

Meeting Date: 2/7/2023

Meeting of: Madison County Fiscal Court

Meeting Type: Special Called Work Session

HONORABLE REAGAN TAYLOR COUNTY JUDGE EXECUTIVE PRESIDING

The Madison County Fiscal Court convened in a special called work session on the 7th of February 2023 at 9:30 AM at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) 560 South Keeneland Dr, Training Room B in Richmond, Ky. Present was the Honorable Reagan Taylor in the chair presiding and the following members of the Fiscal Court: James Brian Combs, Stephen Lochmueller, Billy Ray Hughes, and Tom Botkin were present. Madison County Attorney Jennie Haymond, and Madison County Sheriff Michael Coyle were also present.

It being determined a quorum was present, the meeting was called to order.

IN RE: Presentation of Economic Development Analysis—MWM Consulting, LLC:

Lucas Witt, Elizabeth Carter, and Audrey Grace Hacker with MWM Consulting, LLC presented an Economic Development Analysis to the Court. They discussed the current industrial activity in the U.S. from January 2022 to July 2022, stating that national site selection consultants suggest that communities that have invested in site readiness initiatives have an advantage and are more well-positioned to compete for projects. From a workforce perspective, Madison County is well positioned with 7 exits on I-75 but it may be losing out on opportunities due to lack of available industrial sites.

They also discussed the workforce demographics of the county in regard to the employment and wage trends, and commuting patterns, as well as provided a snapshot of the industries in the county. The average worker in Madison County earns an annual wage of \$44,169, compared to a national average of \$67,777, and 43% of Madison Countians are commuting to Fayette County for work. The major industries in the county are educational services, due largely to ECU and Berea College, followed by retail trade, then manufacturing. They recommended that Madison County identify site(s) to pursue for acquisition by analyzing studies and determining if they would like to proceed with an acquisition, meet with utility partners to develop an improvement path, organize a timeline for an acquisition and meet with landowners, and partner with an Engineering firm to conduct a due diligence study. Once the decision has been made to acquire a site, they suggest placing the desired site under option and identify funding sources, develop a market strategy to attract desired companies to locate to Madison County. The County's return on investment will not be immediate but will be a long-term success for the community and generations to come.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that Madison County has so much potential, but doesn't feel like it has been in the forefront of the governing body's mind in the past, and they need to be active in getting business and land in order to invest in the economic development of the county. He stated that this Court might not see the implemented changes but if they don't have some vision for the future, they are doing a disservice to the next generation.

Judge Taylor asked the Court what the pleasure of the Court was in regard to the presentation. He stated that growing their tax base is how the County is going to increase their revenue to continue to provide great services and a better quality of life, not by increasing the tax rates.

Magistrate Combs stated that he thinks this is their only way forward as a county.

Magistrate Botkin stated that he would like to see them move forward as well. In the past, the County has been passed over because they didn't have the infrastructure ready that certain industries needed in order to come to Madison County.

IN RE: Presentation of Broadband Expansion Proposal—Chris Iseral, Chief Information Officer:

Chris Iseral, Chief Information Officer, and Clay White, GIS Manager spoke about the expansion of quality, affordable broadband in Madison County. Over the past years, particularly during Covid, the need for good, reliable internet has become extremely important due to students and businesses working more from home, and the County has the opportunity to use ARPA Funds to help fund the broadband expansion to all Madison

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Counties that need it. When someone moves into a new area now, they not only expect water, sewer and electric, but also internet. Since they started looking into getting affordable internet to everyone, the internet companies have begun competing with each other and putting in their own fiber optic lines to areas that are unserved or underserved, but there are still 2244 (6%) locations that is unserved. They are asking Fiscal Court to give up to \$750,000 of ARPA Funding to Spectrum to construct a fiber optic network to Madison County that is unserved.

Magistrate Lochmueller stated that the mountain that they have climbed and solved is almost unbelievable and they should be credited because it is a game changer for Madison County.

Iseral stated that at the next meeting, the Court will be presented with a Resolution to approve the expenditure of \$750,000 of ARPA Funding. Once the contract has been signed, it will take roughly 24 months to complete and then the County will have 6 months to review and make sure that everyone is served that should be.

Magistrate Lochmueller reinforced that they are not only looking at providing service for those that are unserved or underserved in the County but also those that are within the city limits.

Magistrate Hughes asked if there was a "catch" to this contract. Iseral stated that due to the due diligence and the length of time they have taken to get to this point, there is no "catch" other than the possibility that Spectrum may be the only servicing company for that area.

Magistrate Botkin stated that the goal of everyone that was initially on the Broadband team was to make sure that everyone in the county would be served when it was all finished.

Judge Taylor thanked Chris and Clay for their work on this project, and informed the Court, if it was their pleasure, they would be presented a Resolution and a draft contract at the next court meeting.

Magistrate Lochmueller asked how this contract would affect future growth in the county. Iseral stated that it would be wrapped into the planning of the economic development for that growth.

ANNOUNCE NEXT COURT DATE:

Judge Taylor announced the next court date for February 14, 2023, in the Berea Council Chambers' Courtroom at 9:30AM.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Motion from James Brian Combs to adjourn, seconded by Stephen Lochmueller. Hearing no objection, the meeting adjourned at 11:22 AM.


REAGAN TAYLOR MADISON CO. JUDGE/EXECUTIVE