**CLAY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA**

**4:00 pm**

## **November 14, 2012**

**Present**: Joe Mobley, Greg Clary, Rev. Bill Randall, Debbie Ricks, Grady Williams (Counsel/Interim Executive Director), Jan Conrad, Tom Morris

**Absent:** Chip Dobson, Paz Patel, Matt Welch, Virginia Hall

**Staff:** Kellie Collins, John Tabor, Bill Garrison

**Guests:** Holly Parrish, Doug Conkey

**Call to Order:** Vice Chair Ms. Debbie Ricks, presiding, called the Clay County Development Authority (“CCDA”) Board meeting to order at 4:01PM.

**Invocation:** Reverend Bill Randall.

**Approval of Minutes:** Joe Mobley moved to approve the minutes of the October 17th meeting. Reverend Randall seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report:** The Finance Committee recommended approving Mary Ann Magers as CCDA’s auditor, and authorizing Grady Williams to sign the audit engagement letter. It will be $4,500 for the audit, and if we are required to have a “single audit”, it will be an additional $2,500. Jan Conrad made a motion to approve, Joe Mobley seconded, and the motion carried. Tim Coleman, CPA, will make a recommendation at our next board meeting as to how much money we should keep in our operating checking account for monthly bills. We have more money in our checking right now that we can move to our money market account. Chair Matt Welch had asked the Board to table the budget for another month until we get together with Bill Garrison and see what the plans are for Economic Development. Finance Chair Debbie Ricks asked for a motion to table the budget for another month. The Board will continue to make its monthly contribution to the Chamber in the interim. Greg Clary made a motion to table the budget for another month, Tom Morris seconded the motion, and it carried. Chamber President John Tabor said we need to have a budget, we need to publish it. There is a $21,000 loan still outstanding under the defense grant. We have been told this money is coming from Enterprise Florida; it is just taking a little longer than expected. Jan Conrad pointed out we have a $12,000 loss monthly; which is mostly the $8,333 payment to the Chamber.

**Attorney’s Report:**

1. **IStart Jax:** Grady Williams has been asked by Paz Patel if Paz can present iStart Jax to the Board at the next Board meeting.
2. **Big League Dreams:** BLD Committee Chair Greg Clary reported that we have we have received and reviewed proposals, and are prepared to meet with the interested parties for presentations this Friday, November 16th for an all day marathon starting at 9:00 a.m. Hopefully, by the end of that meeting we would have made a selection and bring it to the Board at the next Board meeting. However we are going to be initiating a market study on the site we choose. Debbie Ricks asked what kind of finish time we are expecting after the study to give to the county. Greg Clary said we don’t know yet, we have to work with the proposer to make sure what the mechanics are. Clay Today is now engaged with this project. Debbie Ricks said we need to make sure everyone has the facts; we don’t want people to get the wrong idea. Greg Clary wants to make sure when we do choose a site that the Board talks it over and makes sure we have all of our questions answered. Debbie Ricks has been speaking to individuals and saying it is an Economic Engine for the County. We as a Board need to be ready to answer questions; we need to come up with talking points. Debbie Ricks asked the BLD Committee to put together talking points for BLD. Greg said we have seven proposed sites with three proposers; Ken Smallwood, Ted McGowan and Holly Parrish with the County. Guest BCC Chairman Doug Conkey said he hopes BLD is involved with the study and to have their input on the studies. Greg Clary says BLD has done their own studies and we have all of their data. Joe Mobley said one thing to look at when the field is built we can look at getting sponsors to sponsor each field like they do up north and that would generate money. Greg Clary thanked BCC Chairman Doug Conkey for his support in BLD.
3. **Economic Development Report:** John Tabor reported we have a number of projects from Enterprise Florida. A common theme we are finding is a lack of inventory is the problem we just don’t have the sites like Duval County. We are getting Bill Garrison involved. We did have inquiry from this company who wanted the land donated; we tried to present them with a tax refund proposal. We have been working with the county to try to address this situation. We can say it was a timber related company. We had Clay Electric and the utility authority to meet with them as well. Guest Holly Parrish said we do not have natural gas available that is our biggest problem. We were told Teco Peoples Gas has the capability and they have not offered it. Greg Clary said it is so refreshing to hear about Economic Development projects, this Board needs to know about these issues and how we may be able to help. We need to approach Teco Peoples Gas; we need natural gas available in this county to bring in new businesses. Guest Doug Conkey said the county commission could have them come in front of the BCC and ask them questions and try and solve this issue. Joe Mobley said St. Johns County Utility Authority offers great deals to new businesses and businesses that are expanding. We could have a conversation with Clay Electric or the Clay County Utility Authority and try to get them to offer 20% discount for our new businesses. Clay County has vacant properties available; it is important to work with your local government to solve any issues quickly. It is surprising that businesses looking to relocate are looking to buy existing buildings and don’t want to build. Companies try and avoid any delays. If we work with the right people moving forward we should have a much bigger success. Joe Mobley introduced Bill Garrison to the board. Bill is a business person who is from Clay County; he will be our contact moving forward for Economic Development. He is very committed and is working very closely with the Choose Clay Board. Choose Clay will continue searching for a new Economic Development President, we have hired Idea Staffing in helping us search. Choose Clay is working on bringing in new and existing investors; we need your help. If we bring in more money this Board will be able to lower its monthly contributions. We are looking to raise the private sector and public sector support. In our research, we found out that the local government supported all Economic Development funding. The county does pay for JAXUSA but it’s something we are looking at. We have had the major employers step up in their contributions for Economic Development. Bill will be going to the cities and asking for more contributions, and maintaining our public/private relationship with them. Choose Clay did discuss the SBDC full time office in Clay and feel it is a great idea and Joe Mobley said Bill Garrison and Jan Conrad should meet with the business bankers and have them fund the program. All inquiries will go to Bill Garrison now. The SBDC office is about $35,000 a year. Janice Donaldson with SBDC could have a few minutes with them and it would be easy to sell. Jan Conrad asked when John Tabor was going to be finished. John said as of right now his last day is December 31st. We should be hiring a new Chamber president within 30 days. There are really some great things going on in the Chamber. Debbie Ricks and the Board thanked John Tabor for his services.

**Next Meeting:** Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at 3:00 PM at the Clay County Administration Building, Conference Room B in Green Cove Springs. Big League Dreams sub-committee will be prior to that at 2:00 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 5:10 PM