

MONROE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 13, 2023

- I. Chairman Oberleiter called the Regular Meeting of the Monroe County Economic Development Corporation held at the First Merchants Bank Regional Headquarters at 10 Washington Street, Monroe, Michigan 48161 on Tuesday, June 13, 2023 to order at 8:05 a.m.

- II. Roll call by Clerk as follows:

PRESENT: Tom Allen (left at 9:23 a.m.), Mike Baker, Barry Buschmann, Kim Comerzan, Tim Janssen, Scot Laskey (arrived at 8:23 a.m.), Stacey McCoy, Tracy Oberleiter and Randy Richardville (arrived at 8:10 a.m.; left at 9:02 a.m.) and David Swartout

ABSENT: Dan Minton (excused)

A quorum being present, the Committee proceeded to conduct business.

Jamie Dean (Monroe County Health Department), Matt Vanisacker (City of Monroe), Tim Lake (Business Alliance) and Nicki Eyler (MCOP) were also in attendance.

Kim Comerzan introduced Jamie Dean, formerly the Finance, Administration and Education Director, Monroe County Health Department, is now the Interim Health Officer and will transition into the Monroe County Health Officer/Director position effective in August 2023 with the retirement of Kim Comerzan.

David Swartout introduced Nicki Eyler, Marketing & Outreach Specialist from MCOP who brought multiple flyers for upcoming events.

- III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Kim Comerzan, supported by Stacey McCoy to approve the June 13, 2023 agenda as presented.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

- IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (03/14/2023 Regular Meeting)

Motion by David Swartout, supported by Tom Allen to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2023 Regular Meeting, as presented, and waive the reading thereof.

Voice vote taken. Motion carried.

V. STAFF & SPECIAL REPORTS (Tim Lake and Matt Vanisacker presenting as guests)

1. Monroe County Health Department update-Kim Comerzan
 - Working on transition with Jamie Dean
 - Jamie's replacement is John Laub who was with City of Rockwood government
 - Programs continuing and back up to pre-Covid levels
 - Number of cases of Covid are down; Covid vaccinations are still being offered but not many are getting them
2. Michigan Works update-Stacy McCoy
 - Unemployment numbers are down
 - January & February 5.1%; March 4.9%; April 3.3%
 - Providing training opportunities
 - Job fair-50 people
 - Just closed Going Pro applications-2nd Round, waiting for results
3. Utilities update-Michigan Gas Utilities-Mike Baker
 - Job front—Not a lot of turnover at Michigan Gas; Well qualified people that get hired
 - Work is steady; Contractors that they use don't have as many challenges getting workers
 - Some parts are still hard to get
 - Big challenge with people not calling MISS DIG and causing damage to Michigan Gas equipment; Asked members to spread the word about calling MISS DIG
4. Prepare for Investment Pillar Team update-Barry Buschmann
 - Monroe Link 2.0
 - Several from this group are a part of it
 - Goal is to assist in analyzing areas for development; Residential is also being looked at
 - Helped the City of Monroe apply for a grant for new underpass (CSX railroad on Elm St.)
 - Working on a brand new map—looking at corridors
5. Farming/Agricultural update-Tim Janssen
 - Plenty of labor; 250-300 H2A workers are working in the County. They are from Mexico and South Africa
 - Wheat prices are very low; Cattle prices are high. Lowest amount of cattle since the 1960's; Protein is being affected by the drought out west
 - Grocery prices are not coming down any time soon
 - Land prices are steady
 - Fertilizer prices are coming down a little
 - Family farms are being bought up by big investors
 - Gasoline shortage to gas stations are causing prices to rise
6. Monroe County Board of Commissioners update-Dave Swartout & Randy Richardville
 - Randy Richardville:
 - GFOA award was granted for excellence in financial management
 - Transitioning from Mike Bosanac to Aundrea Armstrong
 - Joint Venture between Humane Society and Animal Control
 - \$10,000,000 of ARPA money that the Board of Commissioners decided not to do anything with

- Opioid lawsuit will pay money to the County over the next 18 years
- David Swartout:
 - Opioid Task Force is developing a Strategic Plan
 - MCOP update—Nicki Eyler updated
 - Summer camp & Tot lots
 - Flag Football League
 - Free diaper & wipes program
 - Juneteenth celebration coming up
 - June 14th School's Out for Summer Ice Cream celebration at the Dairy Queen Grill & Chill (part of the proceeds to benefit kid's programming at the Opportunity Center)
 - End of the Summer Bash—August 25th, 6:00-7:00 p.m., Labor Park
- 7. Labor update-No report-Dan Minton absent
- 8. Automotive industry update-Tom Allen
 - Still not at full production
 - Chip shortage is getting better
 - Trying to stabilize the prices of new cars; Going electric or hybrid
 - Hydrogen fuel cell-GM & Toyota Joint Venture
 - Used prices are stabilizing and going down; There is a bigger market for used cars
 - His dealership bought the old Car Rite business; they recondition used cars only
 - A lot of large dealer groups are selling stores that are not doing well
 - Still having shortage issues with parts
 - Trying to bring down Electric Car prices
- 9. Consulting/General Business comments-Scot Laskey
 - He has talked with quite a few business owners and they are as busy as ever
- 10. Monroe County Link Plan 2.0 update-Tim Lake
 - There is a lack of skilled labor talent in the County
 - Manufacturing is the 2nd highest industry in Monroe County
 - Adult learners—How do we upskill?
- 11. Stakeholder & All Pillar Team meeting on 6-23-23 @MCCC-Tim Lake
 - Provides structure
 - In the fall will have another large All Hands Meeting
- 12. Launch 734 Pillar Team update-Tim Lake
 - Entrepreneurial Program; Biggest job creators are small businesses
- 13. ProMedica Matching Funds update-Tim Lake
 - ProMedica pulled out of the program for now
 - Biggest project is Zoom Broom
- 14. City of Monroe update-Matt Vanisacker
 - New job=Deputy Director of Economic & Community Development and Neighborhood Services Coordinator
 - David Robinson is now City Manager upon the retirement of Vince Pastue
 - Development of new areas of residential housing and elimination of blight
 - Bicycle & Pedestrian trails at the City level; Bike lanes on Macomb Street
 - Grant for kayak launch at Hellenberg Park

- Five Guys is coming to the La-Z-Boy Redevelopment along with a 6 unit commercial outfit and an 8 unit townhome complex
- More active role in acquiring Duffy Towing, Bowl-O-Drome and Clawson Dance
- Several other businesses are being sold in the downtown area to be redeveloped
- First Merchants Bank moving from old branch to HQ building
- Cairns Park redevelopment, then St. Mary's Park
- Concerts have started back up in St. Mary's and on Fridays concerts will be held in Altrusa Park
- Social District is coming soon
- Murals are going up across town

VI. COMMUNICATIONS- None

VII. INFORMATION – None

VIII. OLD BUSINESS –None

IX. NEW BUSINESS—None

X. CITIZENS TIME – None

XI. NEXT MEETING – September 12, 2023

XII. ADJOURNMENT –

Motion to adjourn by Kim Comerzan, supported by David Swartout. Voice vote taken. Motion carried. Adjournment by Chairman Oberleiter at 9:57 a.m. with no further business.