

YOUR NEWS. FOR OVER 1

BDC

FROM PAGE 1A

city commission for approval.

Then last Wednesday, in the BDC's September board meeting, Commissioner Aydelott, Mayor Gosline and Mangum brought their concerns to the BDC's board of directors. They said it wasn't personal, but the website was still in disrepair, a report on BDC work had not been provided, and transparency was a concern.

"I want to clear the air, the questioning at the meetings and that's kind of been going on the last couple of weeks are not a dig at anybody at the BDC," Gosline said.

"They are not a dig at Jan or Rick. It's just that we, as elected officials, get asked questions and I've been on the commission for 3 and a half years and have had questions and have never really followed through to be honest. It just seems like lately I've been getting asked a lot of questions, and I know the other commissioners have too."

Gosline presented the board with several questions. She said she didn't expect immediate answers but wanted the BDC to get back with her and the commission.

First, she asked what "are some of the projects in the past five years that the BDC has done," and how much have they funded.

Gosline also wanted to know about the previously undisclosed project fund: "I know we are trying to build money for the future, to get a big project. How much money is in that fund? And where, how is that allocated? Is there a balance statement, financial statement or audit? Do we see that, or can we see that? And audits, how often are those done? Are those shared public? How does the public get that?"

Gosline also wanted to talk about cooperation with other city departments: "How often do you meet with Main Street or Main Street board? Do you work together?"

City Manager Marty Mangum added that the BDC should also work with Monica Wilkinson, who is in charge of the city's Economic Development, outside of downtown. Gosline agreed.

Gosline then asked how the BDC operates: "If we get an inquiry, what do we do then? Is there a packet that goes out? What do we do to scratch their back to entice these people to come to Vernon?"

She also asked, in light of advance notice that the power plant was leaving, "How are we proactive? What do we do, being proactive, trying to get businesses to come to Vernon?"

"I know we brought up the website, and Jan I'm not going to bring it up again, I know that's being worked on, I think anyway, that's being worked on. If you go to the website, there is nothing," Gosline said.

Board member Terry Spears responded: "I think those are all good questions, I think if people ask questions and we don't feel comfortable addressing those, then it makes us look like we have something to hide – and we don't."

He said Gosline's questions were appropriate, and the commission should hold the BDC accountable, and the questions be answered. Spears asked for a copy of Gosline's questions, and a copy was made for each director.

BDC board chair Lisa Herber asked Gosline how she wanted the responses delivered. Bonner interjected that she was going to answer some of the questions in her report.

Bonner started with projects. She said there were two projects approved in 2020, the Pearson Livestock expansion and the new peanut sheller at the Texas A&M Research Station.

She said a conference call was made August 12 with a potential client; she said the project was still viable. She also said the BDC facilitated, earlier this year, an introduction between a client and a property owner. The client was referred to the SBDC for a business plan development.

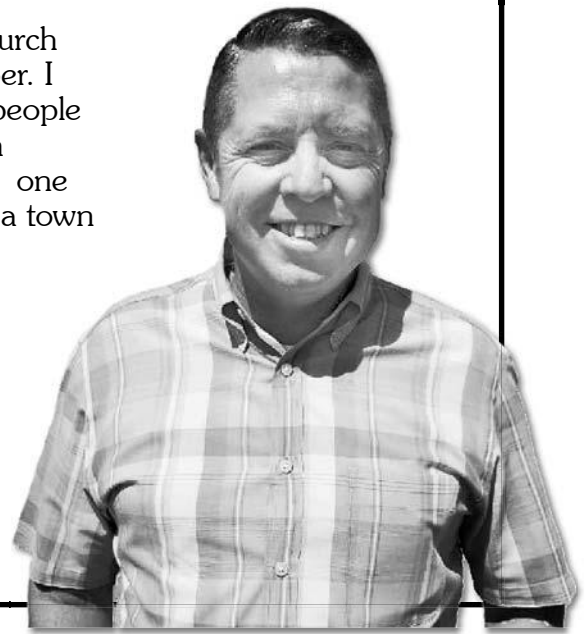
"I believe he contacted SBDC to become a client, I don't know how far along they've gotten... but at least we have gotten over the hump of going to SBDC for help. Because very often, when you recommend to a prospect to go the SBDC for a business plan, that's generally where it stops," she said.

In other meetings in August, Bonner said she and Rick had met with Mangum and Gosline on Aug. 19 to discuss the BDC proposed

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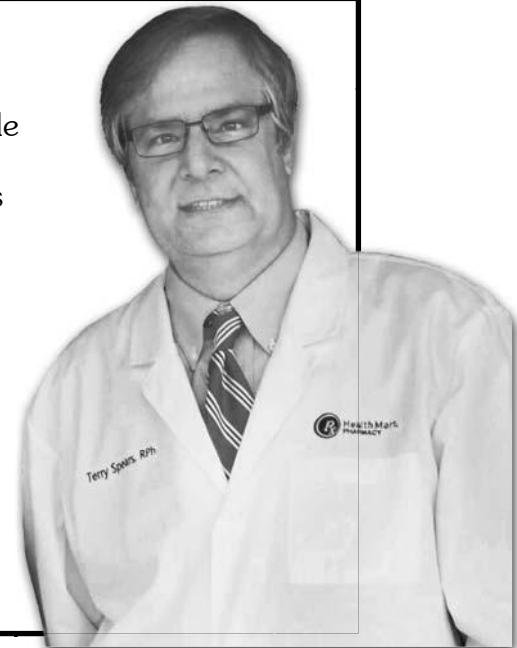
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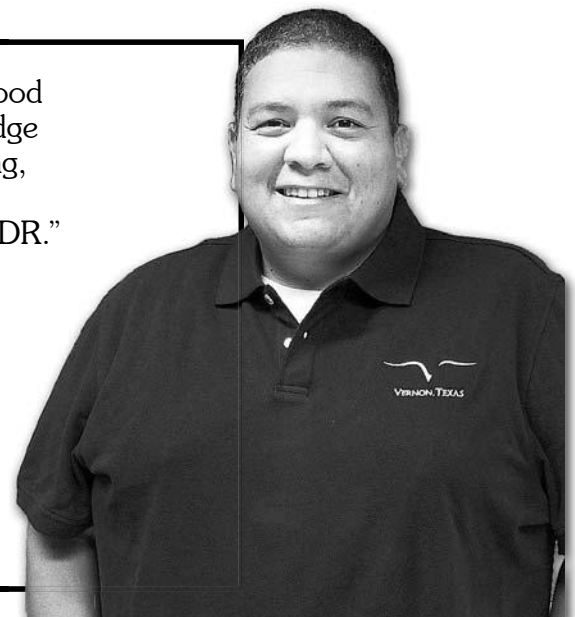
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