

GLADEWATER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2024, 4:00 PM

PRESENT: Luke Kimbrough, Jim Bardwell, Danny Darden, John Paul Tallent, Michelle Palmer (Executive Director), Amanda Nobles (Consultant), and Scott Owens (Ex-Officio)

ABSENT: Mark Carpenter, Kevin Clark (Ex-Officio), and Charlie Smith (Ex-Officio)

GUESTS: Nathan Palmer, Bob Mauldin, Lois Reed, and Elaine Roddy

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM.

2. **CITIZENS COMMENTS:**

None

3. **CONSENT AGENDA:**

- (a) Acceptance of December 13, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes
- (b) Acceptance of December 2023 Financial Report

Jim Bardwell made a motion to accept the consent agenda. John Paul Tallent seconded. Motion passed 5-0.

4. **DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION to renew sponsorship of Expedition Texas:**

Bob Mauldin provided the board with comprehensive updates on the show's viewership and highlighted the increasing number of markets carrying the program. He shared exciting news about the show's growing social media following and YouTube subscriber numbers. Mr. Mauldin proudly announced the production of a book featuring a story about Elvis in Gladewater. Following his presentation, Mr. Mauldin opened the floor for questions. John Paul Tallent inquired about the cost of sponsorship, to which Mr. Mauldin responded that existing sponsors would pay \$4,200, with the Chamber of Commerce contributing half through their partnership with GEDCO. Danny Darden asked about the upcoming season's planned topics, and Mr. Mauldin discussed ongoing developments, emphasizing the value of sponsorship, including the complimentary production of ads for Gladewater. Mr. Tallent expressed his preference for more business-focused ads, while Luke Kimbrough asked Lois Reed about tourism trends during the past year of sponsorship. Mrs. Reed noted the increased event attendance without definitive figures. Jim Bardwell suggested exploring other avenues, questioning the possibility of purchasing ad spots without sponsorship. Mr. Mauldin clarified the lack of availability and value in such an approach. Mr. Bardwell mentioned the Chamber's decision to table sponsorship renewal discussions until February. Both Mr. Mauldin and Amanda Nobles emphasized the tourism-promoting value of the ads and Mr. Mauldin expressed a willingness to tailor them to the board's preferences. Mr. Tallent voiced support for sponsorship but urged GEDCO to strategically focus its messaging on attracting new businesses.

Danny Darden made a motion to renew sponsorship of Expedition Texas. Luke Kimbrough seconded. Motion passed 3-1 with Jim Bardwell in opposition.

5. **DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION to approve MOU with Kilgore College's Adult Education and Literacy Program for use of the GCCE building:**

Michelle Palmer reported on an important development concerning Kilgore College's Adult Literacy and Education classes. She explained that Councilwoman Brandy Flanagan had contacted her seeking assistance in finding a suitable location for these classes. Mrs. Palmer, in turn, reached out to Charmyn Tumey, the program director, suggesting that GEDCO's GCCE building might serve as an ideal venue. Ms. Tumey revealed that the previous location for the classes was no longer available, jeopardizing the program's effectiveness unless a new space could be secured by mid-January. Following a meeting and facility tour, Ms. Tumey expressed enthusiasm about relocating the classes to the GCCE building, citing its size and layout as advantageous for accommodating an additional teacher and doubling the class size. Mrs. Palmer emphasized to the board that GEDCO would be a valuable partner in this effort, aligning with the corporation's commitment to workforce development through increased program participation.

John Paul Tallent sought clarification on whether this was the building GEDCO had previously agreed to give to GISD, which Mrs. Palmer confirmed. Jim Bardwell informed the board that the agreement with GISD had fallen through but expressed his support for the Adult Literacy and Education program, praising its quality and outcomes. Both Mr. Bardwell and Mr. Tallent inquired about any potential costs associated with partnering with the program. Mrs. Palmer assured them that no monetary exchange would occur, with the only cost to GEDCO being the continued operation of utilities. Kilgore College would handle all maintenance and cleaning responsibilities. Mayor Scott Owens inquired about any obligations to Gladewater High School, to which Mrs. Palmer clarified that there were none. Amanda Nobles sought confirmation that the program targets individuals who may have fallen through the educational cracks, lacking a high school diploma or GED, and affirmed that there would be no cost to the students. Mr. Bardwell confirmed this understanding.

