

**Minutes**  
Regular Meeting  
Bellville Economic Development Corporation

Date of Meeting: May 2, 2019  
Time of Meeting: 5:00 P.M.  
Location: Council Meeting Room, Bellville City Hall  
30 South Holland St., Bellville, TX 77418

1. Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge
2. Roll Call and Certification of Quorum **Present: Rhonda Dean, Pat Burns, Danny Jacob, Garrett Dornon, Ric Flores, Reesa Ueckert. Absent: Paul Jones. Quorum certified.**
3. Consideration and Action to Approve the Agenda as Posted **Mr. Jacob motion to approve, Ms. Dean 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion approved unanimously.**
4. Public Comment (3-Minute Remarks of Speakers who have completed Sign-in Sheet) AND Receipt of Grant Applications **No Speakers. Grant request from Mockingbird Landing**
5. Questions and Comments from Board Members (discussion is limited to statements of policy or statements of factual matters, or the request that a matter be placed on the next meeting's agenda). **Mr. Jacob expressed the condolences of the board to Mr. Jones and his family for the recent passing of his Father. Ms. Ueckert asked that an agenda item be added next month to discuss moving the time of the EDC meetings to 5:30. She also gave an update on commercial activity, saying several vacant buildings had been leased, and there was interest in a couple of others. Mr. Dornon and Mr. Flores both submitted affidavits that they had a conflict of interest in matters relating to Bellville Medical Center and would be recusing themselves from any actions involving the hospital.**
6. Consideration and Action to Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting held **Mr. Jacob motion to approve, Ms. Ueckert 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion approved unanimously.**
7. Consideration and Action to Approve Treasurer's Report, Payment of Outstanding Bills, and Investments. **Mr. Flores presented report. Total current assets are \$839,997. Income for the month was \$21,375.46. Bills presented for payment: \$160.42, \$58.12, & 34.50 for utilities to City of Bellville, \$188 to Brown & Hofmeister for legal services, \$473 to Holland Haus for sign grant, \$500 to Forged in Fire for security, \$1,000 to Judy Manning for Blondies Sign Grant, \$700 & 591.20 to All Out Outdoors for maintenance, and \$350 to LeAnn Luedeker for monthly contract. Total \$4055.24. Ms. Ueckert motion to approve report and pay bills, Mr. Burns 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion approved unanimously.**
8. Consideration and Action to Approve the Advertising and Tourism Report from the Chamber of Commerce **Sabrina Sandoval presented the report for the Chamber. She updated the board on recent activities. They are currently advertising in Round Top during antiques festival. Reported Market Days and Farmer's Market are doing well despite challenging weather. She is looking at revamping the Discover Bellville website.**

9. Public hearing on Bellville Hospital Foundation grant. **Began 5:16. Mr. Dornon and Mr. Flores recused themselves from discussion and left room. Mr. Jacob acted as President for this portion of meeting. Speakers: Joe Ed Lynn spoke in support of the grant. Said saving the hospital and keeping it under local control was important for our economic development. Speaker: Gary Morris – Asked why it was going to be named Bellville Medical Center and not Bellville Hospital. Tony Causey from the Hospital District explained that it was to be more than just a hospital, and Medical Center more accurately described the new mission. Speaker: Nancy Dornon explained how crucial the success of the Medical Center was to Bellville. Discussed the expansion of services. Said EMS was now transporting 70% of their patients to Bellville, up from just 30%. Hearing closed at 5:22**
10. Consideration and Action as needed on Bellville Hospital Foundation grant. **Ms. Dornon presented the request on behalf of the Foundation. The request was for \$77,357 for signage and \$55,780 for IT infrastructure. She explained the new signage would simply replace the old signs which would be removed on May 6<sup>th</sup>. She showed mockups of what the new signs would look like. She explained they were doing as much as possible locally, but the quick timeline and large amount needed meant they also had to contract with vendors in Bryan. She also explained that the Medical Center would be required to buy back the existing computers, which were at the end of their useful lives anyway. The IT infrastructure request would be a total upgrade and allow the hospital to function. The original request also asked for any additional funds the board might want to give to the Medical Center. The consensus of the board was that it felt it would be better to have specific grant requests in the future, but that the Board would be open to and welcomed additional requests as they arise. Mr. Burns made motion to approve payment of \$133,437 to Bellville Hospital Foundation. Ms. Ueckert 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion approved unanimously by quorum of Ms. Dean, Mr. Burns, Mr. Jacob and Ms. Ueckert. Mr. Dornon and Mr. Flores then returned to room, and Mr. Dornon returned to role as President.**
11. Public Hearing on Quiet Zone. **Public Hearing began at 5:40. Speaker: Randy Bounds. He is a member of Mill Creek church, said the Quiet Zone is needed. They have talked with the neighbors who agree it is a nuisance, and that the majority of the community around the tracks felt the QZ is needed. Speaker: Les Evans. He is a railroad employee but speaking for himself. Feels Quiet Zones are unsafe. Worries about the safety of his children and grandchildren. Feels the equipment can be unreliable, and warns if the Wayside Horn misfunctions, it may blow for hours before it will be repaired. Speaker: Joe Ed Lynn. Says the City has been looking at this for a long time and thinks if it is to be done it should be done right. Feels the right way is to put Quad arms on the intersections, and that the Board is trying to do this on the cheap, and should set aside this plan, save up for the Quad arms and do it right. Also warned we would be spending money that the Hospital might need. Speaker: Cathy Byrd. Husband is Pastor of Mill Creek Church. They have canvassed the community. Train horn is more than just annoying, it affects the entire households, waking the children, shaking the houses. Says the train noise interferes with the church services, and all activities there. It affects the community and the businesses nearby. Speaker: Linda Niehuus. She's a realtor and homeowner. Says a Quiet Zone will help the community economically. We are the only City in**

area without one, which hurts our competitiveness. Spoke of how train horn would drown out conversations inside her home. Says this has been studied for too long and urges board to stop talking and make a decision. Speaker: Doug Lottridge. Doesn't have a problem with the Quiet Zone but agrees with Mayor Lynn the Quad Arm are the way to go. Thinks board should start a reserve fund. Speaker: Donna Jacob. She agrees the discussion on the QZ has gone on too long. Says the proposal adds safety measure. She said nothing will stop someone from going through the crossing if they are determined to do so, but this is safer. Speaker: Joe Ed Lynn. Repeated support for Quad Arms. Said this was doing the project on the cheap. Hospital should be the priority. Speaker: Patsy Rutta. Questioned who would pay for the additional insurance and fix things when they go wrong. Worried about the safety. Speaker: Nancy Dornon. Pointed out the horn blows 400 times a day in Bellville. Hearing ended at 6:06

12. Consideration and Action on Quiet Zone. Mr. Burns made presentation. He began with the history of this project, that it had started 4 years ago, that the board had hired a consultant who specializes in QZ's, Robert Albritton of Quiet Zone Technologies. Two different diagnostic team visits had been made to find the best treatments for each intersection. Four treatment options were explored. The most expensive is Quad Arms, which would cost approximately \$250,000 per intersection. That was rejected as too expensive. Next is the Wayside horn, then channelization, then road closure. The team explored closing the 3<sup>rd</sup> street intersection, which would result in a substantial rebate from the Railroad, but that was rejected because the community expressed the need for that crossing. Mr. Burns showed the graphics detailing the current extent and impact of the horn noise, and then showed how much the QZ would change that. The options decided on for each intersection were: Hacienda- Channelization. Third Street- Channelization. Main/159 – Wayside Horn. Glenn Street- Channelization. 1456- Wayside Horn. N. Granville- Wayside Horn. Mr. Burns then explained what work would be done at each intersection. The EDC would be contracting with the City to do the work. Essentially the EDC is paying for the materials, and the City would provide the labor and the expertise. Also, because the City has a Utility department, electricians would be able to install the Wayside Horns. For the channelization crossings, the team had looked at traffic flow and made adjustments at each intersection, including widening the road and providing curbing for the sides. Care was given to allow 18 wheelers to safely make the turn on Hacienda, and to not blocking a private driveway on Glenn street. Then Mr. Albritton took the options to the Federal Railroad Administration, which calculated the formula for each crossing, and found that the entire zone qualified as a QZ because it made to cumulative crossings safer. Mr. Albritton submitted the plan to BNSF railroad to calculate the costs. The costs came back as follows: Hacienda - \$40,400, Third St. - \$20,400, Main St. - \$70,746, E. Glenn- \$21,900, 1456 - \$164,772, N. Granville- \$276,649. Mr. Burns pointed out the cost for Granville and 1456 were so high because the railroad equipment was older, and that the setup of the streets required boring under the roadways. Mr. Burns submitted 3 options to consider, each with a 10% cost overrun included. Option 1 was to cover all of the crossings, which came to \$656,327. Option 2 would exclude Granville and cost \$350,040. Option 3 was for the 4 crossings inside the City, excluding Granville and

1456 and came to \$168,793. He then discussed economic studies which found the benefits of a Quiet Zone included an increase of 4% to 13% positive increase in property value. He discussed a 2011 nationwide study which found there is no evidence QZ's are less safe. He also talked with the Public Works Director in Brenham about their experiences with the QZ. Mr. Dave Rou said their QZ experience was "Awesome" "No one misses the horn". No safety issues, only ongoing maintenance is replacing channelization taken out by vehicles at certain intersections. Noted that if a train operator sees something unsafe he can still blow his horn. Mr. Jacob said he had talked with other Cities in our area as well. All also felt their QZ's were a positive. He originally wanted to do all 6 crossings, but felt cost was too high, and supported Option 3. Ms. Dean asked about the possibilities of outside grants, Mr. Burns said none were available. Mr. Flores pointed out with the extended timeline of implementation, that there were sufficient funds to help the hospital and put in the QZ. Mr. Burns made a motion to approve Option 3, paying for crossings from Hacienda to E. Glenn at a cost of \$168,793. Mr. Jacob 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting took small break at this time.

13. Consideration and Action as needed on hiring consultant for Strategic Plan. Mr. Flores introduced Diane White. He said he and Mr. Dornon had met with Ms. White to discuss acting as a mediator for the Strategic Plan. Ms. White explained her background as a City Administrator in Texas, and experience in shepherding large committees and projects such as this. The contract for services is for \$16,000. Mr. Flores said that was a capped number, and there would be no additional charges. Mr. Burns said when he first saw the contract, he was concerned by the cost, asked what the board would be getting for that amount. Mr. Flores and Ms. White discussed the specific services she would be providing. Ms. White said the cost was actually half of what she normally charged, because her parents lived in Cat Spring, and she wanted to help Bellville. Mr. Burns said after thinking about it, this was about what the board had paid other consultants on different projects and said if this this was important to the board, then the price was reasonable. Ms. Dean and Ms. Ueckert both thought this was important and liked the idea of a hard six-month deadline. Mr. Flores made motion to approve contract for \$16,000 to Public Admin Consulting. Ms. Ueckert 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion approved unanimously. Mr. Dornon appointed himself and Mr. Flores to the Strategy Vision Committee.
14. Consideration and Action as needed on Square Backdoor project. Ms. Ueckert made presentation. She showed pictures of the back of the buildings around the Square, starting with the area between the old Jail and the Probation department. The grass is uncut, the area is cluttered with trash cans. She pointed out this is the sight that visitors to the Jail see. She discussed options such as putting a common trash compactor to reduce the number of cans, and of possibly putting decking on the back of the buildings. She wanted board input on the ideas. There was discussion the EDC could provide basic infrastructure such as paying for a pad for the compactor, and work with the building owners on other improvements. The consensus of the board was this was worth pursuing. She then showed the other alleys around the Square and talked about options there. Finally, she showed the alleyway between the Bellville Café building and the Budget Inn. A prospective restaurant tenant had decided against leasing the Café, because there was no place

**to take the trash. He had looked at using the alley but decided that was unsafe and unsanitary. The alley had at one time been owned by the City, but when the Budget Inn was sold 10 years ago, it was included in the deed and is now privately owned. It is full of trash and debris that appeared to be obvious health and safety concerns. Ms. Ueckert has had numerous conversations with the owners of the Budget Inn about buying or leasing the alley, but there has been no resolution. The owner of the Café building also has expressed no interest in fixing up the back of the building. Ms. Ueckert suggested that a first step was to get City Code enforcement to inspect and get the area up to code. Mr. Burns made a motion to make a Resolution asking the City Code Inspector to make it a priority to inspect the alley and make sure it complies with existing City Codes. Ms. Ueckert 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion passed unanimously.**

15. Committee Reports

- a. Main Street Committee
- b. Community Relations Committee
- c. Hotel Committee
- d. Strategic Plan Committee
- e. EDC Administration Committee
- f. Other committees

16. Executive Session under Govt. Code Sec. 551.071, 551.072 and 551.087 to discuss legal matters with attorney, real property negotiations, and/or economic development negotiations. **None**

17. Action on matters considered in Executive Session. **None**

18. Adjournment. **7:44**