



COLES Together

The economic development organization for Coles County

Coles Together Board of Directors Meeting February 28, 2022

Members Present:

Mike Stanfield, Mike Taylor, Jerry Groniger, Doug Abolt, Rick Hall, Nathan Meinhart, David Glassman, Tim Condron, Summer Hallowell, Blake Pierce, Bob Shamdin, John Inyart, Todd Vilaro, Steve Grissom, and Carlos Ortega

Members Absent:

Darrin Hite, Brandon Combs, Josh Bullock, Brooke Kieffer, David Glassman, and Jerry Esker

Others Present:

Angela Griffin, Kasey Considine

Call to Order:

Called to order by Mike Stanfield at 7:30 a.m.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion to approve the January 2022 Operations Committee meeting minutes was made by Rick Hall and seconded by Josh Bullock. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Mike Taylor provided the Treasurer's Report as of January 31, 2022, which is four months into the fiscal year for Coles Together. The income statement shows a net profit of \$29,000 compared to \$7,000 at the same time last year so we are running \$22,000 ahead of last year's fiscal year. Revenue is a little over \$20,000 below budget, though that is due mostly to timing of contributions. Revenues are \$21,000 higher than last year which is a combination of the community navigator grant revenue of \$9,000 and rent from the Coles Energy Center. Annual contributions are running \$8,000 higher than last year. On the expense side, expenses are essentially flat from a year ago. While we had revenues from the community navigator, we also had \$6,000 in expenses that are incorporated in the statements. There are some reclassifications included on the statements as a result of the audit and reclassification within categories. Overall, it is a good position four months into the fiscal year. The balance sheet continues to remain strong and balances in the fund are in a strong position.

Approval:

A motion to approve the January 2022 financial statements was made by Todd Vilaro and seconded by John Inyart. The motion passed.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2022

Page 2

IRS Form 990 and Audit:

Griffin stated the Operations Committee approved the Form 990 at the January meeting so it could be filed before the February 15 deadline. She is presenting it and the audit to the board for review, but approval is not needed. She stated the January minutes contain many details shared during that meeting about the forms so she will not recite all those details in today's meeting. She just pointed out it was a clean audit without findings. The biggest difference when comparing the two years is the increase in marketing costs related to the sale of the Trailmobile site. Also, the two years do not compare perfectly in terms of salary since some of the salary expense this year was reimbursed by the community navigator grant.

When comparing the financial statements to the return, payroll expenses appear lower on the return since they were reduced for the employee retention credit.

Overall, there is nothing unusual in either the statements or the 990. She stated these electronic copies are still marked draft, but the final documents are identical and available in hard copy to anyone who wants them, along with a copy of the final 990.

President's Report:

Griffin stated she has been working with Bill Graber, one of three owners of Graber Trusses which is part of a larger construction conglomerate in Indiana interested in locating a portion of the operation to the former Sturdi-Built facility east of Charleston on Rt.16. The Sturdi-Built business was sold but the site is for sale, which is 10 acres with five buildings, three of which are large enough to be production facilities. There is roughly 34,000 SF under roof with a separate facility for office space. One of the empty facilities was previously used to build trusses which is what this company plans to do in the initial phase of the project.

In a second phase they want to produce floor trusses and a third phase would involve production of laminated columns. At the end of the third phase, which could take up to five years, the company believes they would have 30-35 people working on site. We have been working with CCI to address internet service on site and the Embarrass Area Water District to address water capacity at the facilities.

Griffin also talked with Graber about opportunities to partner with Lester Buildings in Charleston and gave him contact information for Tyler Bennett.

Griffin stated that late last year she reported on a project represented by Grant Thornton. The consultants have reached out again to say their client, a regional company wanting to expand into Coles County, is pushing the project forward again and is interested in learning more about the Coles County workforce and the enterprise zone. We have met with the consultants to answer all the company's questions, although the company has not been in attendance and the

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2022

Page 3

consultants are not at liberty to identify them yet. The only thing we can confirm is the activity would make them eligible for enterprise zone benefits.

