

**COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Meeting Minutes – February 25, 2021 at 3:00 pm**  
**City Council Chambers**

**Committee Members:**

Gene Merrill (Chair)  
Bryan Hawkins (Vice Chair)  
Tripp Androy – By phone (late)  
Shauna Bland  
Sam Engel – By phone (late)  
Kenny Houck – Absent  
Josie Molloy - Absent  
Colene Martin – By phone  
Cameron Camp- Absent  
Bob Schaller  
Paul Lonquist – By phone  
Kim Dickson - Absent  
Casey Alderson  
Daniel Mancuso –By phone (late)

**Government Liaisons:**

Susan Seereiter – City Business Advocate  
Darin Fowler County Commissioner  
Jean Ann Miles – City of Cave Junction  
Joel King – City Councilor

**Guests:**

Doug Walker  
Marta Tarantsey (late)

1. **Roll Call-** meeting officially started at 3:20 PM with quorum present
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
  - a. Approval of minutes from January 28, 2021

**Motion**

**Member Androy moved and Member Bland seconded the motion to approve the minutes from January 28, 2021 as presented. The vote resulted as follows: “AYES”:**  
**Committee Members: Schaller, Martin, Androy, Bland, Engel, Lonquist, Chair Merrill and Vice Chair Hawkins. “NAYS”: None. Abstain: None.**  
**Absent: Members Mancuso, Dickson, Camp, Molloy and Houck.**  
**The motion passed.**

4. **Work Session Items:**
  - a. **HAC and Foundry Village update**
    - Doug Walker gave an overview of Housing advisory committee’s top priorities that City Manager requested.
    - The HAC has been tasked with identifying 10 items to highlight.
    - He addressed the importance of public relations and outreach and marketing to the community.
    - Minimum density zone allows for more units which is needed. Recommendation would be R3 minimum density to increase greater density.
    - Create and or utilize tax incentives for low to moderate income.
    - Solicit to all committees and city staff for housing concern crisis.
    - Create a Housing Specialist Position at City (currently approved and position is being advertised through several media outlets)

- More discussion and education need to be shared to remove the “not in my backyard” attitude and change culture of saying no to programs such as Rogue Retreat.
- Member Engel suggested that the CEDC committee advocate to identify buildable land within the County. Dimmick Campus was mentioned.
- Councilor Miles advocated to identify county lands in Cave Junction as well.
- Discussion continued about housing disparity and cost of building.
- Commissioner Fowler commented that more services are needed than just housing. Member Engel did ensure that services were being provided besides just a “roof over the head”. Case management is part of the solution.
- Member Androy questioned how much of the cost of building is being driven by the cost of the land vs cost of improvements of the land and capital cost of financing and considering materials for those improvements.
- Walker mentioned that capital was not really a problem since interest rates have been so low, however, materials have skyrocketed, especially lumber. Grants Pass is no different that the larger cities for material. Difficult pattern of behavior to build a long-term investment such as apartment complexes vs single family.
- Cost will unfortunately remain high for the foreseeable future which continues to be a barrier to multi family options.
- Foundry Village update: concrete poured. Permit for transitional housing are forthcoming and anticipation of 6-8 months to process.
- Member Martin circled back regarding the County property and advocated for members to “get on the list” of when properties were being auctioned off.

**b. Three Rivers School District update**

- Casey Alderson shared that since the shutdown has taken place it has been hard for a representative to attend these meetings. Graduation rates are up and finding ways to serve the students is top on administration’s list.
- Focusing on CTE to involve construction, woodshop for middle school. Hands on trade top on list from focus groups.
- Graduation coaches is helping with high school succession.
- Elementary K-5 grades have been attending school since COVID shutdown. December, they did have to shut down temporarily. Middle School and High School recently came back on campus.
- District will be going out for a bond in May. Capital funding is not included is state funding and there is a huge need for safe infrastructure.
- Member Alderson is planning to represent on committee until another outreach representative is identified.
- Housing quantity and cost has been a stumbling block to retain and recruit teachers.
- Distant learning has been extremely hard without reliable internet.
- Three Rivers used Wi-Fi hotspots to help with the problem. Illinois Valley has been affected by over 40% not having access.
- Three Rivers was able to identify detailed GIS addresses of where wi-fi access is. It made is easier to target where hotspots are located 93% of parents were surveyed asking about internet access and reliability.
- The survey was for computer devices and chrome books not phones.
- Councilor Miles mentioned the unreliability of Ziple’s internet service.

