

**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING**

**February 21, 2022**

**MONTGOMERY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Rebecca Huss called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present:       Rebecca Huss – President  
                  Jeff Angelo – Vice-President  
                  Ryan Londeen – Secretary  
                  Byron Sanford – Board Member  
                  Jeff Angelo – Board Member  
                  Dan Walker – Board Member  
                  Carol Langley – Treasurer

Absent:         Wade Nelson – Board Member

Also Present:  Richard Tramm – City Administrator  
                  Amy Brown – Events Coordinator

**OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- 1. Consideration and possible action regarding the Minutes for Regular and Special Meeting of January 17, 2022.**

Motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Carol Langley. All in favor. (6-0)

## **APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **2. Consideration and possible action regarding the Financial Report for January 2022**

Presented by Carol Langley.

Sanford asked if the new system is more “real time”? Tramm affirmed this and believed it to be a beneficial change.

Sanford asked about the February receipt being transferred on February 18<sup>th</sup>. Tramm responded that what was done in February is lagging and it was business done in March. February is the single largest payment month.

Huss mentioned a few years ago HEB accidentally paid the city a large amount, 10% of the Cities entire budget. Rather than leave it in the general fund unsegregated, it was put in a separate account to be kept away from sales tax income. There was then a long series of discussion with the comptroller and HEB that it had to have been a wrong allocation of sales tax. 6-8 months later it was finally reversed. Langely and Huss were involved in a series of conversation about take backs, if the comptroller makes a mistake and they pay us something that was sent accidentally, they don't feel any sorrow when they take that money back. City had to pay it back in installments. Putting suspicious funds in separate accounts through this system will be very beneficial.

Carol asked if the report has already been sent. Tramm said it was received Thursday evening.

Richard Tramm expounded that eventually the comptroller did a “courtesy call”, and they said the money was going to be taken from the city the following month which was a big blow. This resulted in two regular months of collections.

Motion to approve the Financial Report through January 2022 by Byron Sanford and seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (6-0)

## **CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **3. Discussion and consideration of an economic development grant application from Reflective Life Ministries.**

Presented by Terry Weaver with Reflective Life Ministries

Weaver believed that the attendance for the event anticipated is meager and he hopes to grow the number. They are planning to rent an LED wall for the showing, they are also going to provide site tours around the city. The show will then launch globally to over 2 billion people. Their current budget for the project is \$10,065. There are 5,240 youths' grades 7-12 who

attempt suicide daily, that's why the project is so important to the production company. Last week in Montgomery County alone Terry received 3 phone calls about completed suicides.

Jeff Angelo asked if episode 2 has been previewed yet. Weaver responded that it has been previewed twice.

Angelo asked if the other 2 episodes, 3 and 4, were close to being finished. Weaver said the launch date is the 31<sup>st</sup> for episode 4.

Angelo asked if these episodes are coming out on any mainstream platforms. Weaver responded that the information hasn't been released yet, but they will be released through YouTube in addition to other platforms. KSBJ wants it on multiple platforms.

Londeen asked Richard Tramm about the clause in the grant application that states, "typical grants are awarded at 1/3 the total project cost or up to \$5,000" and if that applies here. Tramm said it's just a guideline to help applicants think carefully about how much to ask for. Londeen asked if the clause was added by previous MEDC board. Tramm was not sure of the background.

Motion to fund grant for the Reflective Life Ministries event coming up in April was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Byron Sanford. All in favor. (6-0)

Byron Sanford brought the materials to youth directors of Fellowship of Montgomery, First Baptist of Montgomery, and Lakeside Bible Churches. They have this in their hands currently. One out of three of those churches knew about the videos specifically. There are a few more churches in the area to spread the information to including Restoration Church which has a large youth program. He also mentioned that Montgomery County suicides have been flatlined.

Jeff Angelo mentioned that Judge Wayne Mack would be a wonderful presence at the event.

Weaver asked the group to please share the information with everyone.

**4. Discussion and consideration of an economic development grant application from Troy Tep LLC.**

Presented by Richard Tramm.

Langley brought up that this is the second time that this grant is being applied for because he didn't have a signed permit and was asking for significantly more. She is comfortable with the \$5000.

Londeen mentioned that the MEDC had talked about creating a budget line item for signs in the city.

Langley said that this is only the second grant application for a sign has come up since she's been on the MEDC.

Huss said that she wouldn't mind creating a budget for this because of the visual impact to keep the historic Montgomery feel. If it's more expensive to do that it would make sense for the MEDC to cover that cost. More discussion on creating room in the budget for signs would be good.

