



Russell County Economic Development and Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board Meeting



Thursday, March 19th, 2026 @ 7:30am @ RCED&CVB Office

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Dustin Madden, Duke Strobel, Malinda Walker, Karla Berry, Lacie Austin, Jamie Malone, Jeannine Byers-Long, Alex Lofland (online), Aaron Talbott (online), Jessica Somers, Lisa Sandberg, Ryleigh Wagner, and Mike Parsons.

Call Meeting to Order:

Vice Chair Dustin Madden called the meeting to order at 7:32 a.m.

Review and Approval of Agenda:

Jamie made a motion to approve the minutes, Karla seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

Karla made a motion to approve the minutes, Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Financial Review:

Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 8% of the budget for the year, YTD \$7,461.13, with a remaining balance of \$84,638.87. ED fund #155 has spent 10% of the budget for the year, YTD \$26,833.41, with a remaining balance of \$223,166.59. Mike reported that USDA grant checks totaling \$47,500.00 have been issued, and the office will be reimbursed.

Public Comment:

None.

Board Reports or Announcements:

Jessica Somers, Interim Director, shared that Trivia Night is this Saturday at Chet's place, and What's Up in Russell is tonight at the new D. Palma & Co. location. Dustin shared that on April 18th the City of Russell will be holding the annual clean-up event; however, this year the location has changed to 11th and Kansas and will run from 9:30 a.m.-11 a.m.

Staff Reports or Announcement:

- **Travel Guide Ad:** A one-eighth page ad has been reserved in the 2027 Kansas Travel Guide for \$1,828, and it will contain a QR code for the "one-stop shop" project. Ryleigh will design this ad, and input from the board is encouraged by August.

- **Holiday Collective Planning:** Ryleigh had discussions about a possible partnership with K-State Research and Extension that will help to expand this year's event.
- **USDA Grant Overview:** An overview was provided for the \$47,500 USDA grant to avoid duplicating efforts between organizations and create a "one-stop-shop" digital platform and strengthen our redevelopment services.
- **Grant Writing Workshop:** Ryleigh met with K-State Research and Extension to explore hosting a workshop in Russell County. It was noted that this may be one of the last in-person workshops with Nancy Daniels.
- **Office Rebrand:** The office is exploring a rebrand to create a fresh, updated look that better reflects the mission and future direction of Russell County Economic Development & CVB.
- **SLP Partnership:** Virtual and in-person meetings are being scheduled throughout the year. Analytics are being gathered and will be distributed at the end of the year. Opportunities for board participation in company meetings are being explored.

Unfinished Business:

- **Billboard Grant:** Ryleigh presented scoring sheets for the 14 billboard applications received, requesting that they be returned to her by Monday.

New Business:

- **CVB Funding Request - Waudbys-** They are requesting \$1,000.00. After board discussion, Aaron made a motion to deny the funding request for \$1,000.00; Dustin seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- **CVB Funding Request - Lovegrass-** They are requesting \$3,000.00. After board discussion, Dustin made a motion to approve the funding request for \$3,000.00; Jeannine seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- **CVB Funding Request - LaSada-** They are requesting \$4,000.00. After board discussion, Dustin made a motion to approve the funding request for \$4,000.00; Jamie seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- **RMS Historic District Request-** Discussion was had about the potential funding request for a Downtown Russell Historic District survey, with additional support and funding avenues being explored.

Executive Session (Time – Start and Finish):

Dustin made a motion to recess into executive session to include ED & CVB staff to discuss information relating to potential new businesses pursuant to the discussion of data relating to financial affairs or trade secrets of corporations, partnerships, trusts, and individual proprietorships exception, K.S.A. 75-4319(b)(4). The open meeting will resume in the board chambers at 8:27 a.m. Duke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment:

At 8:27 a.m., Dustin made the motion to adjourn, Duke seconded; motion carried.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: April 16th @ 7:30 am @ Eco Devo & CVB Office