- Three Rivers is working with Hunter and ESD looking for access points so that the school doesn't have to rely on Ziple service. The School has shared their concerns with Hunter not the data and heat maps.

**c. Childcare and rental assistance funding and other info from Bus. OR**

- Marta Tarantsey from Business Oregon shared rural CDBG low income eligibility for Josephine County for possible rental assistance low and moderate income. Also available is broadband assistance for this group of individuals. Childcare assistance is directed to the childcare provider.
- A community can apply for up to \$250K if the project and need makes sense.
- Deadline is May 20, 2021, she encouraged sharing this information and making sure that childcare providers are aware of this funding option.
- Marta encouraged the committee to send her names and contact information.
- The City of Grants Pass recently received a grant from Business Oregon for over \$42K to assist with watershed monitoring to help mitigate the recent wildfires that took place last year.
- City of Grants Pass is leading in this initiative to make sure the water stays safe in the Rogue basin.

**6. Information Sharing:**

**a. Items from Committee Members**

- Broadband subcommittee met and identified that most important step is developing a long-term plan. Survey of what people are experiencing such as the recent information that TRSD has conducted is exactly the information that is needed to move forward.
- Member Schaller shared with the group that Southern Oregon Air Academy has disbanded and there is no longer a board to move it forward. Possibly there is a way to consolidate missions such as the innovation hub, drones etc. into an electric mobility umbrella to develop next generation electric machinist/technicians.
- Chair Merrill mentioned that Common Connections is working with REACH to bring back the conception of the Innovation Hub.
- Josephine County has invested in electric buses and possibly there is an opportunity to train students through Youth Pathways.
- Member Engel mentioned that personal accountability is what is going to get the community to open back up.
- Member Alderson shared that the school is sending a letter to Salem objecting to SB238 which will take away the opportunity to collaborate with the Josephine County Sheriff Department. There is a great partnership with the Sherriff Department, and they are educators for the students.

**b. Items from Councilors and Commissioner**

- Commissioner Fowler shared news that the County will be relieving all restaurant fees for the year. This is a savings to businesses of \$400-700 per year. The funding will come from economic development to help all the restaurants. It will cost the County \$250K.
- Josephine County is remaining at extreme risk at this time. Commissioners are making a pact to not go back once the risk is lessened.
- Committee was encouraged to help by supporting local businesses.

- Councilor King mentioned that the parklets will be coming back downtown Grants Pass.
- Four City Councilors sent a letter to Governor in support of reopening Mainstreet.
- Warming Shelter will not be happening at this time, the building owner backed out of the temporary agreement.
- Councilor King talked about vaccines and getting over COVID.
- Councilor Miles talked about the great things going in Cave Junction. Park maintenance and new spray park along with other amenities. ADA accessible playground ground covering.
- Cave Junction is looking at a public/private partnership to redo main street. They are working hard to get people to stop and stay and shop.
- Councilor Miles participated in a vaccine event and was very impressed and encouraged everyone to get a vaccine.
- There will be an emergency preparedness fair for Illinois Valley in April. Hand cranked radios will be given out to public. Plans are to give out 250 “go bags”.

**c. Items from Staff**

- Susan shared that information about Connect Oregon in partnership with Unite Us.

**7. Future Agenda Building for Next Meeting:**

- a. RCC update/Water Service (scheduled for March)
- b. Innovation Hub/Youth Pathways

**8. Adjournment:**

- a. Meeting adjourned at 4:54 pm

**Next scheduled meeting: March 25, 2021**

*Minutes prepared by Susan Seereiter, City Staff Liaison.*