

Green County Development Corporation Board Notes
Thursday, August 20, 2020
Via Zoom Call

1. **Attendance:** Nikki Matley (Thrivent Financial), Matt Urban (Blackhawk Technical College - BTC), John McNeil (Big Radio), Richard Thoman (Monroe City Council/County Board/AmericInn), Mike Sanders (1100 Partners), Beth Luchsinger (County Board), Brian Wilson (Village of Belleville), Becky Olson (Village of Belleville), Dr. Tracy Pierner (BTC), Ron Schaaf (Sugar River/Bank of New Glarus), April Fuhr (Village of Monticello/BugTussel), Mike Williams (Colony Brands), Tom Johnson (Monroe Truck Equipment), Joan Rufenacht (County Board), Donna Douglas (City of Monroe), Jane Curan-Meuli (Monroe Clinic), Craig Fuchs (Orchid International), Drake Daily (Village of New Glarus), Rick Waski (Monroe School District), Senator Janis Ringhand, Calvin Boldebuck (Office of Congressman Pocan), Cara Carper (Green County Development Corporation).
2. **Call to Order:** President Nikki Matley called the meeting to order at 7:32 am.
3. **Introduction of all on the call:** There were no new faces on the call.
4. **Approval of Agenda, Minutes (July 16, 2020) and Financials:** Motion by John McNeil; second by Ron Schaaf. Motion carried.
5. **Events Update/Staff Update:** Cara provided a written report and a brief update.
 - a. Growth Opportunity Fund – We met our \$750,000 fundraising goal! Take every opportunity to let Green County manufacturers know we have funding for them.
 - b. Driftless Homes Project Update – Brodhead and Monroe are getting closer to decisions about this opportunity.
 - c. COVID Response – GCDC is working with United Way of Green County to strengthen existing childcare providers and grow new, regulated providers.
 - d. Green County Leaders – Virtual classes will begin on September 9. (Second Wednesdays from noon-1:30 pm) This is a great professional development opportunity for all!
 - e. Talent Pipeline Management – We plan to start up again with healthcare providers in the fall.
 - f. Leadership Breakfast Idea – Suggestions for topics and speakers are appreciated.
6. **Community Roundtable/Partner Reports/Board member Business for the Good of the Order:**

Tom Johnson (Monroe Truck Equipment) – Orders are strong and Monroe Truck is working on a good backlog. Their focus is on attracting and retaining employees and they are increasing their investment in the talent pool by looking outside of a 50 mile radius. Relocation packages are available and housing is a high priority. Monroe Truck has been investing on the shop floor and added a new building for raw materials to the yard. They have not been hit heavily by Covid, but are back to an A and B shift for office workers, to keep people safe. A recent survey of employees found that 40% of employees have kids in school and 80% of them are impacted by the school scheduled changes due to Covid and are asking for changes to shifts or are leaving the workforce. They are stepping up Covid awareness activities to ensure a healthy workforce.

Joan Rufenacht (County Board) – Outdoor visits at Pleasant View are being scheduled and are going well. The garden at Pleasant View is beautiful and the weather has been perfect for outdoor visits with Pleasant View residents. The census at Pleasant View is normally 94-98, but is now

down to 72-75 due to people choosing to stay in their homes, rather than being separated from their families.

Becky Olson (Village of Belleville) – Becky recently started her position and continues to get her feet wet. She has been doing Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) activities and working with businesses to use outdoor spaces to serve people. She is getting to know village properties available for redevelopment and getting the new website up and running.

Richard Thoman (AmericInn, City of Monroe, County Board) – Farm & Fleet is working on their new building. A City Administrator candidate is coming this weekend to look at the community. The Finance Committee will be looking at the Driftless Homes proposal.

Dr. Tracy Pierner (BTC) – The big news is that the BTC Board has agreed to move forward with a referendum for the November 3 election for a \$32 million Public Safety and Transportation project. (This will be the featured topic for presentation at next month's GCDC meeting.) There is a great need for this facility without much impact on the mill rate. There will be a \$3/\$100,000 equalized value increase for two years which will decrease in the fourth year and revert to the current \$59/\$100,000 value in the fifth year. The BTC Fall Semester started yesterday. Although an enrollment decline was anticipated, there has not been a decline. BTC is opening in Stage 5 and Dr. Pierner was pleased to announce students are following health and safety protocols. Students can choose how they receive classes (MyEdChoice) – in person, via Zoom live or recorded for later viewing. BTC has had a couple of students test positive, but there has been no spread amongst students.

Matt Urban (BTC) – Enrollment in internet classes is up 106% and students are coming to campus in smaller numbers. BTC submitted five Workforce Advancement Training grants and all were fully funded, including a Green County consortium of businesses. Monroe Truck Equipment will be sending a third cohort for Monroe Truck Equipment Academy. Employees are shuttled to the Milton BTC facility for an eleven-week program. (Capacity on the shuttle is limited due to Covid.) BTC is also working on "Designing a Curriculum" for area employers for a Supply Chain Management program to meet needed outcomes for employers. Another Drive Through Job Fair is being planned for September. (Last month's Drive Through Job Fair was very successful in Monroe with more than 100 people taking advantage to pick up bags filled with information on available local jobs.)

Mike Sanders (Emergency Operations Center committee) – Agencies across the county come together for the EOC to focus on the Covid response. The past two weeks have not been great as numbers of positive cases increase. Handwashing, masks and social distancing is necessary for all of us.

