

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)
March Board Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 20th, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Glacier County Satellite Office, Browning, MT, and via Google Meets

I. Roll Call:

Present: Rod Cline, Tony Sitzmann, Mike Schultz, Mary Jo Bremner, Sky Gilham, Arkaidy Wisniowska.

Late Arrival:

Absent Excused: Tom McKay.

Absent Unexcused: Ken Hoyt, Kim Stoltz.

Public Present: Grace King, Sara Converse.

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

A. Mary Jo motioned, seconded by Rod, to approve the March agenda. Motion carried.

B. Tony motioned, seconded by Rod, to approve February minutes. Motion carried.

C. Tony motioned, seconded by Rod, to approve the February financials. Motion carried.

D. Sky motioned, seconded by Tony, to accept the March expense budget. Motion carried.

Discussion: Phone bill still out of control. Contract ends in July. This month's bill was only \$10, but it varies every month from \$10-\$130.

III. Old Business:

A. Voting on Morgan Hughson's Grant Request: Caught up those who did not hear all the details of the grant request at our previous meeting. Per request, Morgan provided the board with her business license, insurance, photos of her space, and a photo of the red light therapy board she wished to purchase with the grant. Tony motioned to approve the grant request for \$1,800, seconded by Rod. Motion carried.

B. By-Laws Update: Reviewed the sections already proposed/discussed. Agreed to tackle section 4 at our next meeting. No motion.

C. Shop Local: Our last 2 winners were Darrell Peterson for Garden of Eat-In and Caden Lahr for Nation's Burger Station. Current business is R Snack Shop. Next 2 businesses will be Browning Lumber and The Hairport in Cut Bank.

IV. New Business:

- A. EDF Grant/Loan Application Grace King – Sparkles Salon:** Grace presented to the board her request for a \$5,000 grant, as well as a \$10,000 loan. She presented a detailed business plan which outlines not only her business, but where every portion of both the grant and loan would go. She currently has used chairs, equipment, etc. and it has served her well, but she needs updated equipment to offer her clients the best. Such as chairs that function so that elderly clients don't have to work so hard to stand up and sit down in. In order for her to apply for a loan through GCED, she will need to fill out a different application, which Arkaidy will get to her. Some discussion made on whether to split her request into 2. Possibly vote next month to approve/deny the grant request, and then approach the loan as a separate matter. Arkaidy to follow up with Grace. No motion.
- B. Need for a Browning Board Member:** We are in need of a board member to represent Browning. Mary Jo said she would ask around and see if there is any interest. Arkaidy to advertise on our Facebook page as well. No motion.
- C. Chamber Banquet Sponsor/Table:** Discussion on participating in the annual Cut Bank Chamber Banquet. The board will purchase a \$250 table. Arkaidy to gather a list of members who will be going. Tony motioned, seconded by Rod, to approve purchasing a table. Motion carried.
- D. Discussion on Non-Profit Status:** Continuing on discussion from last month regarding whether a port authority can also be a non-profit. Rod had reached out to several attorneys, as well as the secretary of state, and was unable to get a solid answer. Sara Converse advised that she believes having both in not a contradiction and that many port authorities hold a non-profit status as well. She will look into it further via her resources and attorneys, and get back to us. No motion.
- E. Executive Director Monthly Report:** Arkaidy was happy to advise the board that our USDA grant application was successfully submitted and well received. She has heard good feedback and now it's just a matter of waiting to go through the final scoring and judging process. Also working on collaborating with areas businesses more and opening communication channels with them on what we have to offer, as well as inviting them to participate in our Shop Local initiative. Lastly, Arkaidy provided the board with a strategic planning survey to fill out to begin the discussion of where the board would like to head next, and what they see as important work to focus on.

V. Activity Reports:

- A. Browning:** Heart Butte School has a new playground. Browning celebrated Siksika Women's Day on March 8th. Browning boys made it to State. Blackfeet Community College hosting a College & Career Fair April 16th from 11-2.
- B. East Glacier Park:** Reservations for Going-to-the-Sun-Road are on sale, hiring for seasonal jobs has started, although government hiring freezes and firings can potentially impact things. Ryan Zinke has been said to have taken initiative to bring back frozen jobs for the season.
- C. Babb/St. Mary:** A lot of hiring in the area getting ready for Summer tourism! Milk River project has received continued approval and permitting and is in full swing.
- D. Cut Bank:** Marketplace on Main awarded Made in Montana Retailer of the Year! "Cut Bank Best Of" nominations ended March 14th. Cut Bank Chamber of Commerce Awards Banquet is on April 5th. The 40th Annual Shamrock Shootout was a success and brought in over \$10,000 to the community. Little Guy Wrestling Tournament had over 500 competitors and was massive this year. Divisional basketball was also in town the week prior.

- VI. **Public Comment:** Sara Converse announced the annual Sweetgrass Development Board Meeting and luncheon which will take place April 3rd in Shelby. Time and location to be announced, but most likely at noon.
- VII. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. by Rod. The next meeting will take place on April 17th, 2025, 2:00 p.m. at the new GCED Office at 13 E Main Street in Cut Bank, 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.