

Un-Adopted Minutes

Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council

June 1, 2016

Present :

Mark Henne, Weirton Transit Corp.
Steve Maguschak, Wellsburg City Mgr.
Brenda Mull, Weirton Chamber of Commerce
Barb Zimnox, Region XI PDC
Sue Simonetti, Mayor, City of Wellsburg
Rik Rekowski, Mary H. Weir Public Library
Norm Shwertfeger, WVU Extension Office
James Smith, Mayor, Windsor Heights
Patrick Ford, BDC
Patrick Sutherland, Mayor, Town of Bethany
Linda McNeil, Mayor, City of New Cumberland
Mike Paprocki, Executive Director, BHJ
Hampton Cokeley, Senator Capito's Office

Mark called the meeting to order at 4:37 pm. He asked for a motion to adopt the minutes of the February 10, 2016 meeting. Sue made the motion. Steve seconded. Motion carried.

Mike gave an update to the group on some West Virginia legislature bills, including HB 116 and HB 101. HB 116 allows the governor to furlough employees and to make "executive orders". This was passed by the House and headed to the Senate. HB 101 was passed by the House and also headed to the Senate. This bill did away with budgetary line items including Regional Councils and local economic development partnerships. The governor is expected to veto this bill.

Pat updated the group on the status of the \$600,000 EPA Assessment Grant. We received this grant, which will re-fund the Brownfields Task Force, and the taskforce will now include Jefferson County in Ohio. We will have to complete a contract with EPA and the funds will probably be available in October. Submitted in the application were 2 sites in Wellsburg, 2 sites in Jefferson County, and 2 sites in Hancock County. We will have to procure an environmental consultant soon so that we will be ready to move forward in October. The BDC was also awarded clean-up grants for asbestos in a building at the Jimmy Carey site and the Lodge at Williams Country Club.

Mike told the group that we must submit our EDA grant on line by June 10th. We need to just update the CEDS this year. We will have a small team working on this.

Mark gave an update on Weirton Transit. They were in the process of surveying the customers regarding the service provided. They are also trying to get contracts with a couple community organizations to provide their service. Our city in-kind was cut, but the City of Weirton has stepped up the assistance they give the transit in cash.

Mike gave some highway updates, including New Cumberland's alternative 5. He said there isn't enough information to go to public hearings at present. They need to procure engineering services to do an environmental study. A TIGER grant has been filed for the project. In Wellsburg, (Route 2/ 27 intersection), a FAST lane grant has been filed in the amount of \$8 million. He also told the group about some local bidding dates for repairs – Pleasant Hill Rd in Wellsburg, June 28; Weirton slip repair on Harmon Creek Road, June 28; Kings Creek Guardrail, June 28; Route 30 in Chester, June 22; and the Bridge opening, July 26.

Barb gave the status report for community development in the region. Also discussed was Broadband and funding. Eric Sherrard had sent a report about a possible partnership with Micrologic, an internet provider, who was trying to submit a grant for funds. It was suggested that a representative from Micrologic attend the next meeting to talk to the group about what the status of the funds are.

Pat Sutherland explained the heritage tourism growth area in Bethany, and how they're trying to take advantage of it. New infrastructure is coming to Bethany. The president of the school is looking to do a fundraiser, hoping to bring in more tourism. They are looking for ideas. We need to put his project in the CEDS.

Mark raised concerns about the new election cycle and how the "state funding stops in Wheeling". He said we need to have a strategic plan and stand together in Charleston to make the needs of the northern panhandle known.

Rik told the group that he had applied for EPA funds for technical assistance for Broadband. Only 5 grants were awarded in the country. Weirton had made the short list, but did not get a grant.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:39 pm.