

Holmes County-Washington County Joint Infrastructure Committee Meeting
Log Cabin - Bonifay
March 28, 2016; 11:00 a.m.

Participants:

Ashley Pettis	Holmes Co Development Commission	Hcdc1978@gmail.com
Julia Bullington	Holmes Co Chamber/TDC	chamber@wfeca.net
Charles Kent	Washington County BOCC	
Raymon Thomas	Holmes Co Development Commission	hcdc.thomas@gmail.com
Ted Everett	Washington County Chamber/EDC	ted@washcomall.com
Wendel Whitehurst	Holmes County	hcc@holmescountyfl.org
David Corbin	Washington County	dcorbin@washingtonfl.com
Jim Town	Washington County	Jim_Town@bellsouth.net
Susan Estes	Opportunity Florida	susane@opportunityflorida.com
Caitlin Cerame	West Florida RPC	Caitlin.cerame@wfrpc.org
Roger Brooks	City of Bonifay	rogerbrooks@centurylink.net

The meeting was called to discuss the possibility of an application for a technical assistance grant from DEO.

Ted Everett asked Caitlin Cerame questions regarding the Community Planning Grant and what it would fund.

Everett listed the costs the authority would like to fund through the grants:

Consultant fee to recommend type of authority, including legal fees

Engineering fees for water/sewer design. Everett will ask Cliff Knaur what he would charge for the engineering.

Marketing plan: Cerame said that the WFRPC could put together a marketing plan

Cerame believes the consultant fees could be covered by writing that it would be part of a community based master plan. The hiring of a consultant would just be one part of that plan; marketing and outreach should be included so it is not just about hiring one consultant but a component of a larger plan. Raymon Thomas said that engineering costs would be covered by a separate portion of the grant under technical assistance.

Everett said that if it is the consensus of the committee, they would like for the WFRPC to write the grant and the committee will give them (WFRPC) the deliverables. This will enable a fourth party and not one of the three partners to have responsibility for the grant

Jim Town estimated that the preliminary legal fees would be around \$15,000 and probably total about \$40,000 later on. The legal consultant initially will produce a recommendation for an authority and why; additionally they will produce the legal documents that actually create the authority.

Ted Everett suggested that as Jeff Goodman already works with two of the three entities that he do the legal work that needs to be created for the committee. Town said that the committee would eventually need a law firm, probably in Tallahassee, that deals with special districts.

David Corbin made a motion to accept Jeff Goodman as legal counsel to the committee; Jim Town seconded and the motion was passed without dissent.

Caitlin noted that the DEO state grant could work in conjunction with the EDA grant. She will need more details about the engineering fees and legal consulting. She would like a Scope of Work and to be advised as to what documentation will be submitted to be reimbursed as well as the amount she will need to request. Cerame will send a template to the committee to inform the group of the information she will need and what tasks will need to be done.

The maximum request for the EDA grant is \$300,000. Raymon Thomas asked if the EDA grants would qualify for Strike Force points. These were recently put in place by USDA for grants and Congresswoman Gwen Graham got approval for Northwest Florida. He was unsure if they could also be used with EDA grants. Caitlin Cerame will check to see if the grants qualify for the points.

The DEO grants do not require a match, however, the EDA grants do. It may be possible to use county millage as the match. The DEO grants can also be used as match.

Ted Everett asked how the committee would pay the WFRPC for the writing and administration of the grants. Some grants do include admin fees. Cerame will check into the costs for writing and administering the grants and will inform the committee.

The committee has requested capacity levels for water/sewer from the city of Bonifay. This will help determine what to include in the grant. It is important to know what the city can and cannot do and how the plan should be structured. It was suggested the authority might help Bonifay set up a spray field. The city would then pay the authority back which would help pay off debt. The agreement with the businesses that move into region might stipulate that businesses would need to use gray water in landscaping.

Caitlin Cerame asked about the various components needed to bring the grants and information provided together. Everett said the technical grant is needed to take all the information gathered in creating the authority and to bring everything before the county commissions and city for approval of the authority. A second round of grants will probably be used to build out the pipes and sewage lines. He said the committee was looking to have at least eight businesses within the next ten years along the corridor.

Jim Town will send his notes regarding the rationale behind the original budget to Cerame.

Raymon Thomas informed the group of a USDA grant/loan program that concerns sewage and waste and storm water disposal for rural areas. This may be a grant the authority or the city of Bonifay might pursue.

Jim Town said the financial model will show the authority's ability to generate revenue once it is activated. There will be front end costs but eventually it will be able to generate revenue from various fees. Everett noted that it would be good to keep property values low initially before any growth occurs.

The percentage of ad valorem taxes would be what can be spent to pay off the debt. He suggested that Bonifay pass a resolution that the growth corridor should have ad valorem taxes; otherwise, the only revenue will be from impact and sewage fees. Town said there were other ways the authority could generate revenue, as well.

Cerame was asked where the WFRPC was on the land use planning arrangements with the city of Bonifay and Holmes County and whether a proposal had been submitted as yet. The RPC has not submitted anything as yet although something has been put together for one parcel that had been discussed. It is important that both counties update the future land maps.

NOTE: The decision to pursue the aforementioned grant will be made when the committee has received the requested information regarding the grant from Caitlin Cerame.

Susan Estes
Opportunity Florida