



# (Informal) Meeting Minutes: 06/21/2023

Skilled Trades Building - UA Cossatot De Queen Campus

## Attendance

X Mike Branson, President

✓ Greg Revels, Vice President

✓ Jay Bunyard, Secretary/Treasurer

X Jimmy Bristow

X Dr. Steve Cole

X Ned Hendrix

X Angie Walker

✓ Tiffany Maurer, Ex Officio

Others in Attendance: Diana Ramirez, Megan Williams, Suzanne Babb, Sandra Dunn, Jeff Brown, Dana Poindexter, Bud Gentry

## Minutes

The board did not have a quorum present and did not approve previous meeting minutes.

Tiffany updated the group on the financial reports, with the current bank balance standing at \$122,707.83. A few memberships are still pending payment. Tiffany has updated the FRIENDS Foundation Summary and Success form to include recent accomplishments from the past year to be used to gain new multi-year financial commitments from members/donors and it was sent out last month along with the minutes. She has been working with the CREATE BRIDGES regional grant to create Business Development Labs (marketing labs) to be established in Sevier and Little River Counties. The space will be equipped with computers, cameras, backdrops, and editing software that will be available free to the public for entrepreneurs to use and develop marketing skills for themselves and their staff. The grant group is also working to fund a regional advertising page within the Arkansas.com (Arkansas Tourism) website.

Tiffany shared that she has been working this month on quarterly federal financial reporting for the SBA Community Navigator grant, along with several training events hosted this month for the grant. Training this month included:

- The Importance of Branding on June 6
- Filing Articles of Incorporation on June 13
- Website 201 training this Thursday
- another Importance of Branding class next Monday
- Establishing Your Business with the IRS next Tuesday

She has been working with a Marshallese translation company to arrange for the City of De Queen's Coding and Zoning book to be translated into Marshallese, along with having a Marshallese interpreter come to De Queen soon to translate for a one-hour Q&A session with

the City and our Marshallese community. The partnership with De Queen and Horatio high school art programs through the CREATE BRIDGES grant has concluded, with 6 paintings rendered and installed in the Small Business Office Space on the UA Cossatot De Queen campus. An open house event is scheduled for July 18 to showcase the space. A conference table has been added recently to provide a group-work function to the space also.

Upcoming CNPP events this summer are as follows:

- Greg Revels' Starting a Business Series
  - June 27 – 5pm – Establishing Your Business with the IRS
  - July 6 – Ask an Accountant Q&A
  - July 11 – 5pm – Business Law Basics
  - July 25 – Starting a Nonprofit
  - August 8 – Bookkeeping Basics
- Jennifer Collier's scheduled marketing training
  - June 26 – Importance of Branding
  - July 5 – Marketing for the Total Eclipse 2024 (and other special events)
- Keisha McKinney's website training
  - May 22
- ServSafe Training
  - English – July 12 (class) July 13 (test)
  - Spanish – July 10 (class) July 11 (test)
- Women in Leadership Panel Discussion
  - Date TBD
- Hospitality Training from the AR Hospitality Assn.
  - August 22 – Hospitality training (A.M.)
  - August 22 – Tourism Development as an Economic Driver (P.M.)

The board not having a quorum present, will vote via email to approve the allocation of \$30,000-\$35,000 to pay for half of the Sevier County Chamber of Commerce Director's salary for Eclipse 2024 planning.

CEEDS committee updates were then provided:

**Entertainment/Recreation (chairperson: Ned Hendrix)** – chairperson absent, the group is discussing the potential for purchasing the De Queen Country Club and creating a stockholder membership. Discussions are in progress to determine pricing, number of stock, purchase pricing, line of credit, and more.

**Housing (chairperson: Angie Walker)** – chairperson absent, the group is working to secure a speaker from the USDA to come to De Queen and present information about their housing



## Meeting Minutes (Continued)

development funding/grant process. The Norris Group has confirmed their intention to develop housing in Sevier County and recently traveled to the area for site selection and due diligence on available property. They are eager to develop and have support from the Choctaw Nation.

**Job Diversity/Quality (chairperson: Jay Bunyard)** – chairperson still forming committee

**Broadband (chairpersons: Greg Revels & Jimmy Bristow)** – Dana Poindexter shared with the group that the AEDC is waiting for new federal broadband coverage maps to be released so they can assess and address inconsistencies and inaccuracies with the map regarding availability and speed of broadband service throughout the state. After the map is verified, the second round of broadband grant funding through the state will be allocated. This process is expected to begin later this year and last about 2 years. Sevier County has formed its county committee for broadband and next steps will be assigned by the AEDC and/or the state broadband office.

**Solar Committee (chairperson: Dr. Steve Cole)** – all partners have signed on with Scenic Hill Solar and final paperwork is being signed today. Next steps will be the purchase or lease of property and buildout for the solar farm.

Mayor Jeff Brown updated the group that the City of De Queen is moving its city council meeting next month from July 4 to July 11 in observance of Independence Day. The rezoning of Samaritan Fields soccer fields and the adjoining church property to commercial property zones will be on the agenda.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned.