



THE HONDO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, (HEDC)

Meeting Minutes

Type of Meeting: Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Thursday, April 17th, 2025 7:00 a.m.
Location: South Texas Regional Airport Board Room
700 Vandenberg Road, Hondo, TX 78861

1. Determination of Quorum

1.1 Call to Order

Chair J. Gruber, Vice-Chair Ronnie Miller, Rachel Ramirez, Roger Hernandez & Rose Mary Mares.

Absent: Secretary Ashley Lowe, Treasurer Brett Riff

“President J. Gruber called the meeting to order at 7:01 a.m.”

- 2. Public Forum:** *Upon recognition by the Chair, persons desiring to address the Board may speak on any topic not to exceed three (3) minutes in length. Board Members are prohibited from deliberating on any item presented but may recommend placement on a future agenda for discussion.*

No comments were made by a visitor.

- 3. Consent Agenda:** *All consent items are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. If requested by a Board Member, any item may be taken off the Consent Agenda by the Chair for individual consideration.*

3.1 Approval of Feb 20th, 2025 and March 20th, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

“Ronnie Miller made the motion to approve the consent agenda items. Rose Mary Mares seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.”

4. Consider Items: Consider and take any action necessary

4.1 Approval of Resolution ED 2-25 for expenditure of Microsoft funds to HISD - \$10,000

The Board reviewed **Resolution ED 2-25**, a measure authorizing the expenditure of Microsoft scholarship funds to Hondo ISD in the amount of \$10,000. The funds, previously discussed at length in prior meetings, will be transferred to Hondo ISD’s general fund. The resolution also authorizes payment accordingly.

The Chair briefly read the resolution aloud for the record:

“Resolution authorizing the expenditure of Microsoft scholarship funds to the Hondo ISD in the amount of \$10,000 for the use in general funds and authorizing payment therefor.”



It was noted that the language of the resolution had been revised to ensure clarity and proper accounting.

The Board expressed appreciation that the matter, which had been under consideration for several years, was finally resolved.

“Ronnie Miller made the motion to approve the resolution, and Roger Hernandez seconded the motion. Rose Mary Mares abstained from the vote. Motion carried 4-0.”

4.2 Presentation and adoption of STRA Lease Agreement (J. Gruber – Chair of EDC)

Chair J. Gruber provided a summary of the finalized lease agreement between the Hondo Economic Development Corporation (HEDC) and the South Texas Regional Airport (STRA). Gruber noted that he and Ryan Elder – (Director of Airport Operations) had worked through the final details of the lease agreement and reached a mutual understanding without requiring attorney involvement.

Key terms of the lease include:

- Monthly lease amount of **\$400**
- Use of **two offices and a conference room**
- **HEDC will continue paying for Rise Broadband**, as it currently does
- **All other utilities and costs will be covered by the Airport Fund**
- The lease is for an initial term of **12 months**, after which it will be converted to a **month-to-month** arrangement

Gruber expressed appreciation for getting the lease formalized, remarking that this was the first written lease agreement for this arrangement in three or four years.

“Rose Mary Mares made the motion to approve the lease agreement. Rachel Ramirez seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.”

4.3 Request for Chamber of Commerce Funds (Jacie Galland – Exec. Director) \$35,000

Jacie Galland opened her presentation with gratitude for the opportunity to speak and shared updates on Chamber efforts, programming, and their effective use of previous EDC funding. She emphasized the Chamber's role in promoting business growth and strengthening community ties in Hondo.

Key Programs and Initiatives:

1. New Neighbor Welcome Bag Program

- Distributes branded bags filled with local business swag, cards, and promotional materials to new residents and event attendees.



- Bags promote Chamber members and are handed out at events like Shop Hop, Christmas in God's Country, and Summer Music Series.
- Real estate agents are also involved in distribution at closings.

2. Hondo Community Banner Program

- Recently launched; provides **38 banner opportunities** around downtown.
- Combines business sponsorships and local artist submissions (art representing Hondo/Medina County).
- Banners to be displayed from early summer to Nov. 1 (before Christmas banners go up).
- EDC, the City, and the Chamber are sponsoring initial banners.

3. Signature Event – Cartharts & Cocktails

- 275 tickets sold; featured 8 local eateries with room to grow participation.
- Eateries are paid to attend.
- The event recognizes outstanding local businesses, including nominees and finalists.
- EDC support allows for additional business exposure via signage and promotion.

4. Coffee & Clock Outs (Networking Events)

- Monthly mixers hosted at rotating local businesses, now growing due to high demand.
- Flexible formats: e.g., evening coffee at God's Country with unique offerings (e.g., Affogato espresso over ice cream).
- Recent successful events: one at **Vital Balance Wellness** for their anniversary with outdoor setup and refreshments.

Small Business Week Preview (Upcoming):

Five days of themed activities promoting local business engagement:

- **Monday:** “Make It Count” – community brings local receipts to enter prize drawing.
- **Tuesday:** “Hype Up Hondo” – social media shoutouts for favorite businesses.
- **Wednesday:** **Fiesta with the Finest of Medina County** – multi-chamber business mixer with Castroville and Go Medina.
- **Thursday:** “Love Local Member March” – board members visit businesses to deliver gifts, conduct service surveys, and strengthen relationships.
- **Friday:** “Open House Friday” – returns with popular **Dirty Soda Bar** and open invitation to learn about Chamber offerings and membership.

“A motion was made by Ronnie Miller to approve funding for the Chamber in the amount of \$35,000 for the 2025-2026 Budget. The motion was seconded by Rachel Ramirez. Rose Mary Mares abstained. Motion carried 4-0.”

4.4 Request for Oktoberfest 2025 Funds – (Joe & Melissa Claire) \$1,500

Melissa Claire presented a request for \$1,500 in sponsorship support for the upcoming **Oktoberfest 2025** event. Highlights from the presentation included:

- **Musical Entertainment:**
They have secured a commitment from the *Corey Weaver Band*, a group based in Kerrville, whom they discovered and enjoyed during a performance at Bandera Brewery. Their involvement is expected to elevate the entertainment experience.
- **Vendor Participation and Outreach:**
Building on last year's successful vendor turnout, the Claire's expressed intentions to increase vendor participation. They've been actively involved with the **Hondo Collective** and have already started informal outreach to past and potential vendors.
- **Sponsorship and Community Support:**
 - Claire's will continue as sponsors of the event.
 - *The Regulators* and *Rise Broadband* have already committed to sponsoring again this year.
 - Additional outreach to local stakeholders.
- **Charitable Engagement:**
 - They are considering continued support for the **Hondo Food Pantry** and **Bluebonnet Children's Center**, although no formal conversations have taken place yet.
- **Event Venue and Expansion Plans:**
 - Oktoberfest will again be held at their bed and breakfast property this year.
 - However, they expressed a **long-term vision** of significantly expanding the event to a larger venue to accommodate more guests, vendors, and entertainment options, capitalizing on the fact that theirs is the **only Oktoberfest in the area**.
- **Financials and Marketing:**
 - Last year's success came from a combination of **ticket/table sales**, which included food, drinks, and entertainment.
 - The **HEDC sponsored the event in 2024** with a \$1,000 contribution, which earned a banner placement (not a table).
 - This year's ask is **\$1,500**.
 - Their **marketing team is donating all time and resources** for promotions and outreach again in 2025, minimizing overhead costs and maximizing impact.

"A motion was made by Ronnie Miller to table the item to the May Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Roger Hernandez. Motion carried 5-0."

5. Discussion Items: Discuss with no formal action to be taken

"No action was taken by the Board."

