



COLES Together

The economic development organization for Coles County

Coles Together Operations Committee Meeting November 28, 2022

Members Present: Doug Abolt, Mike Stanfield, Mike Taylor, Rick Hall, Bob Shamdin, John Inyart,

Members Absent: Brock Ashley, Brandon Combs

Others Present: Angela Griffin

Call to Order: Called to order by Doug Abolt at 7:30 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: A motion to approve the October 2022 Board meeting minutes was made by Mike Stanfield and seconded by John Inyart. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Taylor gave the September Treasurer's report which is the fiscal year end. He stated annual income of \$82,000 was very close to budget and was \$7,000 above where the organization ended the year in fiscal 2021. Griffin added we were slightly under budget for the month of September in terms of receipts but that is the recurring issue of timing as we ended the year over budget. Also, expenses were higher than budgeted in September due to paying the real estate taxes in two installments over two months instead of paying them in full with the first payment as was budgeted. Also, professional fees in September were about \$7,000 over budget due to more work being performed by Gilbert Metzger and Madigan related to year-end and the grant reconciliations.

Approval of Treasurer's Report: A motion to approve the September 2022 financial statements was made by Rick Hall and seconded by Bob Shamdin. The motion passed.

President's Report:

Griffin said the newest project staff has begun to work on is helping Mike Owen with Owen Motor Sports apply for enterprise zone benefits to expand at his current location between Mattoon and Charleston just off Rt.16. Owen is planning to add between 8,000 and 10,000 SF to accommodate an expansion needed to become a Honda Powerhouse Store (which remains confidential). By becoming a Honda Powerhouse Store, this Owen Motor Sports location would focus only on Honda products. As a powerhouse store, Owen would be one of the first dealers in the state to

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get new models, expedited shipping for his customers, and other dealer perks. Currently Owen sells Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Polaris and the company also has a store in Effingham.

John Davis is still focused on building in the Coles Business Park, but he has not removed a site in Jasper County from consideration. Davis has met with Steve Pamperin, the city planner, and Alex Winkler, the city code official about ordinances and guidelines in the park. He has also had his architects and engineers at the site to evaluate building options.

Griffin has processed the enterprise zone application for Ed Carter for his project in Charleston and is now working with his two subcontractors to get their applications processed.

Dom Youakim was also back in the office to talk about building in the Coles Business Park. Youakim is interested in the lot east of the facility that used to belong to Don Howie and Quality Electric. And while the existing road would get him access to the lot, ideally he would like to see the road built out that is platted along the east side as that parcel and the lots behind it go north. Griffin has reached out to Steve Pamperin about any funding the city might have or ways they could apply for infrastructure funding to build the road.

The paperwork required by the state is completed for the RISE grant. We are now working to understand the process by which we go out for bid for the consultant needed to do the six-county industry and workforce study which is the first step in understanding what capabilities already exist, what skills already exist, and what products are being produced, so we know what we have and where we could easily pivot to serve the aviation industry.

The instructor of the manufacturing and construction pathway at LIFT reached out after manufacturing day and asked about the possibility of organizing another day so his students could have the experience the students had on manufacturing day. His students provided tours to the groups that came through LIFT on manufacturing day and were not able to participate but as they were talking to the other students about what they had seen so far that day, they relayed to their instructor they would like to tour. So, we are planning another day of tours on December 20.

The Anixter/WESCO project is ready to move forward. Griffin processed all the enterprise zone applications for the general and the subcontractors on the project.

The December webinar is this Thursday. We decided that rather than discuss the heavier topic we had planned in December, which was mental health awareness and how challenges to mental health affect employees in the workplace, we decided to focus on a lighter topic this month with a shop local, stay local theme for the holidays. We will tackle the important issue of the impact of mental health in the workplace after the first of the year. But this Thursday, at noon, tourism directors from the six counties will talk about activities and business events planned in their communities during December. To represent Coles County, Griffin invited Angelia Burgett, the

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tourism director in Mattoon and Lori Henderson, the new tourism director in Charleston to present. We had a walk-through last week and they both have a short slide presentation that they will give about holiday events in Coles County throughout December.

We are underway compiling information for the auditors. Griffin is preparing confirmation letters and some of you may receive those in the next couple weeks about your donations to Coles Together. We will have everything ready, and they will be on site December 13 and 14 to do the audit.

The employment data was released last Wednesday. Coles County's October unemployment was 4.1% ticking up a bit after 3.8% in September. We had job gains in government of 150, financial activities had 125, professional and business services had 125, leisure and hospitality had 100, construction added 50 and manufacturing added 25. Payrolls decreased in transportation and utilities by 150.

Also, Griffin continues to serve on the Leadership team with the Charleston School district on the implementation of its competency-based learning efforts. Charleston is developing career pathways for students, some of which are different from the Mattoon offerings, like fine arts and agriculture, but some of which support and complement the pathways at LIFT. The schedule is to be fully implemented in 2024.

Griffin is presenting an annual update of the work at Coles Together at the Charleston City Council retreat on December 15.

Finally, the Hilton Hotel and Conference Center is set to open today. There are 52 new employees on site and in fact, may be a factor in the increase in the employment number in leisure and hospitality. Ribbon cutting is next week.

Marketing Report

Considine provided an update on the committee work she continues to do and the new marketing materials she is developing, including having developed the flyer for Manufacturing Day.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Carlos Ortega, Secretary