

**GLADEWATER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
**REGULAR SESSION MINUTES**  
**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2024, 4:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Luke Kimbrough, Jim Bardwell, Danny Darden, John Paul Tallent, Mark Carpenter, Michelle Palmer (Executive Director), Amanda Nobles (Consultant), and Charlie Smith (Ex-Officio)

**ABSENT:** Scott Owens (Ex-Officio) and Kevin Clark (Ex-Officio)

**GUESTS:** Clayton Lenoir, Stephanie Fowler, Haden McGlone, and Nathan Palmer

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**  
The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.
  
2. **CITIZENS COMMENTS:**  
Nathan Palmer said GEDCO is doing a great job!
  
3. **CONSENT AGENDA:**
  - (a) Acceptance of January 10, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes
  - (b) Acceptance of January 2024 Financial Report

Danny Darden made a motion to accept the consent agenda with a correction to Item 3 of the January 10<sup>th</sup> Minutes. "Motion passed 5-0" changed to 4-0. John Paul Tallent seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

4. **DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION** to approve an Emergency Relief Grant for the businesses impacted by the Highway 271 road blockade between the intersection at North Loop 485 and the intersection at Gay Avenue January 31, 2024, through February 1, 2024:

During the meeting, Michelle Palmer initiated a discussion on her proposed grant, designed to assist small businesses facing operational challenges due to unforeseen circumstances. Concerns were raised regarding the potential exploitation of the grant by businesses seeking unwarranted support. Mrs. Palmer reassured the board that the associated risks had been thoroughly evaluated, expressing her intent to rely on stringent grant requirements for determining eligibility. She emphasized her willingness to reject ineligible applications. Danny Darden sought clarification on funding sources within the budget and the board's authority to reauthorize the grant in the future. Mrs. Palmer explained that the grant would be established as a new line item in the Economic Development Expenses section, with funds drawn from the budget's net available funds. Each budget cycle, the board would decide whether to continue the program. Mrs. Palmer encouraged the board to exercise their authority to terminate the program when its utility expired. John Paul Tallent queried the responsibility for determining the duration of business interruption in case of disagreement between the business and the city. Mrs. Palmer asserted that it would be the business's responsibility to prove the duration of the interruption and associated financial losses. Recognizing the misalignment of the current grant with the agenda parameters, the board deliberated on how to approve the item. It was decided that a different grant, using the existing framework, could be created for the specific incident mentioned. The board

unanimously agreed to convene a special meeting, if necessary, to expedite the approval of applications and accelerate fund distribution.

Mark Carpenter made a motion to approve an Emergency Relief Grant for the businesses impacted by the Highway 271 road blockade between the intersection at North Loop 485 and the intersection at Gay Avenue January 31, 2024, through February 1, 2024, for up to \$3,000 per business with 3 employees or less. Danny Darden seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION to reduce the minimum combined balance of GEDCO's accounts at Texas Bank and Trust from \$150,000 to \$100,000:

During the meeting, Mark Carpenter strongly advocated for a reduction in the aggregate funds held at Texas Bank and Trust, proposing a reallocation of resources to increase investments with Raymond James. In response to this proposition, Jim Bardwell sought clarification on whether the corporation was obligated to maintain funds above a certain threshold with Texas Bank and Trust. Luke Kimbrough expressed skepticism about the existence of such a requirement but conveyed confidence that the corporation would not risk depleting accounts to a level that might incur penalties.

Mark Carpenter made a motion to reduce the minimum combined balance of GEDCO's accounts at Texas Bank and Trust from \$150,000 to \$100,000. Luke Kimbrough seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION to install an annual award cap of \$150,000 on the Grow Gladewater Grant program:

Michelle Palmer elucidated to the board that during her presentation of the grant to the City Council for ratification, concerns were raised regarding the absence of a cap for the program. The council granted approval with the stipulation that the GEDCO board would need to endorse a program cap, and the specified amount was set at \$150,000.

Mark Carpenter made a motion to install an annual award cap of \$150,000 on the Grow Gladewater Grant program. Danny Darden seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

7. DISCUSSION of real estate investment and marketing opportunities:

Mark Carpenter led a discussion about the need to address the vacant Texas diecast building, currently hindered by unrealistic pricing set at close to \$3 million. The possibility of approaching them to reconsider the price and exploring potential tax incentives was suggested. Additionally, Mayor Owens inquired about GEDCO maintaining an updated list of available real estate, as the current plugin on the website contains discrepancies, with only 12 properties listed. Concerns were raised about the efficacy of the analytics company handling the listings, with an indication that renewal may not be guaranteed due to dissatisfaction with their performance. Board members emphasized the importance of having a comprehensive property list for effective marketing and suggested collaboration in capturing property images when noticed. The discussion concluded with an acknowledgment

of the need for a strategic approach to make properties attractive for businesses, fostering job creation.

8. ADJOURN:

Danny Darden made a motion to adjourn. Jim Bardwell seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

The meeting ended at 4:44 PM.

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Michelle Palmer, Executive Director

ATTEST:

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Danny Darden, GEDCO Secretary/Treasurer