

**JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
OF
FRANKLIN, HART AND STEPHENS COUNTIES**

**Minutes of Meeting
October 8, 2013**

The quarterly meeting of the Joint Development Authority of Franklin, Hart and Stephens Counties was held Tuesday October 8, 2013 at the Currahee Campus of North Georgia Technical College at 6:00 pm.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chairman Doug Cleveland. He welcomed Kayla Carpenter, Assistant to the Executive Director of the Stephens County Development Authority and Danette Smith, Georgia Department of Labor.

Members present were: Cary Bennett, Vernon Cape, Doug Cleveland, Roy Crocker, Bob Evans, Don Foster, Vernon Edwards, Bill Leard, Mayor Ralph Owens, Greg Roach, Dean Scarborough and Gerald Voyles. Others attending were Economic Developers Lyn Allen and Dwayne Dye, Treasurer Jack Edmunds and Recording Secretary M. S. Smith.

The invocation was given by Vernon Edwards and Mr. Cleveland recognized the death of Harold Andrews, Stephens County Commissioner.

The minutes of the July 22, 2013 meeting had been mailed or e-mailed. No additions or corrections were noted and they were approved unanimously.

Mr. Edmunds presented a financial summary as of October 8, 2013 and it was accepted unanimously.

Ms. Carpenter gave an update on the Broadband project.

Mr. Cleveland reported that the Gateway I Property Transfer is in progress.

Ms. Carpenter updated the group on the Veterans Parkway Infrastructure Project.

Mr. Roach gave a report on the progress of the new Health Science wing at North Georgia Tech. Completion is anticipated in January or February of 2014. He also discussed the nursing programs at both campuses.

Mr. Cleveland reported that he and Mr. Edmunds had recently met with Hart County Administrator Jon Calme to discuss need for future funding assistance from Hart County for operation, maintenance and annual debt repayment on Gateway I Industrial Park. During the conversation, the possibility of looking into a lower rate on our USDA loan was discussed. Following this conversation, Mr. Cleveland met with area banks to determine their interest in a take-out commitment on the USDA loan. Currently the principal balance on the loan is \$441,301, the rate is 4.75 percent and 29 years remain on the term. He reported he had received a commitment from Pinnacle Bank for a 15 year loan at a fixed rate of 3.50 percent. The commitment is subject to the bank receiving opinion of counsel that the interest qualifies as tax exempt. The net result of reducing the term and the rate would be a savings of approximately \$240,000 in interest over the life of the loan. Since the annual payment would increase, further

discussion was held with Mr. Calme. He indicated the county would be agreeable to this in order to recognize this much savings. On a motion by Mr. Edwards, seconded by Mr. Bennett and passed unanimously, the chairman was authorized to proceed with the necessary action to transfer the loan to Pinnacle Bank. The motion also authorized the chairman and secretary to execute all necessary documentation to accomplish this transfer. It was noted that the required USDA reserve could then be freed up and be used for maintenance etc. at Gateway.

Ms. Carpenter reported that Stephens County has four active prospects and that they are launching a new web site.

Ms. Allen reported that State project activity is kind of quiet. She said they are working with the school system, the chamber of commerce and industrial authority for tours of various industries by students. Franklin County has a couple of solar projects underway. She reported J Peters Restaurant is doing well and Hampton Inn has broken ground.

Mr. Dye reported that he had participated recently in the annual bus tour led by Rope Robert with Ms. Allen and Mr. Martin. He had recently attended the 50th Annual GEDA Conference in Savannah where Bob Evans was recognized for his many years of service.

Mr. Dye reported that the USDA loan to purchase approximately 135 acres at Exit 177 had finally closed making a total of approximately 400 acres in Gate I, II and III. He reported healthy activity in Hart County overall with an uptick in interest from domestic companies.

Mr. Dye announced that grading is in progress at the new highway patrol office to be located across the road from RITZ. This will employ about 20 troopers.

He also commented on the recent Tri County Manufacturers meeting.

Ms. Smith from the Department of Labor announced a Regional Employee Summit to be held at the Currahee Campus of North Georgia Tech.

Mr. Roach reported a recent ribbon cutting for a new Economic Development Training Center at the Clarkesville Campus of North Georgia Tech.

The next meeting was announced for January 27, 2014 in Franklin County.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm

M. S. Smith
Recording Secretary