

**MINUTES**  
**HARRISON COUNTY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**November 12, 2019**

A regular scheduled meeting of the Harrison County Development Commission was called to order at 8:17 am on Tuesday, Nov 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at Harrison County Development Commission, Gulfport, Mississippi.

Commissioners present: President Jimmy Levens, Brian Gollott, Cliff Kirkland, Frankie Castiglia, Jennifer Burke, Frank Bordeaux, Sharon Bentz, and Mark Schloegel. Commissioners absent: Rip Daniels, Warren Conway, John "Shorty" Sneed, and Sam LaRosa.

Staff members present: Executive Director Bill Lavers, Marcia Crawford, Lori Frazier, Brandi Hough, Gia Blackwell and Michelle McGraw as recording secretary.

Consultants present: Legal Counsel Jim Simpson and Don Clark with DCC Consultants.

The media was notified of this meeting via the Sun Herald and our <http://mscoast.org> website.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

President Jim Levens called the meeting to order at this time.

**II. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

President Jimmy Levens announced the following adjustments:

- Jennifer Burke will be leaving early so we will go through the financials first.
- Frankie Castiglia announced the belated Birthday of President Jimmy Levens.

**III. GUESTS / COMMENTS**

Dax Alexander, Cindy Lamb and Greg Collum were present.

**IV. MEETING MINUTES**

The motion was made by Commissioner Jennifer Burke to approve the Oct 15, 2019 meeting minutes. Commissioner Frankie Castiglia seconded the motion. No further discussion took place, all in favor of Ayes and the motion carried unanimously.

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Dax Alexander, Cindy Lamb, and Greg Collum were introduced as guests.

**V. Vote Items**

- *No Resolutions at this time.*

**A. Finance (Sneed, Chairman)**

- **Financial Statements for Oct 2019 Exhibit B**  
Commissioner Jennifer Burke reviewed the breakdown of the October financials and stated this was the first month of our fiscal year. Everyone

received an email from Commissioner John (Shorty) Sneed stating he reviewed the financials as well. Jennifer pointed out a few items which were off on the budget vs actual and they were PERS and the payroll taxes. The budget was \$7,400.00 and actual is \$9,400.00 and it appears to be something that will continue into the year and we will need to look at it and adjust the budget. Commissioner Jennifer Burke didn't see anything out of the ordinary.

- **Financial Claims for Oct 2019 Exhibit C**  
Commissioner Jennifer Burke reviewed the financial claims and pointed out two payments made towards an audit and the trailer purchases. Everything else is standard and nothing out of the normal. Commissioner Jennifer Burke made a motion to approve Exhibits B and C and Commissioner Frank Bordeaux seconded the motion. Everyone in favored of Ayed. After no further discussion, the motion was carried unanimously.

## **COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES**

### **A. Marketing & Industrial**

Commissioner Frankie Castiglia handed it over to Executive Director Bill Lavers to give the update. Bill talked about the celebration of the new Mayor of Rio negro Nero and said he wants to continue and strengthen the sister city agreement we already had in place. While in Colombia they met with the guys at Air Cargo but had no good updates and still trying to figure a way to make it work. They need U.S. investors to help with the flowers and rum in order to make this work. They do not have enough money (6.5 million is needed to purchase 2 planes) and cannot get a U.S. loan without U.S. investors to support it.

Marketing is working on a new name and Brand for workforce development.

### **B. Administrative, Engineering & Maintenance**

Jimmy Levens stated we put the bid out for the tank, and Gia is working on the proposal for the sea wall. Jimmy asked how we are coming with the BP money and Bill stated we cannot get a straight answer from Jack. Bill also stated we still have not heard anything on Rail from Jackson.

### **Team Reports**

- Executive Director Bill Lavers gave an update and mentioned Brandi Hough was nominated for the MEDC Young and Professional Leadership Award and she will be representing Harrison County Development Commission and also, she was picked for the Chamber of Commerce.

Brandi gave an update on Project Florida; it is still pending and the money from MDA is on the table till December so we will be poking them a lot and hopefully have another update next week.

- Marcia Crawford gave her report and updated everyone on how busy we have been with marketing and relocation. We are in the process of creating a name, branding and tag line for workforce development. We are also long overdue digital marketing on social media. Soon a proposal will be sent out requesting additional information on how (hopefully a local company) can help us our social media programs.

Last week Marcia attended the update on the Mississippi Aquarium and other events. She handed out the invitation to the HCDC Holiday luncheon and commented on the Ambassadors who volunteer to set up and do the welcome centers and events to represent the Coastal Partnership.

The Mayors event is coming up Dec 6<sup>th</sup> and we have 3 seats available at our table. If any Commissioners would like to attend please let her know as soon as possible. Frank Bordeaux and Frankie Castiglia want to attend.

