

**EAST TENNESSEE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

**MINUTES**

The East Tennessee Development District's Executive Committee held a meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2020, at the ETHRA offices in Knoxville, TN. The following Executive Committee members were present:

Ron Woody, Roane County Executive  
Roland (Trey) Dykes III, Member at Large  
Joe Brooks, Claiborne County Mayor  
Terry Frank, Anderson County Mayor  
E.L. Morton, Campbell County Mayor  
Crystal Ottinger, Cocke County Mayor  
Mike Byrd, Grainger County Mayor  
Bill Brittain, Hamblen County Mayor  
Glenn Jacobs, Knox County Mayor  
Brian Langley, Morgan County Executive  
Jason Bailey, Union County Mayor

**Guests**

Rick Yakubic, ETDD  
Gary Holiway, ETHRA  
Jane Jolley, Knox County Development Representative  
Cindy Boshears, Congressman Fleischmann's Office  
Tammy Merritt, Congressman Fleischmann's Office  
Lana Moore, Senator Lamar Alexander's Office  
Sarah Fansler, Congressman Tim Burchett's Office  
Jack Qualls, Loudon County Development Representative  
Anna Beth Walker, Claiborne County Development Representative  
Pam May, Roane Alliance  
Leann Sutton, Jefferson County Development Representative

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ron Woody called the meeting to order.

## **MINUTES**

Chairman Ron Woody presented the minutes of the January 14, 2020 meeting to the Executive Committee for approval. Claiborne County Mayor Joe Brooks made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, it was seconded by Grainger County Mayor Mike Byrd, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Treasurer's Report for the month ending December 31, 2019 was presented by Claiborne County Mayor Joe Brooks. Mayor Brooks made the motion to accept the report as presented and it was seconded by Campbell County Mayor E.L. Morton, and it was approved by all.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Chairman Ron Woody asked Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank to present the report on the Nominating Committee. Mayor Frank thanked the following members for their service:

Terry Frank, Anderson County Mayor and Chair  
Brian Langley, Morgan County Executive  
Bill Brittain, Hamblen County Mayor  
Crystal Ottinger, Cocke County Mayor  
Mark Potts, Jefferson County Mayor  
E.L. Morton, Campbell County Mayor

Committee Chairman Terry Frank reported that the Nominating Committee met in person and via conference call prior to this Executive Committee meeting and the committee proposed the following nominations for the ETDD/ETHRA officers for 2020-2021:

For Chair:	Mr. Roland (Trey) Dykes, Mayor of Newport
For Vice-Chair:	Mr. Mark Potts, Jefferson County Mayor
For Secretary:	Mr. Joe Brooks, Claiborne County Mayor
For Treasurer:	Mr. Jeff Tibbals, Scott County Mayor

Committee Chairman Terry Frank made the motion for the Executive Committee to recommend to the Board of Directors that these candidates will serve as the new officers for the 2020-2021 program year. It was seconded by Morgan County Executive Brian Langley and approved by all.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Terry Bobrowski, ETDD Executive Director, gave his Director's report:

### **Grants Update**

#### **CDBG Grants**

Mr. Bobrowski stated that ETDD staff is in the final stages of the preparation of 2020 CDBG grant applications. The 2020 applications are due in Nashville on February 28<sup>th</sup> of 2020. We are working on applications for Norris (wastewater), Jefferson City (wastewater I&I line), Anderson County (water line) Hamblen County (fire truck), Union County (fire truck), White Pine (wastewater plant), Parrottsville (fire truck), New Tazewell (fire truck), Loudon County (water tank), Loudon (fire truck), Roane County (ambulance) and Oakdale (ambulance).

The CDBG program remains the only viable public infrastructure program that is available to communities so it is extremely important that we advocate for this program whenever we have discussions with federal legislators. The program has not been well supported at the federal level and has consistently lost funding over the past several years although it received a small increase in funding this year. This translates into fewer and fewer grants at the local level and we have really started to feel the pinch in the last couple of years.

#### **Historic Preservation Grants**

Mr. Bobrowski mentioned that we routinely submit applications to assist with the preservation of cultural assets in our region. This year the applications were due in Nashville on January 31<sup>st</sup> and we submitted applications for two projects in the region. We also submitted our annual request for historic preservation planning funds in the amount of \$42,000. These funds are matched by local funds and allow us to employ a historic preservation planner who writes national register nominations, assists communities with the certified local government designation and provides technical assistance with a variety of other cultural asset protection programs.

#### **FEMA Fire Fighters Grant Program**

Mr. Bobrowski was very pleased to announce that the application round for the fire-fighting grants that are provided by FEMA is open. He believes that we have a comprehensive list of everyone that wants to apply but if you think you need to be added to our list please give us a call and we would be happy to assist you. Fire Departments can use these funds to buy equipment such as turn out gear, buy trucks or make safety modifications (sprinklers, exhaust systems, generators) to fire halls. Grants are very affordable, usually in the 90 – 95% range with only a small local share required. This year we are working on 5 applications for fire departments located in four different counties. The applications are due on March 13th and will be reviewed by an independent review team in Washington over the next 9 months or so. They review the applications in batches so they

make funding announcements throughout the coming year.

Mr. Bobrowski also stressed how important it is to register on SAMS.gov prior to any grant opportunity opening up.

Mr. Bobrowski stated he was also pleased to learn that the State of Tennessee is starting a new program this year through the Department of Commerce and Insurance that will also fund fire protection projects. The new fund will also provide the match for grants that are awarded from other programs.