Sanford mentioned that last month someone was requesting \$42,000 for landscaping. Opening a precedent without having a pool of money designated for that could open the precedent for others to come in and request money for the same type of thing.

Tramm said that there is no budget for signs other than the economic development grant fund which is broad. He suggested making subcategories under the event.

Londeen said that he agreed with Huss in that if the MEDC is going to provide money it should be for going beyond what's needed. The cemetery wanted to put in a new fence. A standard chain link fence could have been put in for cheaper but the MEDC helped them put in a nicer fence and it heightened the aesthetics of the city. He has no interest in approving this for a standard sign.

Huss thought that that would give the MEDC a lot more ammunition. She asked Tramm if he could talk to McCorquodale about making the signs more cohesive. Signage is important to businesses; they have to be big and visible but if the businesses want to make them more cohesive then the MEDC should try to encourage that.

Tramm said that maybe the MEDC can pull from other places so that new businesses being built moving forward would have to adhere to something, but it would take a few months to get information like that together.

Motion to deny the grant application from Troy Tep, LLC was made by Ryan Londeen and seconded by Jeff Angelo. Langley voted no. Motion passes (5-1).

**5. Authorize signing and execution of a banking resolution by the approved MEDC banking account signers.**

Presented by Richard Tramm

Motion to authorize signing and execution of a banking resolution by the approved MEDC banking account signers was made by Ryan Londeen and seconded by Dan Walker. All in favor. (6-0)

**6. Consideration and possible action to approve the Special Projects Manager Position.**

Presented by Richard Tramm

Angelo asked if there was anything to approve. Huss answered that the MEDC must approve changes made by City Council.

Motion to accept the job description was made by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Carol Langley. All in favor. (6-0)

**7. Consideration and possible action to authorize photo shoot expenses with Sterling Regard Photography.**

Presented by Richard Tramm

Londeen asked if this is for the photos on the website. Huss confirmed that to be the case.

Motion to authorize photo shoot expenses was made by Carol Langley and seconded by Ryan Londeen. All in favor. (6-0)

**8. Consideration and possible action regarding the extension, terms, and duties of the contracted Events Coordinator position through the hiring of the Special Projects Manager position.**

Presented by Richard Tramm

Huss stated that it's clear what we want from the position and the pay. The pay should adjust to the role that the person is fulfilling.

Londeen asked if the city is still vetting applicants. Tramm said he's just receiving applications currently then he'll start with the paperwork at the end of March.

Angelo asked if the MEDC is just needing to extend the special projects manager salary so that the MEDC can get to the next step. Tramm said yes.

Huss asked if Amy Brown is going from Events Coordinator and stepping into the Special Projects Manager position. Should she be getting paid for that role until that position is filled.

Sanford said that the MEDC needs to get in front of the grant funding. The MEDC needs someone to help with that and not just doing event coordinating. The MEDC should be paying for the Special Projects Manager position on contract.

Londeen said the MEDC would have to tie back into the previous motion by increasing the pay to fit the job description.

Walker asked if the city will have to hire a new Events Coordinator if they hire someone for the Special Projects Manager. Huss said that the Special Projects Manager will be doing that.

Angelo pointed out that as of right now the city has an Events Coordinator and a Social Media person, but the city wants to combine those things along with additional duties for that same salary.

Huss mentioned that the MEDC originally had the Social Media duties as a separate job.

Angelo believed the MEDC should keep it that way. Adding social media is a big job and may be too much on top of all the other duties.

Discussion between Sanford and Huss on how many hours someone can put in without burnout or without getting paid as much as they could in a normal market.

Angelo thought that the social media is too much to add to the job description. The city could hire third party social media workers. Huss responded that there are always downsides to doing that. The job is not thoroughly done.

Langley suggested that everything stays as it is right now with Amy Brown getting a check and Rebecca Huss getting a check. When the new person is hired (if they're still needed) then it's extended again. The new person is going to do all these new jobs. Angelo agreed.

Motion to extend the terms and duties of the contracted Events Coordinator position was made by Carol Langley and seconded by Jeff Angelo. All in favor. (6-0)

Huss stated that it's important to remember that the cities sales tax is not just generated from people inside the city limits.

#### **9. Discussion on planning timeline for projects in the Downtown Master Plan.**

Presented by Richard Tramm

Huss asked if the city council accepted the \$200,000 offered from the MEDC. Tramm said yes, they're happy to have that coming toward them.

