

Habersham County Development Authority
Thursday, May 4, 2023 @ 3:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523

Members Present: Gail Thaxton, Allen Whitener, Jeff Bruns, Bryan Ferguson, Kelly Woodall, Jim Butterworth

Members Not Present: Bill Duff

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 Kelly Woodall, SECONDED by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to amend the agenda to remove item 6B (Consider/Approve annexation of 3.87 acres of pad 10 into the City of Baldwin) from the agenda. The amended agenda was approved by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Kelly Woodall, SECONDED by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2023 regular meeting.

Monthly Activity Report

Alicia Vaughn presented the Monthly Activity and Financial report. April YTD represents 83.33% of the fiscal year. Total revenues equal 149%, while current expenditures are at 13%. Total account balances equal \$1,384,828.

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, SECONDED by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to approve the monthly financial report as presented.

Old Business

Airport Business Park Update – Charlie Fiveash gave the update. Letters have been sent or hand delivered to the owners/tenants of the airport business park, informing them that they should form an owners' association. Windstream, although not in the city of Baldwin, has been asked to participate in the proposed owners' association because they also benefit from the streetlights and other common area services. Charlie would like to start issuing invoices to the tenants ASAP with the help of county staff. Jeff Bruns asked when we will completely turn over the responsibility for the utility bills and other costs to the owners. Charlie replied that he would like to bill them before the closing of Pad 10. It was discussed but not decided how to split costs between the owners. Pad 10 is in the due diligence period and closing date will be May 30th unless they are delayed. There have been several meetings with Charlie, the engineers and developers, and the City of Baldwin. 3.87 acres of pad 10 that was previously owned by Windstream has not yet been annexed into Baldwin. The Development Authority will have the site rough-graded, but the new owners will be responsible for final grading. Alice Venter asked to speak and shared that the buyers are in a hurry to complete their construction and that the City of Baldwin is working closely with them to try to stay on that timeline.

Courthouse Redevelopment Update – Charlie gave the update. There was a meeting earlier today between Charlie, City of Clarkesville, county staff and DCA (Dept. of Community Affairs) to discuss the availability of grants that would help with the cost of the old courthouse demolition. It was advised by DCA that pursuing bids for demolition at this time could jeopardize the grant process and deem us ineligible for a potential award. Therefore, the RFP for demolition bids will not be issued at this time. Alicia Vaughn suggested a press release explaining the situation since the BOC approved the bidding process at their April meeting. DCA indicated that we would most likely meet all the requirements for the grant, which will take some time to process. County grant writer Lauren Long explained that it could be a lengthy and tedious process. First would be an IPA, or initial project assessment. From there, DCA would determine the property as blight. Then an environmental study would be required before submitting the grant application, which could take up to two months. The property will be scored, and other factors considered, to determine what percentage of the cost the county would be required to match. That cost could possibly be shared between the county, the Development Authority, and the City of Clarkesville. Lauren added that partnership grants are looked upon very favorably. An MOU between the three entities as well as letters of support from other community partners would help the application process as well. Alicia added that DCA mentioned other redevelopment grants that could be available to help Clarkesville improve their infrastructure for future development of the old courthouse property.

Other Property Updates – Charlie said the Development Authority needs to look at developing Phase 2 and getting bids on grading and building the road. There should be enough money moving forward to help with the old courthouse project as well as developing Phase 2. Alice Venter suggested that we annex the entire Phase 2 property at one time, rather than one parcel at a time, to save money since the cost is \$1000 per annexation.

New Business

Consider/Approve Extension of Piedmont University Bond until October 2024 – Attorney Janney Sanders explained that the Development Authority had given a 90-day extension of the bond until June 2023 earlier this year. However, Piedmont would like to combine this bond with another bond they have, which expires in October of 2024. At that time, they will return to the Development Authority for a new bond approval. Janney stressed that the Development Authority has no obligation or cost in relation to the bond. A MOTION was made by Jim Butterworth, seconded by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to approve the extension of the 2013 Piedmont University bond until October 2024 and to authorize the chair and secretary of the Development Authority to sign the Third Amendment Resolution and associated documents.

Consider endorsement of application for re-zoning of Pad 10 – Alice Venter explained that the 3.87 acre piece of pad 10 which is not annexed into Baldwin has a zoning of HI (High Intensity) with Habersham County. Baldwin's zoning would be "Light Industrial", which is the same use as HI. Annexation and re-zoning will be done by May 30. Alice added that a letter will be sent to the Board of Commissioners asking that they waive the right to a 30-day waiting period to object to the annexation and re-zoning so the project can move forward and stay on schedule. The Development Authority board members endorsed the application by consensus.

Consider/Approve going to bid for grading of Pad 10 – Charlie expressed the importance of going to bid ASAP for grading, in order to facilitate the buyer's timeline. Charlie also re-stated that the Development Authority will pay for rough grading and a retention pond, and that the buyer will be responsible for

final grading, which will be done under a separate permit. A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to approve going to bid for rough grading of Pad 10.

Other Reports

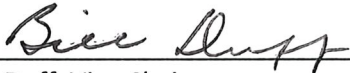
Review/Discuss Draft of updated Development Authority by-laws – Charlie referred to section 2.3B, regarding hosting electronic meetings and voting electronically. Janney Sanders explained that any action taken needs to be in a public meeting. A quorum must be physically present for official voting. Voting by e-mail must be ratified at the next regular meeting. Janney suggested adding “to the extent allowed by law” to the language. Charlie also mentioned that the by-laws call for a Treasurer. The election of treasurer will be held at some time after the by-laws are formerly approved and adopted.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is Thursday, June 1, 2023 @ 3:30 pm, Habersham County Administration Building.

Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Kelly Woodall, SECONDED by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:27 pm.



Bill Duff, Vice Chair



Attest: Charlie Fiveash