### **Home Program**

Mr. Bobrowski mentioned that THDA recently announced they will be accepting HOME program applications again this year. The applications will be due in Nashville on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The HOME program provides grant funds for owner occupied housing rehabilitations for low and moderate income persons. We would be happy to assist anyone who might be interested in submitting an application. We are currently assisting Rocky Top with an application.

### **Recreation Grants**

Mr. Bobrowski announced that we are hopeful that the Local Parks and Recreation Grant program will again be available this year. This program normally cycles around every two years and this is supposed to be the year that it becomes available. The last time it was available in 2018, approximately \$3.5 million dollars was available state wide. Applications are normally due in Nashville in April or May of 2020. Eligible applicants are cities and counties in Tennessee. There is no minimum grant request and the maximum is \$200,000. All grants require a 50/50 match. Grants can be used to purchase park property, buy recreation equipment, build ballfields, build bathrooms, address ADA deficiencies and other activities that are associated with public recreation. We have not gotten official word from TDEC about the opening of a grant round but it would be helpful to let us know if you are interested in applying once the process is officially opened by TDEC. Let us know if you are interested in the program.

### **ARC POWER Program**

Mr. Bobrowski mentioned the ARC Power program is a congressionally funded initiative that makes federal resources available to help communities and regions that have been affected by job losses in coal mining, coal power plant operations, and coal-related supply chain industries due to the changing economics of America's energy production. The application portal opened on January 13<sup>th</sup> and initial Letters of Intent are due on February 28<sup>th</sup>. The full proposal is due on March 27<sup>th</sup>.

The POWER program prioritizes targeting federal resources to projects and activities that:

Diversify the commercial and industrial bases of local and regional economies;

Create high-quality, well-paying jobs in new and/or existing industries;

Attract new sources of job-creating investment (both public and private);

Providing a range of workforce services and skills training, including paid work-based learning opportunities, resulting in industry-recognized credentials for high-quality, in-demand jobs.

### **Agribusiness Loan Program**

Mr. Bobrowski also wanted to remind everyone about the Agribusiness Loan Program. We received \$200,000 from the TN Department of Agriculture to start a new micro loan program. The purpose of the program is to stimulate farm and agri-business income. We intend to provide low interest financing for the purchase of farm equipment and machinery in order to create new markets for locally produced farm products. Loans can be for up to \$25,000, 7 years maximum term and we anticipate the interest rate to be around 4%. Loans can be used for building, harvesting equipment, production equipment, fencing, irrigation equipment, grain storage and variety of other things. No rolling stock such as trucks or trailers are eligible. The program is up and running and we have started accepting applications.

### **Legislative Agenda**

Mr. Bobrowski has included copies of our finalized state and federal legislative agendas in your packets. We use these agendas to identify our legislative priorities to our state and federal legislative delegations. We have a large state delegation from our district – eight senators and twenty-one representatives. On the federal side we have portions of the first, second and third congressional districts within our boundaries. I will be sending these recommendations to our state and federal legislative delegations in the near future. Let me briefly go over the main talking points:

The Federal recommendations have not changed substantially from last year - we are still pushing for full funding of the ARC, the EDA and re-authorization of the SBA and support for a funding level of \$7.5 billion in loan guarantee authority, expressing support for the CDBG program, Chickamauga Lock funding, TVA non-power programs and support for full funding of the Y-12, ORNL and the Uranium Processing Facility in the Anderson/Roane county area. We have added to the agenda that ETDD supports new legislation to expand mental health providers, services, bed and living facilities in support of opioid recovery, including the expansion of programs that develop job skills, job training and job placement.

In regard to our State Legislative agenda - we have examined the legislative agendas of TSCA, TML and TDDA and attempted to coordinate agenda items as much as possible. Of course our main objective is to restore the funding that was cut from our state appropriation last year. We have seen the proposed budget for this year and the cut is in there so we have some work to do in this regard.

This year we have added a request for the Legislature to consider requiring TennCare to reimburse ground ambulance providers at a rate not less than the current Medicare fee schedule and that. ETDD supports new legislation to expand mental health providers, services, bed and living facilities in support of opioid recovery, including the expansion of programs that develop job skills, job training and job placement. We will be mailing these out to our federal and state delegation this week.

### **Census Overview**

Mr. Bobrowski wanted to mention that the US Census will be starting soon. The schedule is for the Census to mail out invitations to respond online during the period of March 12-20. They will send out a reminder letter on March 16-24. Then they will mail out a reminder post card on March 26 to April 3. On April 8-16 they will mail out another reminder letter and a paper questionnaire and then on April 20-27 they will send out a final reminder letter before they follow up in person. Most folks will be asked to respond online but some folks will receive a paper questionnaire to complete and mail back.

### **Calendar Matters**

We will be holding our Annual Business meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup> at Rothchilds in Knoxville, and we will have a very brief ETDD/ETHRA meeting prior to the business meeting. Then the next ETDD/ETHRA meeting will be held on April 14<sup>th</sup> here at the ETHRA offices.

### **Other Business**

Mr. Bobrowski mentioned last month that our current retirement fund management contract with Mass Mutual has terminated and we are starting the process to transfer all of employee accounts over to the State's Retire Ready program as our retirement services provider. We have consulted with our attorney and have been assured that our action will be legal and in compliance with all IRS rules. Last month we approved three different actions to authorize the movement of our current retirement accounts from MassMutual to Retire Tennessee but we now need to tweak one of the changes from a plan termination to a plan merger. Pretty much a technical adjustment but it still requires the approval of a resolution. We have copies of the resolution that needs to be passed and a motion is needed Mr. Chairman.

Anderson County Mayor Terry Frank made a motion to pass the resolution as presented and it was seconded by Morgan County Executive Brian Langley and approved by all.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business, Chairman Ron Woody entertained a motion to adjourn and was approved by all.