

Green County Development Corporation Board Notes
January 17, 2019
Historic County Courthouse, Monroe, WI

1. **Attendance:** Nikki Matley (Thrivent Financial), John McNeil (Big Radio), Richard Thoman (AmericInn/County/City of Monroe), Beth Luchsinger (County Board), Craig Fuchs (Orchid International), Matt Urban (Blackhawk Technical College - BTC), Linda Kuhlman (Village of Brooklyn), Phil Rath (City of Monroe), Joe Hunter (Colony Brands), Sam Liebert (City of Monroe), April Fuhr (Village of Monticello), Doug Sutter (Keller), Art Carter (County Board Chair), Rick Waski (Monroe School Superintendent), Cara Carper (Green County Development Corporation), Calvin Boldebeck (Congressman Mark Pocan's office), Tawsif Anam (Senator Ron Johnson's office).
2. **Call to Order:** President Nikki Matley called the meeting to order at 7:36 am.
3. **Welcome of Guests:** The GCDC Board welcomed Calvin Boldebeck from Congressman Pocan's office and Rick Waski from the School District of Monroe. We also welcomed our newest GCDC Board member, Doug Sutter from Keller. Tawsif Anam from Senator Johnson's office arrived shortly after the welcome.
4. **Approval of Agenda, Minutes (December 20, 2018) and Financials (December 2018/January 2019):** Motion by John McNeil, second by Beth Luchsinger. Motion approved.
5. **Events Update/Staff Update:** Cara reviewed her report. UniverCity projects have started up for the spring semester. UW Madison students will be doing "mini-TED Talks" as featured speakers at the GCDC Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 24. The Food & Beverage Boot Camp classes have begun with 10 businesses (7 from Green County). A great deal of excellent information was shared and each business has a lot of homework to do before the next classes in February. GCDC receive the full amount we applied for through the 2019 WEDC Entrepreneurial Development grant (\$80,000). This will allow us to keep Kristi Smith's 60 percent position and hire an additional 60 percent business consultant to help Brock Waterman cover all Prosperity Southwest counties.) Please mark your calendars for the GCDC Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 24.

John McNeil, April Fuhr, Beth Luchsinger and Nikki Matley offered to be on the Annual Meeting planning committee.

6. **Community Roundtable/Partner Reports/Board member Business for the Good of the Order:**

Calvin Boldebeck (Congressman Pocan's office) – Thank you for the warm welcome. The government shutdown is the current focus. They are doing what they can to re-open government.

Rick Waski (Supt. Monroe School District) – Recall that the school referendum passed in November. Bids for construction projects have just started coming in.

Doug Sutter (Keller) – Thank you for the warm welcome. Keller is a design/builder with four offices in the state: headquarters in Kaukauna, Milwaukee, Sun Prairie and Wausau. Doug grew up on a dairy farm in southwest Wisconsin. He is currently working with Keller on the cold storage project behind Pick N Save in Monroe. He is honored to serve on the GCDC Board.

Linda Kuhlman (Village of Brooklyn) – The Village has 3 candidates for the Village President position. In December they got a new police squad and snow removal equipment. They will receive bids in January for the wastewater treatment plant.

Matt Urban (Blackhawk Technical College – BTC) – Classes started on Monday, so things are busy at BTC. BTC is working on a process to receive community input on how best to maximize BTC's presence in Green County. Matt has lined up service clubs for presentations, but that doesn't lead to much rich conversation. He has found that many community members don't know BTC's current capacity or possibilities. In March, there will be a facilitated meeting, but in the meantime, Matt is willing to meet one-on-one with people and businesses to talk about how BTC can serve Green County. This is a tremendous opportunity to contribute to the 5, 10, 15-year plans for BTC.

BTC's new Training Consortium is gaining interest amongst businesses that can pick the training they need and then join together with other businesses to meet their training needs. Matt saw a show on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how AI will eliminate many of our current jobs. BTC is looking at which programs will be going away and new programs for the future. For example, mechatronics was added in 2018.

BTC has a Green County Board opening. Mark Mayer is retiring. The BTC Board meets once a month. Let Matt know if you are interested.

Phil Rath (City of Monroe) – The City is revising the Redevelopment Authority (RDA). They have new board members who are working to establish an RDA district with a plan to add value for economic development and residential. The new district includes the downtown area and outlying residential areas. Fifty percent (plus one) must be considered "blighted." Being identified as "blighted" may cause concern among business owners and home owners. They are working to get the message out to everyone in the area. This is an opportunity to assist properties in the area that need help.

