

**Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)
November 9, 2017
Meeting Minutes**

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Meeting was held at North Georgia Technical College in Clarkesville (Habersham County) from 3:11 p.m. to 4:25 p.m. on **Thursday, November 9, 2017**.

Attendees: Margaret Ayers with the City of Lavonia; Charles Cawthon with the City of Lavonia; Bill Chafin with City of Hartwell; Ryan Thornton with the Rabun County Development Authority (proxy for Mr. Ray Coulombe); Mitch Griggs with the Union County Development Authority; Carol Jackson with North Georgia Technical College; Patrick Larson with GMRC; Robert Long with the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce; Tom O'Bryant with the City of Cleveland; Danette Smith with the Georgia Department of Labor; and Laurin Yoder with GMRC

- Call to Order and Welcome: The meeting was called to order at 3:11 p.m. and welcomed attendees.
- Announcements: Patrick Larson asked the Committee if there were any announcements to be made. The following announcements were made:
 - ✓ Patrick Larson made the following grant opportunity announcements:
 - **Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** through the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) grants cycle is now open. Pre-applications are due at the DNR offices on or before January 2nd. Any community that has a shovel ready project, please call the GMRC offices.
 - **Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG)** through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) should be available sometime between now and end of year. FEMA has been busy with existing disasters (Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria and California wildfires) that they have not scheduled their workshops yet.
 - **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)** project applications are now being accepted and will be due in April 2018. Please let the GMRC staff know about any projects you may be thinking about and if you need assistance in project development.
 - ✓ Patrick also thanked the Committee for the important role members played in the CEDS rewrite. The CEDS was approved by the GMRC Council at the September 28th meeting and was emailed to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) that same day. GMRC staff will let the Committee know if any feedback is received from EDA.
 - Bill Chafin asked if EDA typically sends any tweaks. Patrick stated that EDA had not sent any new directives but he will research and report back at the February meeting.
 - ✓ Tom O'Bryant was congratulated on his new appointment as City Manager at the City of Cleveland.
 - ✓ Robert Long announced:
 - That a new Mayor was elected in the City of Cumming after 46 years.
 - The Chamber had 3 winners of their 1st Manufacturer of Distinction and Leadership Awards
 - ✓ Carol Jackson stated they had over 125 attendees at the NGTC Manufacturing Summit.

- ✓ Danette Smith stated that the Department of Labor is enhancing the GeorgiaBest Program. This is a free program offered through the public schools that teaches employability skills to K-12 students. They are working to enhance the program to include an employer version that will observe soft skills in the students and issue them a Certificate.
 - ✓ Session update – State legislature may take up State Income Tax in the next session.
 - ✓ Citizens in South Forsyth County are pushing for a new city. There has been a lot of discussion, but we will have to wait and see what happens.
 - ✓ Water Wars – the Supreme Court has announced that it will hear the case.
- Confirmation of Quorum: Quorum requires a minimum of 11 members be present. Nine (9) members attended the meeting; therefore quorum could not be established.
 - Approval of Minutes from August 10, 2017 Meeting: Minutes were e-mailed to the committee members prior to the meeting. The Committee was asked for any changes or comments; none were given. The Minutes could not be brought for a vote due to lack of quorum of the membership.
 - Presentation: Carol Jackson, North Georgia Technical College – Small Business Initiatives: Economic Development has always been a part of the Technical Colleges of Georgia, but has primarily been focused on large industry. Examples include the industrial parks in Franklin, Stephens, and Hart Counties. So North Georgia Technical College started looking at what they could do for small businesses. Carol visited all the towns in their eight (8) county region, and developed a program that was put in place in July 2017. She found that the further she went into the mountains the more help small businesses needed; they lack workforce, ports, airports, highways, etc. Most people who want to start a business just have an idea. This program helps people develop their ideas into business and strategic plans, a budget, and marketing (including social media). They are taught how to use software like Microsoft Office and QuickBooks, as well as how to operate the equipment they will need for their operations, and getting licenses.