Sanford asked about the 3–5-year plan on Clepper St and if the \$400,000 price tag included sidewalks or not. Tramm answered that this is just for the road work. It does not include sidewalk plans.

Londeen asked if the MEDC could pick a few short-term projects that are attainable now and then some midterm ones that the MEDC can come back to. Tramm said that if the MEDC said they wanted to drive these projects now he would ask how the MEDC plans to fund it because you'd be looking at \$1.6 million.

Angelo asked what the low hanging fruit projects were besides Clepper. Is there something that's going to make a big impact? Tramm stated that there are a few things that could potentially be pushed back, but it will be hard to make those decisions.

Sanford emphasizes the need for parking.

Tramm stated that starting next month some of the sanitary sewer lines will be revised.

Londeen stated that the Master Drainage Plan is a function of the city to do. How does the MEDC negotiate that with the City? Tramm said that it goes back to how quickly the MEDC wants to see this stuff done. Is the MEDC willing to pay for the expediency? The city council has accepted this plan.

Londeen asked if the city is funding the Utility Master Plan. Tramm answered essentially no. This is based off the cities funding, but the city's budget was set before this document was approved and forwarded to the council. The funding has not yet been approved.

Londeen and Langley agree that the city should be responsible for those types of plans. That's the function of a city. The MEDC wants to improve the city scape. That's not the city's job, but the plans are.

Huss stated that the MEDC has \$175,000 budgeted towards downtown improvements.

Londeen stated that maybe the MEDC needs to make it clear to the city that it wants to do one of these projects, like McCown St.

Huss mentioned that the city should be using their utility fund for the Utility Plan. City Council would potentially need to use funds for the Master Drainage Plan. The city needs to hire a design firm to get into the nuts and bolts of what it will look like and get hard costs. Huss asked Londeen if that seemed like a logical next step. He agreed that that could be the down payment to show the MEDC is serious about it getting done.

Huss asked Tramm if the city is planning to do a tax bond any time soon. Maybe the MEDC could piggyback on that. Borrowing once is cheaper than borrowing twice. Tramm said that there have been some discussions about it.

Angelo asked when the raised medians will be coming into Montgomery. Londeen answered that they stop at 2854 and won't be coming down this way any time soon. Discussion of potential medians moving into the city and the dangers of driving and pulling out of various areas in the city.

Angelo asked if there was anything the city or constituents could do to light a fire under TxDOT and get them moving on certain things. Tramm answered that there's nothing anyone can do to get TxDOT moving.

No motion needed

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORTS**

### **10. City Administrators Development Report February 2022**

Presented by Richard Tramm

### **11. Events Report**

Presented by Amy Brown

Angelo thought it would be a great idea to get to know the Summit Business Park developer and help spread the word about his development. How can the MEDC support him? Brown answered that the MEDC could help go around to conference and help find businesses.

Huss mentioned that someone from Chamber of Commerce was paid to do that as well. Angelo suggested using the Chamber of Commerce to encourage activity.

Huss expounded that someone was hired and funded partly by the MEDC and partly by the Chamber of Commerce, but she mainly did Chamber of Commerce work. So, the MEDC went in a different direction.

Tramm reminded Angelo that the MEDC and the city's focus is 5 square miles of Montgomery, but the Chamber of Commerce focus is many times larger than Montgomery. Almost one quarter of the county and there's a lot of overlap but not enough.

Angelo suggested a survey for local businesses on the website, instead of going through the city. Tramm said he would be happy to do that when they have help to do that.

No motion needed.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**



**12. Adjourn into Closed Executive Session as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551 of the Government Code, in accordance with the authority contained in the following: Section 551.072 (deliberation regarding real property).**

Item tabled.

**13. Consideration and possible action on real property matters discussed in Executive Session.**

Item tabled.

**BOARD INQUIRY**

Sanford mentioned that Del Roberts is going to do an update for TML. Langley and Sanford went to the TML meeting and there are some ongoing legislative wars.

Huss asked Tramm about the potential of hiring a consultant to nail down people that were skating over things.

Tramm answered that there should be a report back soon.

Sanford and Angelo discussed how great the city is to try to bring more people in.

**ACTION ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

<i>ACTION ITEM</i>	<i>ASSIGNEE</i>	<i>DUE DATE</i>

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Jeff Angelo and seconded by Rebecca Huss to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. All in favor. (6-0)

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Richard Tramm, City Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_

Rebecca Huss, MEDC President