

Campbell County Economic Development Commission

February 17, 2005

The regular meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission was held on Thursday, February 17, 2005 in the Campbell County Historic Courthouse Conference Room, Rustburg, Virginia.

Members Present:

Donald E. Atkins
G. Michael Damron
Herbert W. Guthrie
Kyle S. Rosser
O. Richard Metz, Chair
William Overacre
Scott Tweedy
Frank A. Wright
Lester Wooldridge

Those Absent:

William Anderson
William E. Calohan, III
Marvin Clements

Also Present:

J. Michael Davidson, Economic Development Director
Jamie Banton, Administrative Assistant

Chairman Richard Metz called the meeting to order at 12:04PM. The December 9, 2004 meeting minutes were approved without changes.

Matters from the Director

For informational purposes, the Commission was provided a Project Updates Report

// Mr. Davidson explained that the independent Economic Development Website would be live by July 2005 and maybe as early as April or May. Campbell County contracted with the McBratney ° Sisson design firm to help with the website. As soon as the site reaches a more complete stage, staff will present the site to the Commission.

// Next, Mr. Davidson began a discussion on the Campbell County incentive policy. He provided copies of a Martinsville - Henry County ad that advertised free industrial sites to new businesses. Also, a Southern Economic Development Council survey reported 97% of local governments provide some sort of incentives to new or expanding companies.

Mr. Davidson reported that the current Campbell County incentive policy was adopted in August 2002. Since it has been two and a half years since the last revision, Mr. Davidson requested a review of the policy's goals and objectives.

The goals of the current incentive policy are intended to (1) enhance quality of life, (2) recognize that Campbell County wants higher paying jobs - not just jobs, (3) recognize

responsibility to the tax payer with an appropriate return on investment, (4) nurture entrepreneurialism and (5) support expansion of existing businesses. After general discussion, the Commission agreed that the goals of the incentive policy have not changed.

Next, the Commission discussed the “tools” for achieving the policy’s goals. The tools include the Economic Stimulus grant, discount of county-owned property, waiver of permits, expedition of the permit process, Employment Credit grants, infrastructure assistant and employment training. Mr. Davidson stated that the current incentive package appears to meet the needs of large industries. He explained that to date, Campbell County incentives have never been an impediment to closing a deal if all other needs have been met. Mr. Davidson felt that while the current policy may meet the needs of large industries, it offers little for small and/or minority owned businesses.

The Economic Development Director receives calls weekly from entrepreneurs and small business owners inquiring about county assistance. Because of the high risk of failure, most localities have been reluctant to extend incentives to small businesses. The Economic Development Department’s current process to assist these individuals or companies is to refer them to the Lynchburg Small Business Development Center.

To address incentives or small or minority owned businesses, Mr. Davidson presented the Commission with a draft incentive policy that changes the current county incentive policy in two areas: reduces the capital investment threshold and reduces the required number of new jobs created. The draft proposal lowers the \$1 million capital investment to \$250,000, and it also lowers the number of new jobs created from 25 to 5.

Discussion from the Commission on the drafted small business incentive policy and what defines a small business follows. Several Commission members recommended using the federal guidelines for small business as the county definition. The Commission also discussed how the new policy will be communicated to the Campbell County business community.

Because of the discussions regarding the small business guidelines and definition, Mr. Davidson stated that he would investigate the federal guidelines and bring the issue back to the Commission at their April meeting. The proposed Small Business Incentive Policy will not be presented to the Board of Supervisors until reviewed by the Commission again in April.

Matters from the Commission

Mr. Overacre asked Mr. Damron for a status report on the proposed US Route 29 sewer extension. Mr. Damron explained that the proposed sewer extension is being driven by renovations to Yellow Branch Elementary School. The proposal includes 5.5 miles of new sewer lines and 2-4 new pumping stations. CCUSA has met with VDOT, and they anticipate completing the design phase by August 2005. If the extension is undertaken, construction should be complete by August 2006. The extension may also serve the new Seneca Commerce Park.

Following a general discussion of the before-mentioned matters and with no other items presented for consideration, the meeting adjourned at 12:59PM until Thursday, April 21, 2005 at 12:00PM.

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