The program is open to business with nine (9) or fewer employees (including the owner). And so far the people they have been working with have been successful.

NGTC has applied to the USDA for a grant to help with funding the program, but were unsuccessful in getting the grant. However they are continuing to look for funding.

NGTC is getting the word out by going to Chambers, Department of Labor events, and any group meetings that they know about. They are using student interns, faculty and staff from NGTC to provide the services, so that they can offer the program totally free to the business. This is a Pilot Program for one year from July 2017 to July 2018.

The program does not compete with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The demographic that both are reaching out to are not the same so there is no conflict and the SBDC has been supportive.

- Dates for 2018 CEDS Meetings: Meetings have been held quarterly on the 2nd Thursdays of February, May, August and November. Mitch Griggs asked if there were any objections or conflicts with continuing to meet quarterly on the 2nd

Thursdays. Patrick Larson mentioned that the GARC conference is typically held during the 1st full week in November which usually coincides with the November CEDS meeting. No other conflicts/objections were given. The following dates were agreed to for 2018:

- February 8th
 - May 10th
 - August 9th
 - November 8th
- Next CEDS Meeting: The next CEDS meeting will be held on Thursday, February 8, 2018 at 3:00 p.m. at North Georgia Technical College in Clarkesville.
 - Member Attendance: Mitch Griggs stated that we need people to come to meetings. Daniel had emailed the list of the current membership to everyone.

It was asked how many members does the committee need and what are the terms. Patrick Larson read from the CEDS Committee Procedures that appointments “shall be not less than 12 and not more than 24 members...” and that members are “appointed for 2-year terms”.

There are currently 23 appointed members of the committee. However, there are 2 members that no longer live in the region: Lynne Anderson and Mark Crenshaw.

Individuals identified for membership:

- Dr. Philip Brown @ the Hart County College and Career Academy – **Bill Chafin**
 - John Sell, White County Economic & Community Development Director – **Tom O’Bryant**
 - Tim Lee, Executive Director @ Habersham County Development Authority – **Carol Jackson**
 - Cliff Bradshaw, Sole Commissioner in Towns County – **Mitch Griggs**
 - Dwayne Dye @ Hart County Industrial Building Authority – **Charles Cawthon**
 - David Stovall – **Bill Chafin**
 - Ryan Thornton of the Development Authority of Rabun County has been attending meetings as Ray Coulombe’s proxy. Ryan will speak to Ray to see if he can become the appointed member in Ray’s place.
 - Members whose names are in **bold** will reach out to and vet these potential new members and send names to Patrick Larson who will then compile a list for the February meeting.
- February’s Meeting Agenda: The following will be included on the February Agenda:
 - New Membership
 - Officer Elections
 - Minutes from August’s and November’s Meetings
 - CEDS Plan Update – Feedback from EDA and any substantive changes that need to be done
 - Other Discussions:
 - *WorkSource Plan* – The question was asked if we are trying to parallel the WorkSource Plan with the CEDS. Patrick stated yes; John Phillips is working

on this to make a cohesive plan that will meet all the requirements of EDA for CEDS and DOL for the WorkSource Plan.

- *OJT Incumbent Worker Program* – Mitch stated that it is challenging to reach the customer of the OJT Incumbent Worker incentive program. Since the program doesn't allow for advertising of the program, the issue is getting people to walk in the door and participate.
 - Robert Long further stated that the OJT program does not seem to be being used effectively in this region. He asked if we are using additional qualifications that are not being applied to other areas. He cannot seem to get businesses qualified for the program. Danette stated that Region 1 and the Augusta Region programs are doing well. Robert asked if the WorkSource Board or John Phillips could do some research on the other Regions and what they are doing that is so successful.
- Adjournment: Due to the lack of quorum, no motion was given. The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.