. Charlie shared that the county is working hard to provide the documents needed during Parkside's due diligence process, such as environmental reports, roof condition, etc. New member Mike Franklin asked a few questions regarding Parkside's due diligence period and estimated closing. Jim asked Patti to send Mr. Franklin a copy of the MOU which contains all the requested information.

New Business

None

Other Reports

Patti shared information for the Airport's grand re-opening and ribbon cutting event on July 9th at the Airport.

Public Comment


Rope Roberts told the board that he will be out of town for the next month. Mike Franklin thanked the board for welcoming him. He also mentioned he heard there is a starter home development bringing in over 200 homes.

Next Meeting


The next regular meeting is Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. Gail Thaxton, Mike Franklin, and Sidney Roland all stated they will be out of town and unable to attend the meeting on July 11. Patti will contact each member to confirm their attendance that day. There is a possibility the meeting will be postponed or cancelled.

Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:18 p.m.



Bryan Ferguson, Vice Chair



Attest: Charlie Fivcash