



MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, March 12, 2025 - 4:00 P.M.

155 N. TEGNER STREET WICKENBURG, ARIZONA 85390

A. CALL TO ORDER – Vice Chair Stachowicz called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Peter Stachowicz, Vice Chair
Robert Beacham, Member
Geri Fair, Member
Craig Froeter, Member
Steve Hamilton, Member
Vince Barringer, Alternate Member

Absent: Dwight Zemp, Chair
Christal James, Member
Karla Mortimer, Alternate Member
Kristy Bedoian, Council Liaison

Staff Present: Tim Suan, Deputy Town Manager
Amy Brown, Town Clerk

C. CALL TO THE PUBLIC – None

D. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Discussion and Introduction of Each Returning Committee Member and New Members Steve Hamilton, Vince Barringer, and Karla Mortimer

Committee members introduced themselves.

2. Chair Update - which may include matters related to economic development, transportation, special projects, and current events

Vice Chair Peter Stachowicz, reported that they are still working on the wayfinding signs and workforce development.

3. Staff Update - which may include matters related to economic development, transportation, special projects, and current events

Tim Suan, Deputy Town Manager, reported that Madden Media was still running search engine marketing and meta prospecting of Wickenburg domestically as well as in Canada and Frankfurt, Germany. The international market has not been as receptive as the domestic market. The economic development website will be coming soon with more information.

4. Consideration and Action to Approve the Minutes of the Meeting of January 15, 2025

MOVED BY Member Froeter to approve the minutes of January 15, 2025

SECONDED BY Member Fair

VOTE: 6 - 0 (Yes – Vice Chair Stachowicz, Members Barringer, Beacham, Fair, Froeter, and Hamilton)

5. Presentation by AZ@Work Maricopa County with an Update Regarding Workforce Development in Wickenburg

Tina Russo, Workforce Development Division Program Manager for Maricopa County presented the information about workforce development in Wickenburg. Donna Bunch is the local workforce development coordinator. She showed statistics for workforce services provided in Wickenburg for the last fiscal year, as well as for three quarters of this fiscal year, with the numbers being less due to lacking a quarter of data, except for the workshop participants that has increased. They are working on quality interactions versus quantity to try to get people into the right jobs, not just any job.

Last year the Workforce 2 You received a grant for \$500,000 for two occupational skills training programs in Wickenburg, Gila Bend and Queen Creek. The Medical Billing and Coding class had 15 enrollments, 12 completed the training and 4 found new employment. The Medical Administrative Assistant training had 6 enrollments, 5 completed the training, 1 found new employment and 1 found a paid externship.

Year two of the Workforce 2 You will have classes starting June 9, 2025, with offerings in Wickenburg of Home Health Aide certification training and Electronic Health Records Management certification training.

Vice Chair Stachowicz asked if any of the graduates found jobs locally. Donna Bunch, Workforce Development Coordinator, stated that many of the participants were from Surprise, so they found jobs where they live, not in Wickenburg. This year her goal is to keep people in Wickenburg for jobs.

6. Presentation and Discussion on the Role of Microtransit in Communities led by the Transportation Company Via

Tim Suan, Deputy Town Manager, reported that he has a company called Via who is here virtually presenting their transportation technology that is a growing industry. In the past, Wickenburg had a bus that went from Wickenburg to Surprise but saw limited use.

Joe Martin, Via Transportation Inc., reported that he is present to talk about a program they offer called microtransit. Microtransit, also called “on-demand transit,” is transportation technology that captures trip requests and groups passengers into shared rides, in real-time. Microtransit utilizes a dense network of virtual bus stops to complement and replace traditional bus systems. This can help improve access to jobs, healthcare and shopping. They offer an app for people to book rides. It is different than bus routes as it is not the same route. They offer a software-as-a-service option where an organization can utilize their software and provide their own vehicles and drivers. The other option is a turnkey option operated by Via that includes technology, dispatchers, drivers, vehicles and service management.

Member Hamilton asked about use by tourists in Wickenburg to get around. Mr. Martin stated that in Park City, Utah, they employ drivers to provide rides for employees and tourists to get to the ski areas.

Member Beacham asked who holds the insurance on the vehicles. Mr. Martin stated that if the town wants to operator the program with their vehicles and drivers, then the town would have insurance. If Via runs the program with their vehicles and drivers, they cover the insurance.

Mr. Martin continued that in Chandler, the city covers the costs of the program, so there is only a small rider fare. The most popular locations for rides include the local high schools, recreation center, pool and Chandler Fashion Center. They have had this program since 2022, it is called Chandler flex and helps to provide students with rides to school and to after school activities, allowing parents to stay at work.

Member Froeter asked if the riders pay the entire cost, what would that cost be. Mr. Martin stated that that model wouldn't work as it would cost \$10-15 per ride. Typically, the city subsidizes the rides, making them either free or at a reduced cost.

Member Froeter asked the cost of just one van to run the rides, since we already have a senior van. Mr. Martin stated that it is \$200,000 per van per year.

Member Beacham stated that it sounded like an upscale taxi service. Mr. Martin stated that it is shared rides, so the vehicle might pick up additional people going in the same direction.

Vice Chair Stachowicz asked about transportation to Surprise and wondered about a trial period. Mr. Martin stated that it can be to Surprise for work or medical appointments. Usually a bus is most effective, such as a shuttle to Surprise. A trial time for their program would usually be one year to get the word out and then see if it is worth it. They currently have programs in Chandler, Glendale, Sun City, Prescott Valley, Lake Havasu and Maricopa.

Tim Suan, Deputy Town Manager, asked the priorities of the committee such as affordability, connection to outlying areas, or more rural areas of the town.

Member Hamilton suggested looking at service to residents as well as tourists. Vice Chair Stachowicz thought that there needed to be a deep look at all the areas before the next steps. Member Beacham suggested setting a cap or maximum.

E. NEXT MEETING DATE – May 14, 2025 – Town Clerk Brown reminded all committee members about the upcoming Open Meeting Law training on March 17 and 24.

F. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY Member Beacham to adjourn at 5:00 PM

SECONDED BY Member Hamilton

VOTE: 6 - 0 (Yes – Vice Chair Stachowicz, Members Barringer, Beacham, Fair, Froeter, and Hamilton)

Attest:

Dwight Zemp, Chair

Amy Brown, Town Clerk