## **VI. Directors Report**

Executive Bill Lavers gave his report verbally. Michelle McGraw continues to work hard finding and troubleshooting Water and Sewer and finding things not found before. Lori Frazier has completed and finalized a fixed price for the accounting though negotiations. Gia Blackwell has been here 40 days and has already written and submitted one grant, one RFP, and in doing so we decided to turn ourselves into a consultant rather than pay for one. Bill gave an update on the Workforce project; we are working on setting up a flight and mechanics class at the airport possibly working with MGCCC and the Highschool. We had meetings with the MGCCC, the high school, and the flight academy to see what we can do working together. We have 2 students to be interviewed at Coldwell Banker for an internship, and 20 resumes and 5 positions at USM intern program.

## **VII. Old/New Business**

- **Insurance Renewal Hub** - Guest Greg Collum gave his presentation of the Insurance Renewal and explained the increase of 5.8% saying the big driver of the increase was the property values. Frank Bordeaux made a motion to accept the renewal and Jennifer Burke seconded the motion with the approval of John (Shorty) Sneed to negotiate later. The discussion came up about Cyber coverage, Jennifer Burke asked for the application to see about adding this onto our policy. According to Greg Collum the extra coverage is approximately \$1000.00 a year. All in favor of Ayes, no further discussion took place. The motion carried unanimously.

**President Jimmy Levens then went back to Marketing Activities to discuss the Innovation Center.**

Jimmy Levens stated he had Lori pull the previous audits for the Innovation Center and discovered they are not signed and just seem to be drafted. He stated he doesn't know where this is going but we need to see what is going on. He asked Commissioner Mark Schlogoel if he had anything to update us with. Mark stated he left the Innovation board meeting with they needed to do the audit we offered to pay for. Bill Lavers stated an update from the engineering and marketing meeting we had the other day, he replied to the email they sent requesting us to pay for 6 months of funding, he responded asking why and they have not responded. There has been no response to the previous bullet point emails and letters sent to them from the last meeting we had. Cliff Kirkland suggested we reply to their request for funding with a contingency to answer the questions we have and to agree to an independent audit we will pay for. Cliff stated the previous audits done are not signed, nobody is identified as doing it, and they are drafts that look like fill in the blank drafts. Cliff said we are being asked to continue to fund a failing business model, we should have a better understanding relative to that business model before we make that decision. Jimmy Levens said he was going to try to meet with Guy Johnson who reached out to him to meet for lunch to get another off the record talk to see what thoughts are. Brian Gollott asked the questions, do all Innovations centers in Mississippi operate under the same principals as we do? Bill answered with, Sharon Nichols, the State Directory of the Small Business Development Center, came and visited with us for about 1.5 hours the other day. They are thinking about moving out of the Innovation Center, she's not sure why they are there still. They were moved there after the hurricane and they pay rent when they have never paid rent anywhere else. Innovation Centers are all different they are kind of like a fruit basket as to what each one does. Mark knows the Robby Ingram who runs the Innovation Center for USM and about to run the one in Pascagoula. Mark wanted to bring them a cleaner deal than to interject them into all this stuff. Mark Schloegel said the Innovation Center did vote to charge each tenant \$25 more a month to accommodate the high-power bill. He stated he had a ton of emails he hasn't had time to read them all yet. Bill also stated the majority of the tenants on the rent roll are contractors and real estate agents, they are not innovative customers. Mark said every time the board has a meeting Stephen has an excuse why he cannot be there. President Jimmy Levens stated we need to take to the board the asset and sell the asset and build something else that is more conducive to what an Innovation Center is supposed to be. We would not dump these people out in the street. The current building is probably at its highest value now due to location only. We are not trying to get rid of the Innovation Center we are trying to figure out how to make it run better. Bill brought up the repeated attempts to communicate with the Innovation center and no response. Jennifer asked who we were contacting and he stated Stephen everyone on the board and the only response he has received was asking for more funding.

- **Pump Station #4 Emergency Repair** – Bill we are still working on the bid package and the painting of the tanks.
- **Accounting RFQ Audit** – The Committee reviewed the RFQ's and would like to make the recommendation to go with AVL. Commissioner Frankie Castiglia made a motion to accept AVL and Commissioner Jennifer Burke seconded the

motion. No further discussion took place, all in favor Ayed and the motion carried unanimously.

- Bill Lavers made sure everyone was aware as part of the audit the new firm will be adding in the appraisal of our current assets including water and sewer. Global Evaluation has proposed to do the updated appraisal for our accounting for a flat rate of \$7,500.00. We will continue doing independent appraisals for land sales. Frankie Castiglia made the motion to accept the \$7,500.00 appraisal fee and seconded the motion. No further discussion took place. All in favor Ayed and the motion carried.
- **Bid for Sludge Removal** – Rebid due to no bids received. Jimmy Levens requested us to reach out to the previous bidders and ask why they did not bid this time.

**VIII. Legal**

**IX. Announcements/Notices**

- **Office closed in November for the following holidays:**
  - November 28-29 (Thanksgiving)

**Next Board of Commission Meeting: Dec. 17, 2019 @ 8:15 a.m.**


**X. ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Cliff Kirkland made a motion to adjourn and seconded by Commissioner Mark Schloegel. The meeting was adjourned and lasted 42 min.



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Jimmy Levens, President



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Mark Schloegel, Secretary