

# The Bandera PROPHET

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Bandera City Council meeting Tuesday morning to discuss relief funding for businesses in need

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The Bandera Prophet

The Bandera Economic Development Corporation, which for the first time in its history is an all-female board, met last week to discuss emergency funding for local businesses in crisis. New board members Lynn Palmer, Darcy Hasty and Lee Correll took their seats at the table to continue deliberating the pressing matter.

Not a new conversation, Board President Toni Kunz said federal funding is slow and limited. A week ago, the board approved a proposed budget amendment of \$100,000 to be dispersed among businesses in the city limits.

“We felt the \$100,000 maximum with \$1,000 per business was something we thought we could do to help until federal funding came,” Kunz said, adding if money came directly to EDCs statewide, that would be the next wave of funding. “For the second round, we would have all the applications already.”

Board Member Laura Devenport said she has spoken to some business owners who are down to their last few dollars.

“What we were proposing wasn’t going to be a bailout. It’s taking a while for this money to trickle down,” Devenport said. “May will be here before you know it and rent will be due again.”

Correll said she believes many businesses can weather the storm.

“We need to look at [the money] meticulously and put it with who deserves it the most,” Correll said, adding sole proprietors who lost their sole source of income are the ones who need help first, rather than

business owners who have other income sources. “Everyone will apply for it because it’s free money.”

Board Member Rhonda Carrell said she had to get a second job to pay the bills at her bakery.

“\$1,000 is not going to save anybody’s business here. Half of my salary pays the bills at my bakery,” Carrell said. “I don’t know if the bakery will stay open. That’s what people are facing. We will have a ghost town before all this is over. Whose business is more important than another person’s business?”

Carrell said thus far, 85 businesses have applied for help. Correll suggested reducing the total amount to \$55,000 to be dispersed.

“If we whittle it down to \$55,000, we can give money to about half of the people who need it,” Hasty said in response to whether to transfer \$25,000 from incentives to the disaster relief fund. “I say we use the money in incentives, that’s what it’s there for. If somebody wants a new sign later I say get your own dang sign.”

Palmer said she wanted to be careful that the BEDC handle the relief as a response to the crisis rather than a reaction.

“I would like to create a response now so we can help our businesses just as soon as we can,” Palmer said.

Hasty motioned to maintain the resolution from the BEDC previous meeting for a budget amendment of \$100,000 to be given in either increments of \$1,000 for 100 businesses, or up to \$2,500 for businesses based on sales tax generated and mortgage or rent due.

Bandera City Council will meet Tuesday, April 28, at 10 a.m., to discuss and take possible action on the BEDC’s amendment proposal and relief fund. The meeting will be viewable by Zoom at <https://zoom.us>. The meeting ID is 821 5982 4550 and the password is 417551.