Rick Waski (Monroe School District) – There are many opinions on reopening schools. In June, 70% of parents wanted students to go to school every day. In July, that number had dropped to 45%. Currently 33% prefer in person, 33% prefer virtual, and 33% are okay with whatever the district decides. Monroe and New Glarus school districts are implementing a hybrid model to start school, a week at a time. Brodhead, Monticello and Juda are starting 5 days a week at full capacity. Blackhawk is starting with 4 days a week at 75% capacity. Monroe will do the first 4 weeks in the 50% hybrid model unless numbers of positive Covid cases continue to climb. Everyone needs to work together to wear masks and social distance. There has been some social media teacher bashing. There have only been 4 resignations (2 teachers and 2 aides) so not widespread. The school district will be doing synchronous learning, so even virtual learners will be able to be live with their classes.

Brian Wilson (Village of Belleville) – There has been a lot of growth in Belleville. The equalized value is up 11.5% over 2019 to \$261 million due to new construction. The population is up 2% (and might be higher). The Plan Commission has discussed a new housing development on the north end of town – 60 acres with 314 units of housing (single and multi-family). This project requires more work and annexation over then next 12-18 months. FEMA has approved \$835,000 to fix the dam. Four years ago, 13 absentee ballots were submitted for the primary. This year it was more than 400. With all of this new activity, they are considering hiring an additional employee. A childcare business will be closing on the old elementary school building today. They will be offering preschool and school age programming. The library is ahead of schedule and expected to open in January. There will be a special meeting on the Planned Unit Development for people over 55 in the Baker’s Wood development (27 homes in a condo arrangement).

Ron Schaaf (Sugar River and New Glarus Bank) – Bank lobbies have once again been closed due to the Covid crisis. Drive up is available. They are working with employees to work out staffing possibilities for employees with kids in school. The mortgage business is very busy. There are not enough reasonably priced houses on the market. Sugar River Bank is working on Paycheck Protection Program forgiveness documents for businesses.

John McNeil (Big Radio) – The most recent Spotlight on Green County focused on the Growth Opportunity Fund. Big Radio is coming up on the first anniversary of the addition of new stations and the new facility in Janesville. For sport broadcasting, the only local team playing football this fall is Darlington (and it’s not clear who they will play). Rick Waski added that Monroe has moved fall sports to later winter/early spring. There are many pros and cons to changing the seasons. Nikki Matley suggested the new Green County Humane Society Executive Director Matt Mullen as an introduction for the next Spotlight on Green County.

Jane Curran-Meuli (Monroe Clinic) – Demolition of the old hospital building starts today. All Monroe Clinic services are open and fully functional and no staff are furloughed. They are seeing an increase in the number of people who have delayed care during the Covid crisis and are coming into the Emergency Department and Primary Care much sicker than in the past. Monroe Clinic is preparing for a busy flu, common cold and Covid season and increasing their screening processes.

Beth Luchsinger (County Board) – RoAnn Warden and all staff at the Health Department are working hard to ensure Green County is on top of things. Check out their website for up-to-date Covid numbers. With increasing positive test results, contact tracing has continued to go up. Kudos to all of the Health Department staff. The Health Department is working with providers to hopefully get regular drive in testing for Covid. The senior care facilities in the county are doing a great job of keeping staff and residents safe. The Human Services Department is working in teams so all staff are not in the office all the time.

April Fuhr (Bug Tussel/Village of Monticello) – BugTussel expects the Clarno and Monroe North towers to be on line soon. They have generous “school at home” discounts for internet services. They will be submitting additional Public Service Commission broadband grants for Rock County. April worked the polls in Monticello for the primary. They are gearing up for the November election. Two restaurants, T&Ds and Twisted Tree, closed last month. The new Village Clerk will be starting training soon. The Village office is still closed.

Mike Williams (Colony Brands) – Colony Brands sales have been strong over the past 5 months and continue to be strong. Fall planning is going on from a sales and staffing perspective. UPS, FedEx and USPS have announced big increases for November and December that will greatly

impact mail order companies (and consumers). Colony continues to have a successful Covid response.

Drake Daily (Village of New Glarus) – Village Hall is currently closed. The November polling place will be at the fire station.

Senator Janis Ringhand – The state is currently at a standstill. \$3 million is available for tech careers.

Craig Fuchs (Orchid International) – Orchid completed the acquisition of Carter Motor Company. They were able to move the operation into our building in only one month when they estimated that it would take 3 months. Craig thanked GCDC for the Growth Opportunity Fund loan that helped make the acquisition possible. September is Chamber of Commerce month. The Monroe Chamber of Commerce is dedicating the Monroe Mural on Friday, September 18th. Orchid has taken measures to protect employees from Covid-19, and have not had any cases so far.

Calvin Boldebeck (Congressman Pocan) – Calvin is happy to provide updates from meeting participants to Congressman Pocan. They are getting many calls on the US Postal Service. Congressman Pocan held a press conference to request more funding for the Postal Service. They are also looking for more relief for the Covid situation. The House passed a bill, the Senate has not yet voted on it. They are hopeful that a relief package will be passed soon. Congressman Pocan is planning a Green County Town Hall on August 26. (Note this town hall date was changed to September 9.

Nikki Matley (Thrivent Financial) – Thrivent will be working to bring Action Team funding to those affected by the Covid crisis (including childcare facilities). \$250 gift cards are available for volunteer projects, and Nikki can help get the word out to members regarding needed projects.

7. **Next Meeting:** The next GCDC Board meeting will be Thursday, September 17.
8. **Adjourn:** Motion to adjourn by Matt Urban, second by Brian Wilson. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:42 am.