



**ROCKVILLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INC.**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

January 12, 2021 4:30 p.m.

VIA Zoom Meeting

**Committee Attendees:** Susan Prince, Nancy Regelin, Jennifer Hester, Bridget Donnell Newton

**Staff:** Cindy Rivarde

**Not Present:** Scot Browning

**1. CEO Report**

- Deputy Director Recruitment – Update  
Baker Tilly has advertised the position. It is posted on our websites and social media. We have started to have inquiries. The search firm is finalizing the brochure. The firm is also be contracted with by the City for the Deputy City Manager and City Attorney recruitments. The Ad Hoc Hiring Committee for the Deputy position is Morgan Sullivan, Jennifer Hester and Rob DiSpirito.
- Proposed Marketing Position  
Marketing is the focus of much of REDI’s strategic goals and mission. Now that the website has launched and new collateral has been created, we are proceeding to the next projects that include local tourism (E. Gude area to start), helping the City develop an Arts & Entertainment District, and focusing on our key industries and how we attract and support businesses in those industries, and how we are communicating with our business community through surveys and other mechanisms. The proposed City budget would allow us to bring a full-time marketing person on board at a salary of \$65,000 but would not allow much cushion to hire outside firms for special projects. We currently have Crowe Communications under contract for \$30,000 per year. Lori Crowe has a great deal of institutional knowledge and is very helpful in maintaining statistics through the year as well as assisting with website, communications, and public relations. Given the number of new staff, having her on the team is stabilizing. The committee discussed having Ms. Rivarde work with Crowe Communications on a revised agreement that provides support and dedicated hours at a modestly increased contract amount. It was generally thought that hiring a full-time position should be on hold for now.
- Update on MWBC Personnel  
Lauren Cannon resigned as the Marketing, Events and Outreach Manager. Thomas Squire came on board as a part time Events and Outreach Manager – Special Projects, a position that is subject to receipt of the Cares Act funding. He will be able to fill in along with Crowe Communications while Morgan Wortham

recruits to fill the empty full-time position. Karen Kalantzis joined REDI as a part time business counselor supporting Frederick County. It is hoped that at the point the Cares Act funds are depleted that Frederick County and City will be able to provide more financial support to keep a business counselor focused on their geographic area. Nestor Gavidia is doing a great job coming up to speed with Martha Jimenez in supporting the Child Care businesses. We also hope that our Montgomery County funding through HHS will continue to support his position after the COVID related funding expires.

- Open Meeting Complaint

Judy Rudolph filed a complaint with the Compliance Board to determine if REDI is a public entity subject to the Open Meeting Act. Our attorney, Suellen Ferguson from Counsel Bardel has filed an answer. Ms. Rudolph rebutted, and we will have a short reply. Thereafter, we expect the Compliance Board to render a decision in approximately 30 days. If we are determined to be a public entity, we will need further advice from Ms. Ferguson on how we can protect the confidentiality of our clients' business information per our SBA grant; business recruitment, retention and incentive information; and personnel matters. There will also need to be someone who has taken the training course at meetings.

- City Mayor and Council discussion on Town Center, Districts and East Gude

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Rivarde presented with David Levy and Manisha Tewari regarding the availability of various district tools for economic development. The Mayor & Council expressed interest and support for staff to explore application for an Arts and Entertainment District, which will include public input, as well as REDI's local tourism efforts to promote the E. Gude District as an attraction for visitors to come for craft beverages, good food, and great trails.

The Mayor and Council also asked city staff to come back with some options and ballpark pricing for a branding exercise for both the Town Center as well as the whole City. This effort was not able to be funded for the current fiscal year, nor was a new City website. The Committee discussed the fact that the audience is different for these two efforts/areas. Town Center is similar to East Gude, in that it would be highlighting businesses and would have a local tourism approach, while the overall City brand and website is more focused on access for citizens to information about City services. It was also discussed that there is a desire for a stakeholder group to regularly meet to provide input on Town Center issues similarly to the TCAT efforts years ago. However, a citizen leader has not emerged who appears willing to lead the organization of an association. It was discussed that REDI could participate in assisting a citizen and business group come together to provide input on Town Center issues by hosting a roundtable or meeting to convene stakeholders and help them launch.

- Business Survey RFP

Ms. Rivarde and Ms. Prince thought it would be a good idea to delay the issuance of an RFP until there was more Board input at a Board Working Session on priorities. The creation of a business baseline is someone different in the pandemic environment. It was envisioned that the Board would discuss priorities and what information they would like to obtain.

## 2. Board Business

- Next Board of Directors Agenda  
The draft agenda was circulated for comment.
- Board Working Session/Date  
The Committee said they liked a time from 8 a.m. – Noon on a Saturday for the annual Board working session. It was noted that on Zoom, it will be important to have an agenda that allows for appropriate breaks so people do not get fatigued. It was also noted that minutes should probably be taken during any breakout sessions. Ms. Rivarde will have staff survey the Board for the best Saturday at the end of February/beginning of March.
- Board Members  
Jose Ochoa resigned due to other obligations but assured us that he is available as a resource if needed. Dan Mallon, who was introduced to the Board by Mr. Ochoa, expressed a desire to join the Board after attending the last Board meeting in November. Mr. Mallon has a business development background in the bio tech industry and lives in Flower Valley. Ms. Prince asked for input from the Committee, and it was noted that it was an attribute that Mr. Mallon was so enthusiastic and that he represents a key target industry sector for Rockville.

## 3. Other Business

None.

**Next Meeting:** February 9, 2021, 4:30 p.m., Via Zoom.