

**HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS  
MINUTES OF REGULAR SESSION  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION  
CITY HALL, 1115 BROADWAY  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2021  
12:00 PM**

**Call to Order:**

The January 6, 2021, meeting of the Industrial Development Commission was called to order at 12:01 PM by Chairman Jim Meridith. The meeting was held via Zoom/telephone conference.

**Roll Call:**

Members present: Chairman Jim Meridith, Vice-Chairman Diane Korte-Lindsey, Josh Kloss, Jon Greve and Marshall Rinderer.

Also present: City Manager Chris Conrad, Director of Community Development Breann Speraneo, Economic Development Coordinator Mallord Hubbard, Director Angela Imming, Deputy Clerk Lana Hediger, and, Matt Kundrat, Bob Knight, Lisa Buchman, and Carolyn Mandelker, all of Harrison Edwards, and Recording Secretary Megan Von Hatten.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Jon Greve made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3 2020, Regular Session meeting of the Industrial Development Commission; seconded by Josh Kloss. All members voted aye; none voted no; the motion carried.

**Reports:**

**Treasurer's Report – Jon Greve**

Jon Greve sent the Treasurer report to members via E-mail. The financial report reflected that the balance in the IDC checking account as of December 31, 2021, is \$14,386.21. There is also the \$60,000 CD with interest to date of \$831.22 leaving the balance on the CD at \$60,831.22. Total assets for the IDC account is \$75,217.43.

**Updates on other job inquiries – Breann Speraneo**

Breann Speraneo reported:

- The Schlafly negotiations are going very well, at the last City Council meeting a development agreement for 907 Main Street, and purchase contract for 911 and 913 Main Street were passed by Council used for a public park. The plan is to have Schlafly and the Public Park open by June 1, 2021.
- Trow Nutrition negotiations took a bit longer than anticipated. The attorneys are still discussing details of the development agreement. So, it will likely be on the next city council agenda (January 19, 2021) for approval.
- Single-family home incentives for subdivisions platted before May 1, 2018 are all gone for this fiscal year. The next round will open on May 1, 2021. We still have some available for subdivisions platted after May 1, 2018.

**Update on Highland Communication Services – Angela Imming**

Angela reported we had a record breaking month, \$230,000 revenue this month, which is well above where we were last year at this time. HCS usually hovers between \$218,000 and \$225,000, so \$230,000 is fantastic.

Angela stated we also had a record breaking number of subscribers. 2,523 customers is currently where we stand, and just a reminder to everyone, we were supposed to max out at 2,500 customers at completion, which was project to be completed by the year 2032.

Next, Angela updated the members on the development of VTV products. We have a very small data group testing the new products. Director Imming stated she is a little concerned with the pandemic possibly slowing the rollout on VTV. We have already had a scare with three of our staff members having Covid at the same time, which is exactly what we did not want to happen. Moving forward Highland Communications will no longer be sending out three technicians to one location, at the same time. The new procedure is to send out one technician at a time to lessen the risk of getting Covid. With that said, I am not sure we will be able to make the July deadline but we are going to try awfully hard.

Finally, Angela stated what we need to keep in the back of our minds that Highland Communications has not raised their rates since 2014. We did raise them in 2014 and lost a considerable amount of customers. Our rates keep rising with no mercy, so we are going to have to look at raising our video rates this next fiscal year. I will entertain any questions you may all have.

Jon asked Angela, "I know we have surpassed our customer expectations. I think as it has evolved the number of services per customer has kind of changed, does that meet or succeed our revenue projection?" Angela responded, yes we have, I do not know what you mean by fewer services, do you mean that few people have video? Jon responded, correct, that and phone services which was a part of the original equation. Angela responded, yes phone strangely is holding steady which I am shocked by. She stated the return on investment for phones is the highest out of all three of our products. You make money immediately when customers use our phone service. Revenue projections, I don't know if you heard me say we hit an all-time high of \$230,000 revenue this month. We can talk about that all day long but what we really have to talk about is our costs, and how we do video service. The only way we are going to become long term physically solvent is to reduce our operational costs, which is where we are going with VTV. We are expect to save about \$230,000 a year on equipment cost by going with VTV. She stated we lose money on video...period. The only way we can continue to come out of the financial position that we are in, is to get on the right side of the video services we provide. That is exactly what we are doing through VTV and raising our rates this next fiscal year.

### **Update on Disaster Relief Initiatives – Mallord Hubbard**

Mallord reported that over the past month we deployed a business survey. We hope all of the businesses will fill out the survey for the IDC members. The purpose of the survey is to get some feedback from the business community. Obviously 2020 was a rough year on our businesses, so we are really wanting to hear back from them to inform us going forward in 2021. Mallord stated these surveys will determine how we can best implement policies that will allow our businesses to succeed and come out of this pandemic stronger than they were before. Mallord stated we are really going to start pushing for those responses. He has already started scheduling retention visits that will be conducted throughout the year.

### **Harrison Edwards-Presentation**

Harrison Edwards Public Relations Marketing gave a presentation on the new Economic Development Marketing Strategy they have been developing for the City of Highland and Highland Communication Services, which was then discussed briefly. Some of the key elements of the strategy presented are as follows:

- The city's opportunity to grow and appeal to young families, a younger work force with more entertainment options to add to the many important assets already within the community.
- The current Economic development and marketing efforts to ensure Highlands brand is reaching the correct target.
- The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats the City has
- The new marketing strategy focuses on, strong social media, highlighting local success stories, leadership goals, more events and forming strong regional coalitions.

### **Approval of 2021 Meeting dates for Industrial Development Commission**

Diane Korte-Lindsey made a motion to approve the 2021 Meeting dates for IDC; seconded by Jon Greve, All members voted by roll call aye; none voted no; the motion carried.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next regular meeting of the Industrial Development Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, February 3, 2021.

### **Adjournment**

Marshall Rinderer made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Diane Korte-Lindsey. All members voted aye by roll call; none voted no. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 1:07 PM.