

***Our vision is to be the best resource for business assistance, through collaborations and partnerships,
for all communities within and surrounding Glacier County.***

Glacier County Regional Port Authority
(dba Glacier County Economic Development)
July Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 17th, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
GCED Office, Cut Bank, MT, and via Google Meets

I. Roll Call:

Present: Rod Cline, Ken Hoyt, Mike Schultz, Tony Sitzmann, Arkaidy Wisniowska

Late Arrival:

Absent Excused: Skye Gilham

Absent Unexcused: Tom McKay, Mary Jo Bremner

Public Present: Sarah Converse, Kacie Fey, Joseph Schildt, Francis Vernwald

II. Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Rod Cline at 2:02 p.m.

A. Tony motioned, seconded by Ken, to approve the July agenda. Motion carried.

B. Approval of June minutes. They stand as written.

C. Tony motioned, seconded by Ken, to approve the June financials. Motion carried.

Discussion: Ended the year \$10,768.47 below budget.

D. Tony motioned, seconded by Ken, to accept the July expense budget. Motion carried.

III. Old Business:

A. Scholarship Award Updates: Both of our winners have been awarded their certificates and checks have been obtained. Will be mailed out next week.

B. Shop Local Winners: A big thank you to Bryan Simons of Curiously Artistic for the custom wooden ticket box he made for us! Our winners were Anna Heryford for BTI Feeds and Mark Krapf for Curiously Artistic. Bell Motor Co. is our current business.

C. Swim Days Update: Checks for swim days sponsorships have been given to Cut Bank and Browning pools.

D. By-Laws Final Discussion and Voting: We have a final draft everyone is happy with. Not enough members present to vote. Tabled until next meeting.

E. Final Discussion and Voting on 2026 Proposed Budget: No objections to the current proposed budget, but tabled until we receive official numbers from the county.

IV. New Business:

- A. Kacie Fey of Latte Da Grant Request:** Kacie presented her grant request to the board. Provided a business plan and photos of updated paint and signage on her storefront. Asking for a \$4,850 grant. \$1,850 to pay for her new signage, and \$3,000 for a turbo oven. She has been in business 13 years and expressed a need for growth such as offering food. Already has infrastructure in place for the turbo oven. Projecting a 15-20% increase in revenue. Currently has 5 employees including herself.
- B. Joseph Schildt and Francis Vernwald of Pikunii Auto Grant Request:** Joseph and Francis are requesting a \$5,000 grant for their new automotive repair business Pikunii Auto in Cut Bank. Opened around March 2025. Looking to hire Joseph's wife as a receptionist/bookkeeper, have been very busy. Also looking to hire a 3rd mechanic. Gave their business plan. Would like \$1,000 for a second lift in their shop, \$1,000 to have it installed and wired, and \$3,000 for more tools. All of their current tools, inventory, and operations are paid for, no debt.
- C. Next 2 Shop Local Drawings:** Next participant names drawn are Latte Da and Artique Brew.
- D. Executive Director Report:** Continued discussion on the revamping of our grant policies, as well as growing our business support services. Arkaidy has been able to create connections with other development authorities and is gleaning insight that we can utilize in our own operations. Offering other business assistance such as business coaching, plans, financial projections, loans, etc. Discussed updating our grant application to be more in-depth and reflective of needs. Mike suggested having grant periods to reflect our influx of grant applications. Thinking through strategies that will allow us to support more businesses. Sarah mentioned a strategy used in Toole county where the grant is given as a 2% interest loan, and after 2 years of continued business operations, the "loan" is forgiven. Arkaidy will email the board a compiled list of discussed options.

V. Activity Reports:

- VI. Browning:** North American Indian Days took place July 10th-13th with many events and cultural presentations. Blackfeet Youth Day was at the All Chiefs Park July 9th. Tom McKay working on opening Junction Café in Browning, congrats Tom!
- VII. East Glacier Park:** Rising Wolf Outfitters opened a coffee shop and eatery in addition to their outdoor equipment rentals. Roads and stores are very busy for the season, very exciting.
- VIII. Babb/St. Mary:** The Milk River Project reached a milestone with the first surge of water coming through the newly replaced system. Unfortunately, on July 11th a minor slide on the downstream side caused issues. It is being repaired.
- IX. Cut Bank:** Lewis and Clark Festival taking place July 24th – July 27th with event packed schedules for all 4 days! A new quilt shop has opened inside the mall ran by Barb Claybourn. Also, a new boutique has opened inside The Marketplace, Coyote Queen owned by Destiny Faye Carlton.

X. Correspondence: None.

XI. Public Comment: Tony brought up discussion that EGP needs more traffic control. Sarah converse advised that Sweetgrass Development has grant and loan funds available.

XII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m. by Rod. The next meeting will be on August 21st, at 2 p.m., at the Glacier County Satellite Office in Browning, MT and via Google meets.

The mission of the Glacier County Economic Development is to promote, stimulate, and advance the general welfare, commerce, economic development, and prosperity of its region.