Jim Bardwell made a motion to approve the MOU with Kilgore College's Adult Education and Literacy Program for use of the GCCE building. John Paul Tallent seconded. Motion passed 3-1 with Danny Darden abstaining as an employee of Kilgore College.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION to select a survey company and engage services:

Michelle Palmer initiated the discussion focused on the survey bids, instructing the board to review the proposals in their notebooks and make a selection if they felt comfortable with any particular bid. Jim Bardwell raised a concern about the bid from 360 Surveying, pointing out that tax had been applied, whereas the corporation was tax-exempt. Mrs. Palmer reassured the board that the corporation's tax exemption would indeed be applied. Danny Darden sought clarification on whether all the bids were for the same property, to which Mrs. Palmer confirmed. John Paul Tallent then asked Mrs. Palmer for her recommendation, and she advised opting for the least expensive option since it was a straightforward survey. Mrs. Palmer also noted on the record that she had reached out to multiple survey companies, including those in Gladewater, and the bids presented were the only ones received. Mayor Scott Owens sought clarification on Johnson and Pace's bid, noting its significantly lower amount compared to the others, and raised a concern about a discrepancy in their scope of work in relation to the project address. After thorough discussion, the board reached a consensus that the discrepancy was a typographical error.

John Paul Tallent made a motion to hire Johnson and Pace for \$1,995 to perform a survey. Danny Darden seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION to sign Depositor's Allocated Letter of Credit Amount with Texas Bank and Trust:

Michelle Palmer informed the board that the bank had sent a letter in response to GEDCO's recent reduction in the funds stored in their accounts. The bank, aiming to reduce insurance premiums, requested GEDCO to sign a letter authorizing a corresponding reduction in the insured amount for the corporation. Luke Kimbrough sought clarification on the specific lowered amount, and since the letter did not provide this detail, Mrs. Palmer speculated it would likely be around \$200,000, considering the account's maintenance below \$150,000. Jim Bardwell raised concerns about potential limitations the letter might impose on the corporation's use of funds. In response, Mr. Kimbrough reassured him, explaining that the insured amount could be adjusted, either raised or lowered, at any time, providing GEDCO with the flexibility needed for financial management. Continuing the discussion, Mr. Bardwell inquired about the last time the corporation had accepted bids for banking services. Although no one could confirm the exact timeframe, it was established that the last bid acceptance occurred over two years ago.

Jim Bardwell made a motion to approve signing the Depositor's Allocated Letter of Credit Amount with Texas Bank and Trust. Danny Darden seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

8. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION of GEDCO purchasing Advertorials from The Gladewater Mirror:

Luke Kimbrough and John Paul Tallent voiced their frustration at the return of the item to the agenda. Mr. Kimbrough conveyed his readiness to take action, stating that he was prepared to make a motion regarding the matter.

Luke Kimbrough made a motion to reaffirm the board's previous approval of promotional expenditures including advertorials in the Gladewater Mirror, noting that this approval was originally given through approval of the 2023-2024 budget for GEDCO. This action does not set a precedent for other budgeted promotional expenditures which are at the discretion of the executive director so long as they do not exceed the total amount approved in the budget. Individual approval of promotional expenditures is not required as they were jointly approved in the budget. Danny Darden seconded. Motion passed 3-1 with Jim Bardwell having abstained and signed a conflict-of-interest affidavit. (See attachment)

9. ADJOURN:

Danny Darden made a motion to adjourn. John Paul Tallent seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

The meeting ended at 4:45 PM.

Michelle Palmer, Executive Director

ATTEST:

Danny Darden, GEDCO Secretary/Treasurer