

Green County Development Corporation Board Notes

Thursday, October 19, 2023

1. **Attendance:** Richard Thoman (AmericInn, County Board, City of Monroe) Glarus), Joan Rufenacht (Green County Board), Nikki Austin (Thrivent), Casey Jones (Brodhead Mayor), Dave Mosher (Mosher Insurance), Jane Curran-Meuli (SSM Health), Jon McNeil (Big Radio), Mike Furgal (Green County Board), Amy Charles (BTC), Tracy Pierner (BTC), Chris Schindler (City of Monroe Alderman), Olivia Otte (Green County Development Corporation) Tracy Brewer (Green County Development Corporation). Dave Sawdey (Woodford State Bank), Mike Furgal (Green County Board of Advisors), Doug Sutter (Keller Builds), Gabe Altenbernd (Belleville Administrator), Lauren Freeman (Administrator Village of New Glarus)
2. **Call to Order:** Olivia Otte, GCDC Executive Director called the meeting to order at 7:37 AM.
3. **Approval of Minutes:** 1st John McNeil, 2nd Jane Curran-Meuli
4. **Approval of Financials:** 1st Joan Rufenacht, 2nd Dave Mosher
4. **Events Update/Staff Update:** Olivia provided a brief report and update.
 - Fall Breakfast at Wegmueller Farm recap – over 80 attendees focus on Agriculture. Goal is to create themes around future breakfasts and travel throughout the county. GCDC is open to suggestions.
 - Wisconsin Economic Development Conference – end of September Olivia attended the conference in Wausau and spoke on childcare. GCDC was also a finalist for the Economic Development Initiative Award for the Small Business Series (up against Milwaukee area program and an SBDC state wide program (SBDC won).
 - GCDC partnered with Blackhawk Tech for the World Dairy Expo in Madison in early October. Over 60k people attended the event that allows Blackhawk Tech Ag students a chance to attend and network.
 - Brodhead Community Conversations and Community Economic Assessment results presented October 18. 25 people attended. Top priorities were presented as well as GCDC information to the group of attendees.
 - November 15 workshop on ChatGPT/AI for marketing is being held at Blackhawk in Monroe as an extension of the Small Business Series (SBS). Plans are to offer more workshops throughout the year in addition to a new SBS in the spring. Additional suggestions for classes are for digital marketing and financials and bookkeeping.
 - December 7 GCDC is hosting a Housing Seminar to present results on the Housing Study conducted by SWWRPC. In addition, attendees will have a chance to learn about tools the cities have and how the developers and lenders can all work with the municipalities. Registration will be coming out soon.
 - Green County Leaders is in full swing with 37 participants – coming up on their 4th session and having picked their community projects. GCDC will be involved in several of the projects:
 - Monticello Placemaking – connecting a trail throughout the community to create safe spaces to get downtown.
 - Aspiring Leaders Mentorship – creating a mentor program to connect young professionals with experienced professionals for growth and development.
 - Open Doors Green County – focused on creating an event/day that highlights what is made in Green County.

- Green County Micro Loan – to assist with emergency situations such as home and auto repairs or bills. It was suggested to be sure to include an educational component. Nikki Austin offered a free tool called Money Canvas to help with changing behaviors, creating budgets etc.
- Broadband – Green County IT strategic plan identified a need for a Broadband Coordinator. A position has been posted.
- Revolving Loan Fund – a loan was given to Dynamic Specialty Services for expansion into the Armory in Monroe. GCDC is also assisting with an Idle Spaces Grant to support the renovation of the facility. More loans are available – share with business owners.
- Home Construction Cooperative – 17 students have begun demolition and clearing. GCDC hired a GC (Kevin Carpenter) to handle the coordination of the renovation and to work with the school. Cupboards, doors and windows have been ordered. Beyond the house donation by SSM, many businesses have donated \$60k and in-kind products and services. 100% of funds will return to the program for next year. The goal is to expand the program throughout the county.
 - City foreclosures may be options for future homes.
 - Doug Sutter offered oversupply donations if the school has a storage location.
- GCDC is working on plans for 2024 event, programs, and plans. We are looking for input for those items and the strategic plan as well.

5. Community Roundtable/Partner Reports/Board member Business:

Nikki Austin (Thrivent): *the board of education passed the levy for the budget, of which is about 80% salaries. Soil boring and traffic studies have begun for the new school. Nikki has become a Certified Exit Planning Advisor. She is the only one in Green County. This is a resource for succession planning for businesses, including family farms.*

Richard Thoman (City of Monroe/ Green County Board/ AmericInn): *budgeting for Green County and the city are in process. AmericInn is seeing lower numbers. Personally he has had some scary health issues – vision loss and strokes. With much hospital time he is hopeful they have figured it out.*

Dave Mosher (Mosher Insurance): *Green County and Monroe has a housing issue. Market rate housing is needed and it hasn't changed in decades. Monroe has a negative history with developers. Changes need to be made at the city level and zoning to eliminate the disconnects and get things happening.*

Jane Curran-Meuli (SSM Health): *volumes have been high with no breaks as typical in the summer months. The Innovative Dialysis program has exceeded plans with 17 patients (4 were expected). The billing issues problem is being resolved by bringing it back in house in November. There are obvious Food Insecurity Issues, with many patients leaving with bags of food and lists of pantry information and job opportunities at SSM. She offered to include job lists for others as well.*

John McNeil (Big Radio): *Spotlights continue and football playoffs are in high gear.*

Mike Furgal (Green County Board): *the Child Advocacy Center broke ground on the addition with a local contractor (Kundert). A 501c3 was created for the center to be able to furnish the interior and support additional programming. The Aging and Disability Resource Center needs volunteer drivers desperately. It was suggested to use the new website with United Way called Impact Green County (www.impactgreencounty.org) to post any volunteer positions.*

Chris Schindler (City of Monroe, city council & cold storage): *city is in budget planning. His cold storage business is expanding and he is working on permits for the school and a housing development.*

Casey Jones (Mayor of Brodhead): the Community Economic Analysis was presented last night with top priorities, including hiring of a position to help with economic development either alone or in partnership with GCDC., and a need for housing. Budget wise the city is in good financial shape. City council struggles continue with approvals and growth.

Amy Charles (BTC): the new manufacturing center has broken ground in Janesville. Monroe high school representatives attended with conversation about donations of equipment. FFA Soils Competition hosted about 200 students in Monroe, and Textsploration is happening November 7 for prospective students to learn about programs and get signed up. Blackhawk partners with UW two year campuses to support programs. Emphasis on squelching rumors – Blackhawk in Monroe is NOT leaving the area!

Gabe Altenbernd (Belleville Administrator): Belleville recently hosted the Green County Leaders. There are 3 new downtown businesses with some building renovations occurring. Recent trails and multifamily developments are in plans, and a Highest and Best Use study is in process.

Lauren Freeman (Village of New Glarus Administrator): Oktoberfest was a huge success with over 10k people attending. The school has broken ground on the primary school and a new track and field.

Doug Sutter (Keller Builds): about a half dozen projects in the works but notes that the activity is not as high as last year.

Ron Schafer (The Bank of New Glarus): working on budgets, interest rates are likely not coming down soon. The bank has had a great year.

Dave Sawdy (Woodford State Bank): budgeting is in process. They are currently hosting Harvest Appreciation Lunches at the grain elevators, supplier box lunches at the sites and for those in the fields.

6. Next Meeting: November 16 in-person, 7:30 at the courthouse.

7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:45 AM. 1st John McNeil, 2nd Joan Rufenacht