



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



Thursday, September 17th, 2026 @ 7:30am @ RCED&CVB Office

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Dustin Madden, Duke Strobel, Malinda Walker, Karla Berry, Jamie Malone, Aaron Talbott (online), Lacie Austin, Alex Lofland, Jeannine Byers-Long, Kac'Rae McAlonan, 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:

Duke made a motion to approve the agenda, Jeannine seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approval of Minutes:

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

Financial Review:

Mike gave a general overview; CVB fund #150 has spent 47% of the budget for the year, YTD \$42,980.51, with a remaining balance of \$49,119.49. ED fund #155 has spent 56% of the budget for the year, YTD \$138,475.54, with a remaining balance of \$111,524.46.

Public Comment:

Kac'Rae shared that her housing assessment for Rural Champion is almost complete. She also said that Rural Champion is going to be applying for the Tourism Attraction Grant. Kac'Rae moved on to Russell County Leadership updates that included trying to bring the "13 Ways to Kill Your Community" author, Doug Griffiths to Russell. She is going to be seeking partnerships and sponsorships throughout the community.

Board Reports or Announcements:

Dustin shared that the Floodplain forum is today from 2-6 at the 4H building, encouraged attendance.

Staff Reports or Announcements:

- **Childcare Updates:** Ryleigh shared details about the opening of Small Town Sprouts Daycare at 10 Jay Street, with a ribbon cutting and open house scheduled for Friday, Oct. 2 at 11:00 AM. She also noted a safety concern near a daycare and is working with community partners to address it.
 - **Holiday Collective:** Ryleigh shared that plans for the Tri-County Shopping Tour on November 14 are moving along well, and she is finalizing quotes. RSVPs will open soon, and this year's tour has expanded to two larger buses, accommodating up to 112 shoppers.
- Promotion Update – New Mural Brochure:** Ryleigh shared that updated mural brochures have been created and are ready for distribution throughout the county.

- **Business Award Nomination Update:** Ryleigh shared that Ally Ochampaugh is a finalist for the Under 30 Entrepreneur Award. A local ceremony is also being planned to recognize and congratulate all businesses nominated by the office.
- **Impact Reports:** Ryleigh presented two additional event impact reports for Wicked Fest and the 2026 State Shoot.
- **Governor's Holiday Ornament Collection:** Ryleigh shared that each county may submit up to three ornament designs and welcomed ideas. Approved ornaments will be displayed for years to come. She also noted that there is a tight turnaround time for submissions.

Unfinished Business:

- **Fire Sprinkler Grant Program:** Mike stated that our office will be submitting an application to the RCACF to secure funds for this program.
- **NRP:** Mike shared that our office is in the process of reworking the program so that it qualifies for the housing incentives offered through the NWK Innovation Center.

New Business:

- **Phase 2 Housing Development** – Discussion was had on whether to pursue phase 2. This discussion has been tabled for a later time.
- **CVB FR – Halloween Parade \$300.00** - They are requesting \$300.00. After board discussion, Duke made a motion to approve the funding request for \$300.00; Jamie seconded; motion carried unanimously.
- **Scrap Happy Craft Retreat** – Ryleigh presented a long-standing event to the board and encouraged support. After board discussion, Duke made a motion to fund their next two retreats for \$500.00; Jeannine seconded; motion carried unanimously.

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 9:15 a.m. Duke seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. The executive session was extended an additional 5 minutes. At 9:20 a.m., the meeting resumed with no action taken.

Adjournment:

At 9:20 a.m., Duke made the motion to adjourn, Jeannine seconded; motion carried.

Next Advisory Board Meeting: October 15th @ 7:30 am @ Eco Devo & CVB Office