6. Standing Reports

6.1 Budget Report (Sales Tax & General Ledger Detail)

The Board reviewed the March financial report, which included sales tax revenue data and general ledger (GL) details. Key points from the discussion:

- **March Sales Tax Revenue:**
 - **Net payment for March:** \$155,000.
 - Sales tax revenue is running **slightly below** last year's levels, attributed primarily to the loss of two major contributors:
 - **Lone Star**, which contributed approximately **\$32,000** last year.
 - **Churches**, which added around **\$12,000** in 2024.
 - Despite these losses, **gains in other retail sectors** are helping offset the decline.
 - Comparisons with neighboring cities (Bandera, Castroville, Devine, Hondo, Lytle, and Uvalde) show **flat or slightly down** trends in sales tax revenues across the board.
- **Overall Financial Health:**
 - At the six-month mark of the fiscal year:
 - **38% of the budget has been expended**, while **50% of the fiscal year has passed**, indicating **good budget control**.
 - **Sales tax revenue is slightly ahead of budget projections**.
 - **Interest income** is tracking exactly at **50%** of the annual estimate, aligning with the mid-year mark.
 - **Miscellaneous revenue** reflects carryover funds and is not included in percentage tracking unless used.
- **General Ledger Detail:**
 - An updated GL detail report was distributed, providing a **breakdown by individual chart of accounts**.
 - This document reflects **every expense incurred for the year** in each category.

The Board was invited to ask questions, but none were raised during the presentation, signaling consensus and satisfaction with the financial position.

6.2 Executive Director Report

Here's a detailed summary of Kaitlynn Jensen's BR&E and social media update presented during the HEDC Board Meeting:

1. Business Contact Activity

- Sean Patty made 33 individual business calls in Q1, which were solo efforts prior to Kaitlynn Jensen (new team member) joining.
- With Kaitlynn now assisting, activity is expected to increase substantially in Q2.

Social Media & Communications Update

2. Growth in Social Media Presence

- **Facebook:** Followers increased from 769 to 837 since Kaitlynn started.
- Increased interaction during **weekday work hours**, especially around **11:00 a.m.**, aligning with lunchtime browsing habits.

3. Content Strategy and Engagement

- **Photos** perform significantly better than links or polls.
- Posts with business highlights, job opportunities, and property listings see consistent interaction.
- Ongoing features include:
 - **Texas Building Show** updates (ending soon)
 - **Weekly Property Posts**
 - **Job Listings**
 - **Business Highlights** – High engagement; owners share to personal pages. Features include business origin stories, challenges, and their reasons for choosing Hondo.

4. Cross-Platform Promotion

- **LinkedIn** followers are increasing, currently around 190.
- Kaitlynn leverages her personal LinkedIn network to share EDC content, expanding reach to out-of-state contacts.
- **Web Traffic** is steadily increasing, attributed to consistent social media activity.

5. Content Planning & Visual Scheduling

- Kaitlynn uses a two-month visual **social media Calendar**.
- Plans to continue the “**Meet the Board**” series to humanize EDC leadership (e.g., upcoming feature on Jay).

6. Newsletter Expansion

- HEDC newsletter now has 51 subscribers (up from 27).
- Sent via **Brevo**
- Kaitlynn is incorporating interactive **polls/surveys** in each edition to boost engagement.
- Feedback has been highly positive.

7. Social Media Giveaways

- A **quarterly giveaway** initiative was launched to support local businesses.
 - Current giveaway sourced products from **10 local businesses** with a \$250 total budget.
 - Businesses tagged in the giveaway posts, boosting their visibility.

- Participants asked to follow featured businesses, increasing their traffic and interaction.
- Strong engagement seen on HEDC's page as a result.

7. Topics for Future Meetings: *Board/Staff discussion*

"The Board requested additional input on the 2025-2026 Budget in May."

8. Executive Session: *As authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Section 551.001, the Board may enter into a closed Executive Session at any time concerning any and all subjects and for any and all purposes permitted by the Act, including, but not limited to, the following:*

- 8.1 Section 551.071 - Consultation with the Board's attorney
- 8.2 Section 551.072 - Deliberation regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property
- 8.3 Section 551.074 - Deliberation on personnel matters
- 8.4 Section 551.087 - Deliberation regarding economic development negotiations

9. Actions Resulting from Executive Session

"There was no executive session."

10. Adjournment

"A motion was made by Rose Mary Mares to adjourn the meeting. Roger Hernandez promptly seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:58 a.m."

ATTEST:



Ashley Lowe, Board Secretary

On 6/19/25