

**Habersham County Development Authority
Thursday, December 14, 2023 @ 3:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523**

Members Present: Gail Thaxton, Jeff Bruns, Bryan Ferguson, Kelly Woodall, Sidney Roland

Members Not Present: Jim Butterworth, Allen Whitener

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

Call to Order and Invocation

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm and invocation given by Gail Thaxton.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Bryan Ferguson, seconded by Sidney Roland, and voted unanimously to amend the agenda to add "Approve Habersham County Ex-Officio list of duties and responsibilities" under New Business.

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Kelly Woodall, SECONDED by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to amend the minutes of the November 9, 2023 Regular Meeting to add Sidney Roland's name under "Members Present". Mr. Roland did attend the November 9, 2023 meeting.

Monthly Activity Report

Habersham County CFO Tim Sims presented the Monthly Activity and Financial report. November YTD represents 41.67% of the Fiscal Year. Current revenues are 266% and expenditures are 203%. The reason the percentages are so high is because of the revenue from the sale of pad 10, and the cost of grading pad 10, which was not budgeted. Tim will do a budget adjustment mid-year to account for that. Total account balances equal \$1,517,088. Last month, the authority authorized Tim to move \$800,000 from the checking account account to Georgia Fund One. However, after paying for other expenses, there was not enough money to move the entire amount, so Tim moved \$700,000 to Georgia Fund One. In five days, the account gained \$1,800 in interest. The Wells Fargo account has grown to \$559,805. After considering the encumbrance of grading pad 10 and the courthouse demolition, there is a total usable cash balance of \$1,257,080.

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Sidney Roland, and voted unanimously to approve the November 30, 2023 financials as presented.

Old Business

- a) Airport Business Park Update – Charlie Fiveash gave the update. Charlie began with an update on the RFPs for engineering services and real estate brokerage services. Tim Sims advised Charlie that January would be the best time to issue the RFPs. Wilson-Hutchinson has put in a request with the City of Baldwin for approval of plans for their first building and are awaiting response from the engineers. Charlie stated the demand for commercial spec buildings has been disappointing and he hopes we see more activity soon. Charlie has put listings in the commercial

multiple listing services for Mr. Higgins' 40,000 square foot building. Charlie suggested that the Development Authority not move forward with Phase II until the Higgins building is leased and the new building on pad 5 or pad 7 is built. Charlie informed the board of one solid prospect that moved a portion of their operation to Habersham County earlier this year and is currently leasing part of Habersham Metal. That company would like to move their entire operation to Habersham County. The Pyratech portion of the Phase II property may be a great option for them to build a 100,000 square foot building. Bryan Ferguson asked Charlie if Mr. Higgins has shown any interest in leasing his building? Charlie said he has made many offers to help market the building, but that Mr. Higgins doesn't seem to be very concerned about the building remaining empty at this time.

- b) Business Park Streetlight & Landscaping Billing Update – Patti McLarty gave the update. The billing was completed for the 3rd quarter of 2023 and Wade Rhodes distributed the invoices to the owners last week. No payments have been received at this time. Charlie asked what had been decided about the additional streetlights for the OK Foods area? Patti explained that Bryan Ferguson had provided a quote for the additional lights for the same monthly cost as the other streetlights, but there would be an installation cost of \$80,000 versus the \$26,000 the Development Authority paid for the first set of lights. OK Foods and other businesses that would benefit from additional lighting did not seem concerned about having lighting and did not agree to pay monthly costs for the existing lighting. Jeff Bruns stated that since the Development Authority has no ownership of the business park anymore, he does not believe we should spend the money for additional lighting. Bryan suggested that when we develop Phase II, the lighting should be put in from the beginning, with the understanding that related costs would be shared by the owners. Charlie added that the previous covenants for the business park required that the park be substantially developed before a park owners association could be formed, which hampered the Development Authority significantly. Charlie agreed that the covenants need to be very specific going forward for future business parks.
- c) Courthouse Redevelopment Update – Alicia Vaughn gave the update. There was a mandatory pre-bid meeting and 14 different contractors attended and toured the facility. The deadline for proposals is January 10, 2024. Once we know who the vendor will be, a town hall meeting will be held to discuss details and answer citizen questions and concerns.
- d) Phase II Business Park Update – Update provided under Airport Business Park Update.

New Business

- Discuss/Approve By-Laws – MOTION by Sidney Roland, seconded by Jeff Bruns, and unanimously voted to approve and adopt the by-laws as presented.
- Discuss/Approve Habersham County Ex-Officio list of duties and responsibilities – MOTION by Bryan Ferguson, seconded by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to approve the Habersham County Ex-Officio list of duties and responsibilities.

Other Reports

- Designate board member to serve on the Executive Board of Partnership Habersham – Rope Roberts with Partnership Habersham explained that this is a new position, and that he feels it is important to have a Development Authority board member on the Executive Board. The Executive Board meets once monthly on the Tuesday before the regular Partnership Habersham board meeting, at 8 a.m. in the board room of Northeast Georgia Medical Center Habersham. This designation will be made at the January 2024 meeting.

- Dr. Thaxton told the board that the next policy that the Development Authority will review for approval is the purchasing policy. The Development Authority will follow the purchasing policy of Habersham County, as well as adhere to their own by-laws. Patti will be sending the board a link to the county's purchasing policy to review. The business park covenants will also be revised or re-typed for approval at a future meeting.

Public Comment

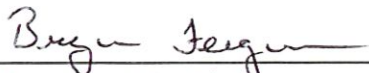
Commissioner Bruce Palmer asked about the formation of a business owner association for the business park. He recommends the formation of such an association to take any liability off the county. Patti and Charlie explained that the parties have been identified to split the costs, and that hopefully soon the Development Authority will be able to turn the billing over to one of the property owners to manage. Janney Sanders added that the original covenants did not provide for or create an owners' association, but that the Development Authority should include that language in any future covenants. Therefore, as each entity purchases property in the new park, they will become subject to the POA from the time of purchase. The covenants should create and form the non-profit corporation and the new owners will be subject to the terms of the covenants. When the original covenants were amended a few years ago, they tried to get the property owners to agree to form the POA, and most of them didn't want to do it. Commissioner Palmer also shared that there are several groups that offer Development Authority training and classes if anyone is interested. He also mentioned the county and cities' HC3 meetings and told the board members that they are welcome to attend. Patti will add the members' names to the meeting invitation.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting and retreat is Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. in the Dining Hall Annex at North Georgia Technical College.

Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Kelly Woodall, seconded by Sidney Roland, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:22 p.m.



Bryan Ferguson, Vice Chair



Attest: Charlie Fiveash