



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



Thursday, June 18th, 2026 @ 7:30am @ RCED&CVB Office

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

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

Call Meeting to Order:

Chair Jon Birky called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

Review and Approval of Agenda:

Mike noted that he would like to take the Market Square topic off the agenda. Dustin made a motion to approve the minutes, Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

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

Financial Review:

Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 28% of the budget for the year, YTD \$25,618.25, with a remaining balance of \$66,481.75. ED fund #155 has spent 48% of the budget for the year, YTD \$118,149.59, with a remaining balance of \$131,850.41. Mike stated the remaining grant reimbursement is expected once all required documentation has been submitted and processed.

Public Comment:

Lisa Moubry stated that the Russell Area Chamber of Commerce is getting ready for the Freedom Fest celebrations on July 3rd and 4th. Lisa noted that there is still time to support the event by buying entries for the duck race, T-shirts for Freedom Fest, and tickets for the raffle draw. Lisa also thanked the board for their sponsorship of the event. She gave a reminder about the house-decorating competition and the parade. Jessica Somers shared that an Off the Clock event will take place tonight at Élan & Co., featuring Lisa at 5:30 p.m.

Board Reports or Announcements:

Kayla shared that fireworks may be discharged within Russell city limits on July 3rd and 4th this year. She also announced that a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Russell Play Park will be held next Friday and reminded the board that the City of Russell offices will be closed in observance of Juneteenth. Lastly, Kayla shared that a data center workshop is being held at the docking center in Topeka and will share more details later. Malinda reported that Wyatt has obtained the plexiglass needed for the log cabin project, and they are inquiring about an informational kiosk.

Staff Reports or Announcements:

- **Postcards:** The office was approached about purchasing county-themed postcards that could be distributed throughout the county. Following board discussion, it was decided that the office will purchase postcards and make them available to local businesses for resale.

- **SLP Recruitment Week Overview:** Mike and Ryleigh participated in several virtual meetings last week and will attend in-person sessions in Dallas, Texas, in August.
- **Kansas Works Bus Update:** Ryleigh shared an update that the bus is back in operation and will be set up at the Russell County Free Fair in July, the Lucas Adam's Apple Festival in August, and Klema Apple Market in September.
- **Foodpreneur Boot Camp:** The office will again sponsor \$50 of the registration fee. Registration is open to everyone; however, only Russell County residents are eligible for the sponsorship through July 1st.
- **NWKSTC Meeting / Site Visit:** Ryleigh will host a NWKSTC meeting on July 28th at Alpha 7, with an opportunity for board members to tour the facility.
- **Business Awards:** The office submitted nominations for the Kansas Department of Commerce To The Stars Business Awards to recognize outstanding local businesses and individuals.
- **Childcare Coalition Update:** Ryleigh shared that the Coalition is expecting to receive an application for the 10 Jay Street property. She also provided an update on the professional development day being held for providers on June 20.
- **Rural Champion Program:** Mike and Ryleigh met with Kac'Rae McAlonan to discuss collaboration opportunities and ensure efforts are coordinated to avoid duplication.

Unfinished Business:

- **Pheasant Release Program-** Discussion was had about the potential of purchasing and releasing pheasants for opening weekend for the youth, also a way of encouraging tourism. The pheasants will be banded with our information, so they can win a prize.
- **Fire Sprinkler Grant Program-** Mike presented a second draft of the program to the board. After discussion, Dustin made a motion for Mike to present to the commission and request funds; Duke seconded, motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

- **CVB FR – RC Free Fair \$5,000** - They are requesting \$5,000.00. After board discussion, Duke made a motion to approve the funding request for \$5,000.00; Jon seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- **CVB FR – Adams Apple Festival \$3,000** - They are requesting \$3,000.00. After board discussion, Dustin made a motion to approve the funding request for \$3,000.00; Duke seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- **July Meeting** - Due to scheduling conflicts related to travel, the Board agreed to cancel the July meeting and reconvene on August 20th.

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 9:00 a.m. Duke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment:

At 9:00 a.m., Dustin made the motion to adjourn, Duke seconded; motion carried.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: August 20th @ 7:30 am @ Eco Devo & CVB Office