

White County Development Authority

CALLED MEETING: Minutes

DATE: Tuesday, September 14th, 2021
PLACE: BOC Board Room
1235 Helen Highway
Cleveland, GA, 30528
TIME: 4:30 PM

Those present were Michael Meuse, John Ziemer, Don Allison, Michael Yarbrough, Ridley Kinsey, and Dustin Hulsey. Guests present were Carl Free, John Sell, Mercedes Dodd, Dean Dyer, WRWH Radio, and Stephanie Hill, White County News.

Acting Chairman Michael Meuse called the meeting to order. Acting Chairman Meuse asked the board members to express their top choices for the proposals.

Mr. Kinsey explained that he looked at the previous projects that each company had done, with his top choice being Thomas and Hutton since they had also worked with local counties and had good college backgrounds.

Mr. Yarbrough explained that his totals were close, so his choices were Southern Prosperity and RSI for the local factor and litigation concerns pertaining to Thomas and Hutton.

Mr. Hulsey said his top choices were Southern Prosperity and GMRC, adding that he had the same litigation concerns for Thomas and Hutton.

Mr. Allison explained that his top choices were Thomas and Hutton and JS&A, with extra points being given for local companies.

Mr. Ziemer stated his top choices as Southern Prosperity for their engineering background and GMRC.

Acting Chairman Meuse stated that his top were Thomas and Hutton and GMRC due to both having "local boots on the ground".

Mr. Sell, White County Director of Community and Economic Development, added that he is not a voting board member and explained that he had chosen Thomas and Hutton because of their experience with local counties in implementing strategic plans and staff credentials. He pointed out that Thomas and Hutton has an engineering background. In contrast, Mr. Sell said GMRC is more planning and may not have as much experience with consulting.

Mr. Free, the Development Authority's attorney, in reference to the litigation concerns, pointed out that companies are required to disclose any pending or threatened cases during audits and that his opinion is that the pending cases are not a red flag.

White County Development Authority

CALLED MEETING: Minutes

Additional board member comments and concerns were that a local company would be more beneficial by having local contacts versus virtual meetings, the company should have the same vision of keeping White County the same by not urbanizing it, the larger companies being too commercial, as well as the selecting company need to be being agriculture oriented. Other board members had concerns of some of the companies being too local.

Mr. Yarbrough added that he took note of Thomas and Hutton, but his only concern was the litigations which had now been mitigated. Mr. Sell pointed out that familiarity with White County is not necessarily an advantage as the other companies may be able to provide new ideas or vision.

Mr. Sell added up the scoresheets and stated that GMRC scored the highest.

Mr. Hulseley made a motion to begin negotiations on a contract with GMRC and was seconded by Mr. Ziemer. The motion carried with four in favor and two opposed, with Mr. Yarborough and Mr. Kinsey being those opposed.

Acting Chairman Meuse added that more meetings and more responsibilities will be required by the board members in going forward with this project.

Mr. Ziemer made a motion to adjourn and was seconded by Mr. Meuse. Motion was unanimous.