A six-unit apartment is going in across from Stonehall Bicycle. There have been some inquiries for residential and commercial development of the Dolan property. The City is inquiring as to whether any of their Revolving Loan Fund can be salvaged from the state CDBG CLOSE program. The City will be hosting an Open House Business After 5 with the Monroe Chamber on August 31. Youth in Government is going strong. There is now a Youth in Government spot on the Public Works committee.

Sam Liebert (City of Monroe) – There are 5 candidates for 4 open spots on City Council. Only one incumbent is running for a spot.

Richard Thoman (AmericInn/City of Monroe/County Board) – AmericInn corporate found that hotel occupancies are down 40% from last December.

Craig Fuchs (Orchid International) – No report this time. Craig did have questions about the Redevelopment Authority and whether it had the power of eminent domain. Phil Rath explained that eminent domain is no more likely due to being in an RDA. Properties within the RDA can apply for various programs to fund improvements.

Art Carter (County Board Chair) – The County signed a \$700,000 contract to tear down the old Government Services Building. Asbestos removal will take 2 months with a May/June teardown. The area will be filled in as a green space. The County is hosting an Open House at the NEW Government Services Building on January 23 from 4-6 pm.

On the business side, things are bad for agriculture. We are losing farmers and the shutdown is not helping because farmers can't get their checks signed because the Farm Service Agency office is closed. At his business, Art says he is "selling machines one part at a time." He is thankful for his repair department.

Art agreed that the Revolving Loan Fund solution from the state is not positive. He is hopeful the new wheel tax can provide some funds for road projects in the county.

Joe Hunter (Colony Brands) – Only 342 days until Christmas! Colony Brands had a good year last year. Fifty two million pounds of product were shipped to customers!!! \$128,000 was donated by Colony employees to area non-profits. You may have heard Figi's is closing, but Colony is not closing (there has been some confusion). <https://www.marshfieldnewsherald.com/story/news/2019/01/04/figis-marshfield-announces-276-workers-lose-jobs-mid-march/2484788002/> A Colony retail store in Chicago is closing.

Beth Luchsinger (County Board) – Bryan Gadow has left his position as Village Administrator. They are working to fill his position. The mild weather is helping tourism in New Glarus. Wind turbines are still a big issue with the county board. They are receiving a lot of concern, but the county doesn't have much control. The Zoning Committee is under duress.

John McNeil (Big Radio) – Spotlights on Green County will continue. Most recently Big Radio highlighted Orchid International. Kudos to BTC – a client he referred contacted BTC and is now hosting a Job Fair there. John offered that anyone interested in doing a Spotlight or having a tour of the studio is welcome.

April Fuhr (Village of Monticello) – April announced that she resigned her position on Monticello Village Board last night. She will continue to represent Monticello on the GCDC Board. There are three openings on the Village Board, 4 people are running, one of them is an incumbent. The President seat is open. Monticello recently purchased a new street sweeper and a snow plow. The wastewater treatment plant is doing to water quality trading and tanks to remove phosphorus.

In Bug Tussel news, new towers have recently come on line and a number of new towers are planned in Green County. Save the Date: Wednesday, May 15 for the Rural Broadband Conference.

Nikki Matley (Thrivent Financial) – Due to tax reform last year, Thrivent is hosting a tax efficiency workshop at 2 pm and 6 pm on January 29 at Peppercorn Banquets. Big news: Erik Haworth was certified with Financial Planner Certification. They are planning some “lunch and learns” for retirees, and is always happy to do them for any company that needs some training. Thrivent contributed to 214 Action Teams, with \$500,000 of impact in Green County last year. Save the Date: Saturday, September 14 is Generosity Day. If you’re looking for something special for your Valentine, Kiwanis have macadamia chocolate candy for sale. All proceeds go for community projects for kids.

Tawsif Anam (Senator Ron Johnson’s office) – Tawsif mentioned a sad report he read about US law loopholes that allow minors from other countries to be subjected to child marriage in the US. Senator Johnson is working on legislation “Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act” to extend laws across states for concealed carry. The “Shutdown Fairness Act” will provide back pay to government employees who are now working without pay.

7. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be Thursday, February 21 at the historic Green County Courthouse in Monroe.
8. **Adjourn:** Motion by April Fuhr, second by Art Carter. Motion approved.