



Development District of Central Texas (DDCT)

Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, April 18, 2024

9:30 AM

Regular Meeting

Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG)

2180 North Main Street

Belton, TX 76513

Voting Members Present:

Dean Roome – Bartlett Activity Center
Ginger Watkins – Cameron Industrial Foundation
Dr. Teddy Clevenger – Bartlett ISD*
Michael Boyd – City of Killeen
Bobby Whitson – Bell County
Michael Boyd, City of Killeen

Vice-Chair Ted Gonzalez – Central Texas College
David O'Connor – Nolanville Economic Development Corporation*
Kayla Schraub – Mainstreet Hamilton*
Cynthia Hernandez, Belton Economic Development Corporation

Additional Attendees

Anna Barge – CTCOG*
Dominic Elizondo – CTCOG
Shakima Lourick – Resident of Copperas Cove*

James McGill – CTCOG
Anita Janke – CTCOG
Callie Tullos – CTCOG
Tay Floyd – CTCOG*

**Denotes online attendee*

Meeting Minutes:

1. Call to Order: Ted Gonzalez, Vice-Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 9:34 a.m. A quorum was present.

2. Opportunity for Public Comment: No comments were made by the public.

3. Staff Update:

Dominic Elizondo gave an update about CTCOG activities including the Leadership Central Texas and Rural Internship Program advertising, Discover Central Texas website hosting, and the Central Texas Entrepreneurial Summit.

Staff are assisting the City of Cameron and the City of Belton with administration of EDA grants. We are helping Central Texas Water Supply Corporation, and New Life Village with grant and loan applications. Staff are assisting with planning and hosting the Central Texas Entrepreneurial Summit which took place in January. The event was successful, and another event is being planned for late summer. Mr. Elizondo also provided economic updates for Q1 2024, noting that the unemployment rate went down slightly to 4.46% and the labor force participation rate was 53.2%.

4. Action Item: Regarding approval of meeting minutes from the January 4, 2024 meeting.

Ginger Watkins made a motion to approve the January 4, 2024 minutes, seconded by Cynthia Hernandez; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Discussion and Action Item: Regarding approval of 2024 Rural Internship Program applications.

Dominic Elizondo reviewed the applicants with the Board and referenced the applications within the packet. He notified the Board that the EDA reached out to the DDCT noting that we can no longer use our grant funds for scholarships or fellowships like the Rural Internship Program. The DDCT was notified the week before the meeting. Dominic Elizondo is reviewing other funding and asked for board feedback on funding. Cynthia Hernandez noted her concerns about timelines and the need of students to have their internship solidified with graduation quickly approaching. The Board gave the DDCT until May 3rd to find funding.

Cynthia Hernandez made a motion to approve the Rural Internship Program applicants, contingent on identifying funding, with the deadline of May 3rd, seconded by Bobby Whitson; the motion passed unanimously.

6. Discussion and Action Item: Regarding approval of 2024 Leadership Central Texas

Program applications.

Dominic Elizondo reviewed the Leadership Central Texas applicants with the Board. He noted there are not any funding problems here since applicants pay their tuition. There were 8 applicants in the program.

Dean Roome made a motion to approve the Leadership Central Texas Program applicants, seconded by Cynthia Hernandez; the motion passed unanimously.

7. Discussion Item: Regarding Fair Housing Presentation and Discussion

Dominic Elizondo presented about Fair Housing, noting that April is Fair Housing Month. The DDCT receives funds through the TDA, including the CDBG. One of the program items is providing a presentation on fair housing policies. He noted policies including the Civil Rights Act of 1968. He noted how communities can help further fair housing. Dominic opened the presentation up for discussion with discussion questions around fair housing measures that have been implemented, future implementation plans, and barriers to fair housing access in local communities. Discussion surrounded there not being enough proactive fair housing work done in Bell County.

8. Discussion Item: Regarding 2022-2026 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Implementation

Dominic Elizondo read the objective and strategies below.

- Objective: Enhance the region's economic connectivity". The strategies under the objective are to:

- Strategy 1: Expand broadband, creating a Broadband Advisory Council to accelerate the audit/survey/buildout process across jurisdictions.
- Strategy 2: Expand public transit offerings to provide reliable, affordable public transportation options for connecting rural residents with employment centers.
- Strategy 3: Improve the conditions of roadways, with particular attention to increased use of county roads.
- Strategy 4: Develop an airport master plan addressing airport marketing/branding, increasing competitiveness vis-à-vis Austin, and needed upgrades such as additional hangar space.

Dominic Elizondo opened discussion for the strategies. There were the following comments:

- Strategy 1: No comments.
- Strategy 2: No comments.
- Strategy 3: Board members decided that awareness of grants would be the role of DDCT staff. Ginger requested an update to the newsletter. The Board also discussed roadway designations, including I-14.
- Strategy 4: Board members recommending making an inventory of local airports.

9. Discussion Item: Regarding Updates on Regional Broadband Initiatives

Anna Barge discussed had updates from the Texas Broadband Development Office including:

- Central Texas Regional Working Group.
- BOOT Program expanding eligible locations due to SB 1238.
- Local Government Roundtable, 1st Thursday of the month (might change in July)
- The BDO submitted the Texas Digital Opportunity plan to the NTIA on February 28th.
- The Comptroller has adopted final rules for the broadband development program established by SB 1238.
- The BDO requires agencies to acquire a Tier E license if the agency wants to challenge broadband coverage maps.
- The BDO announced their Technical Assistance Program. Applications are on their website.

Anna Barge also discussed other updates including:

- The USDA ReConnect Loan & Grant Program is now open. Applications are due on May 21, 2024.
- The NTIA's State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program opened for applications in March. States are eligible applicants. We will be monitoring whether Texas applies.
- The Affordability Connectivity Program is shutting down. Some ISPs plan on offering an alternative low-cost solution to the ACP-approved recipients.

There was some discussion on how to know whether an area is considered served by broadband standards.

10. Discussion Item: Regarding Federal and State Legislative Updates Pertaining to Economic Development

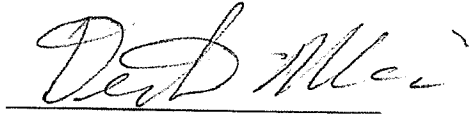
Anna Barge noted that there are not a lot of legislative updates due to the Texas Legislature being inactive at this time. She presented the additional EPA funds the state of Texas will receive for the Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. Anna Barge clarified that there are programs for both new and existing water lines after asked by Dr. Clevenger.

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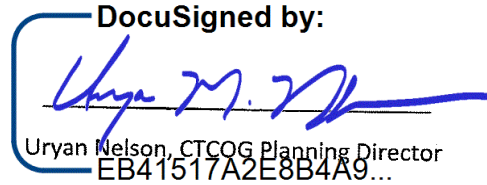
11. Board of Director Comments: Dominic Elizondo noted that the Community Development Fund is opening soon and priorities will be made at the next Executive Committee meeting. Dean asked about the DDCT's involvement in local issues surrounding insurance costs.

12. Discuss agenda items for the next meeting on Thursday, July 11, 2024, at 9:30 AM.

13. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:01 AM.



Dexter Morris, DDCT Chair

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Uryan Nelson, CTCOG Planning Director
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