

**DURANT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING**

**June 14, 2016 AT 8:00 A.M.**

**Durant Industrial Authority Conference Room**

**I. Call To Order at 8:00 a.m..... Tommy Kramer**

Tommy Kramer called the regular monthly Durant Economic Development Council Meeting to order.

**II. Opening Invocation ..... Darrell Mendez**

**III. Roll Call ..... Laura Voorhies**

The following members were present: Shaun Banner, Bert Davison, Bob Delveaux, Eddy Dempsey, James Dunegan, Bryan Hallmark, Kara Hendrickson, Robert Holliday, Ketan Jain, Tommy Kramer, Greg Massey, Darrell Mendez, Fran Mickle, Jeff Monroe and Jeff Tarrant.

The following members were absent: Curtis Armor, Robert Bourne, Ron Boyer, Sean Burrage, Scott Dewald, Chris Glendening, Mike Goodwin, Jeff Hammock, Stewart Hoffman, Drew Miller, Larry Minks, Janet Reed and Jeff Tarrant.

**IV. Welcome New Member Drew Miller, Manager SE Area-ONG..... Tommy Kramer**

Tommy Kramer advised that Drew Miller, the new Southeast Area Manager for Oklahoma Natural Gas (ONG) and he is replacing Rod Miller who is retiring in July. Mr. Drew Miller will be a new member to the Economic Development Council. He could not attend this month due to a prior commitment.

**V. Consider Approval of Minutes of the May 10, 2016 Meeting..... Tommy Kramer**

Robert Holliday motioned to accept with a second by Greg Massey. The motion carried by:

- Aye: Shaun Banner, Bert Davison, Bob Delveaux, Eddy Dempsey, James Dunegan, Bryan Hallmark, Kara Hendrickson, Robert Holliday, Ketan Jain, Tommy Kramer, Greg Massey, Darrell Mendez, Fran Mickle, Jeff Monroe and Jeff Tarrant.
- Nay: None
- Abstain: None

**VI. Present City of Durant Monthly Sales Tax Report ..... Mayor Hoffman**

Mayor Hoffman asked Earlene Walker to explain the tax report.

Earlene Walker advised that sales tax growth has slowed, mirroring what is happening around the State of Oklahoma. They are projecting a flat growth of 1.84%.

Tommy Kramer stated that there has been growth in sales tax the last six years.

**VII. Review of Durant Industrial Authority Annual Report ..... Tommy Kramer**

Tommy Kramer advised that everyone has a handout of the Durant Industrial Authority Annual Report for his or her own review. The report is positive and the projects are listed as well. One of the highlights is the letter from Site Selection magazine; you have copy of the magazine for your review on page 100 advising that we were listed as one of the Top 10 Economic Development Organizations in a Micropolitan City. They will be sending us another plaque for this award.

**VIII. Presentation: Where Is Oklahoma Now and Where Do We Need To Be?.....  
.....Julie Knutson, President & CEO and John Harper, Chairman OK Academy**

Greg Massey stated he has known Julie since 1987 and she had helped Oklahoma in bring the right people together, putting them in a room to discuss and present solutions. It is an honor for you to come speak to us today and not sure where Oklahoma would be without her and OK Academy.

Julie Knutson introduced John Harper, Chairman of OK Academy. John is out there visiting communities explaining what OK Academy is currently accomplishing.

John Harper advised that in the communities they serve, Durant has set the high standard for economic development. The purpose of the Oklahoma Academy is a non-partisan organization that looks a community issues and develops recommendations that can find their way into legislation or implement through other agencies in state government. The Oklahoma Academy has an annual three-day Town Hall process, which is the foundation in which we give recommendations. A topic is selected from the suggestions of our members and members are placed in panel groups in separate rooms and have discussions about the topic and then prepare solutions. There is a person recording all of the ideas of each panel, and then it is reviewed for the commonality. We have speakers come during the meals to give their perspectives on the topic. The members put together a document, which is reviewed by Oklahoma Academy and final recommendations are produced.

Julie Knutson advised that Durant has played, as a vital community a big role in the town hall meetings. To give more detail on the town hall, it is a collective group of about 150 people who have been nominated to participate, giving us representation from all areas of the state, various businesses and non-profits. The last meeting was a discussion the state budget. The groups focused on 11 agencies that are effectively appropriated approximately 91% of the budget and asked them what are their priorities, if they want to re-allocate they will need to take from another, there is no new money in the budget. Their priorities were 1) K-12 education, 2) mental health/substance abuse and 3) transportation/infrastructure. The brief that we have handed out is the result of this meeting.

Transparency was critical to everyone. They did not feel that the legislature, as a whole knew what is happening with the budget and why. We have the legislation this brief, but they haven't done anything with these recommendations.

John Harper stated that Oklahoma Academy is trying to get into the communities to help motivate people to be engaged and share our information.

Jeff Tarrant asked about how to keep the 2014 recommendation on Medicaid expansion moving forward.

Julie Knutson stated they were keeping it moving. Oklahoma Academy had a town hall about health and what citizens can do to be more healthy for themselves and the state as a whole.

**IV. Review of Oklahoma Employment Securities Commission March 2016 County Unemployment ..... Tommy Kramer**

Tommy Kramer advised to review the handout given. Bryan County is at a 4% unemployment and on 6/15/16 there is a round table meeting in the Durant Industrial conference room with the Southeastern Oklahoma State University president to discuss workforce.

**X. New Business..... Tommy Kramer**

Tommy Kramer advised the BASS tournament was in town last week. Debi Snodgrass had called Tommy to have Durant host the tournament. The event was hosted at the Choctaw Nation resort and there were 108 fishermen in participation.

Kara Hendrickson advised that 6/11/16 was the first Saturday of the Farmers Market and it was very successful, most vendors sold out by noon. The community wanted the market back and Jim Dunegan and First Texoma National Bank was kind to allow it on their parking lot until a permanent location come available.

Tommy Kramer stated that the OK Southeast Event, which started 15 year ago went very well this year with the help of the Choctaw Nation and Tammye Gwin. There were 18 site locators, 80 golfers and 9 boats for fishing.

Tommy Kramer advised that the Cornerstone building and its 8 acres, which has been vacant for 10 years and subleased for storage. Approximately 4 months ago, we had a company from Pennsylvania call about the building, which they found on our website. They made a trip to Durant to look at this building and another in Dallas, Texas. The company informed me that if I could come up with \$500,000 in incentives, they would come to Durant. I diligently went to work and had the Oklahoma Tax Commission come to visit the building and they re-certified the building allowing for tax credits, the owner of the building will allow credit for repairs and the Choctaw Nation will participate. This will give us approximately \$1.5M in credits. This company is a dry good distribution center with \$5.2M in payroll, average wage of \$16.00 per hour with benefits and 150 new jobs for our community.

**XI. Adjournment..... Tommy Kramer**

Robert Holliday motioned for adjournment with a second from Kara Hendrickson. Tommy Kramer called the meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.