The Machinery Management Services (MMS) facility on North Rt. 130 in Charleston has sold to Curry Construction. The building is 15,500 SF on 15 acres. The Christophers who own MMS are relocating the operation to identical operation they own in North Dakota. They have been frustrated for some time with workforce challenges and the cost of doing business in Illinois. With an out of state facility to compare their costs with, they could not justify staying in Illinois.

For many years, they have been lured not only by North Dakota, but also by other states on both coasts. They finally decided to make the change and the building will change hands on May 20. Fortunately, Curry is going to keep all of the employees who want and will continue to pay them at their current rate of pay or more.

We continue to have success with the Back to Business applications. As of February 15, more than \$1.7 million in grant funding has been deposited in the accounts of local businesses. Several more are approved and awaiting payment. Most of the work now is providing technical assistance to business owners as we get the final award recipients over the finish line in terms of signing and uploading all the necessary documents.

We have spent the past month narrowing the focus and defining the scope of the project we hope to support with the EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance grant. We have been working with the NASA Glenn Research Center in Cleveland, the Ohio Aerospace Institute, a private not-for-profit also located in Cleveland, and the Director of Procurement at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton. The mission of the OAI is to connect these and other Ohio aerospace and aviation industries with new opportunities and new potential suppliers. We have had two meetings with our region's EDA Director who, after listening to our plan, encouraged us to apply and connected us to an experienced EDA grant writer who has been helping guide us through the application process. As the scope takes shape, we see three phases developing. The first phase will be to conduct an industry analysis of the sic- county region. We will inventory the manufacturers and businesses in the region, document the capability of those businesses, and document the skill sets present. That work will produce an industry study of this region that will have value far beyond the application of the grant. We will use the information in the industry study to develop a marketing plan to share the program and opportunities with businesses and invite them to be part of a program to connect their capabilities to opportunities in the supply chain to NASA, the Air Force, and the Department of Defense. We will then develop and staff a program to facilitate the connectivity and train companies in how to do business with these entities. For companies well versed in how to do business with the federal government, we can make connections immediately. For companies that have never contemplated operating in this space, we will start by providing training in how to acquire the credentials and registrations needed to do business with the federal government. Plans beyond the training include taking companies on site to NASA in Cleveland and the Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton and

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2022

Page 4

then bringing those procurement teams and contracting groups directly to the businesses in our region.

At this point we believe our funding request will be approximately \$400,000 for a two-year program. EDA requires a 20% match which will require \$80,000 be split between the six participating navigator organizations.

Griffin requested the board approve a cash commitment of up to \$15,000 as one-sixth of the match. If we do not end up needing that much because our grant request does not reach \$400,000, then we would not be obligated to spend any money.

In terms of timing, it could take until September 30 before we find out if the grant is funded so it is not likely to impact this year's budget. But, even if it did, we put enough in the marketing line this year that we would not exceed our budget for marketing or even overall if we make this investment.

Griffin stated this is a way to leverage the collaboration and partnership that has developed among the six organizations in the navigator group and do something meaningful on a regional basis that develops opportunities for the businesses that are already located here. It is an opportunity for them to expand production and grow their existing business and product lines. It also lets us leverage key contacts in Cleveland and Dayton to begin a program that could pay dividends far beyond the original scope of the navigator grant.

Approval:

A motion to approve the financial commitment of \$15,000 as cash match for the EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance grant application was made by Rick Hall and seconded by Blake Pierce. The motion passed.

Outreach – Two webinars were held over the past month wherein we and hosted speakers who shared information about funding programs, business resources, recovery assistance, entrepreneurial assistance, and resources that can help both small and large businesses access capital.

Considine shared that she submitted a proposal for Project Zero which was an RFI issued by a manufacturer of electric vehicle-related products. The search area is statewide for up to 16 acres with rail and the company would eventually create 200 new positions. She developed the proposal using the Coles Energy Center site.

Considine stated she has also begun to work on the organization's annual event which will be held in late April.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2022

Page 5

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 AM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jerry Groniger, Secretary