



**MEETING MINUTES  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF BEDFORD, VA  
Bedford County Administration Board Room  
122 E. Main Street  
Bedford, VA 24523**

**July 9, 2020  
5:30 p.m.**

**Economic Development Authority:**

**Present:**

Dennis Novitzke - Dist. 1; Vicki Gardner - Dist. 2; Wyatt Walton - Dist. 3; James Robertson - Dist. 6

**Absent:** Matthew Braud - Dist. 4; Kristy Milton - Dist. 5; Jim Messier - Dist. 7

**Staff Present:** Robert Hiss - County Administrator; Traci Blido - EDA Secretary; Pam Bailey - Marketing & Business Development Coordinator

**Staff Absent:** Patrick Skelley, County Attorney

**Transcriber:** Julia Peters

**Guests:** Mickey Johnson - County Supervisor District 1; Edgar Tuck - County Supervisor District 2; Charla Bansley (via phone) - County Supervisor District 3

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**(1) CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Novitzke called the July meeting of the Economic Development Authority of the County of Bedford, VA, to order.

**(2) APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Vice Chairman Novitzke asked for a motion to approve and/or any amendments to the Authority's July 9, 2020 agenda.

Mrs. Blido requested that under **Item (9) OTHER BUSINESS**, the **CARES Act Grant Briefing** be added.

**Mrs. Gardner moved, seconded by Mr. Robertson, to approve the July 9, 2020 EDA Agenda, as amended.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Robertson**  
**Voting no: None**  
**Adopted Unanimously**

**(3) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - June 4, 2020**

Vice Chairman Novitzke asked for approval and/or any amendments to the Authority's June 4, 2020 meeting minutes.

**Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mrs. Gardner, to approve the June 4, 2020 meeting minutes, as presented.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Robertson**  
**Voting no: None**  
**Adopted Unanimously**

**(4) REPORTS**

**A. Economic Development Director's Report**

Mrs. Blido reported that staff have been working on a back-to-business grant proposal that the EDA members would hear about later in the meeting. It will be funded through the CARES Act and Mr. Hiss will be taking a number of items to the Board of Supervisors (BOS) on July 27 and Mrs. Blido wanted the EDA's review of the proposal beforehand. It will be a \$1million grant program to help about 200 companies with \$5,000 grants.

She also said a few more companies have taken advantage of the existing EDA Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) grant where businesses would be reimbursed up to \$300 for their PPE expenses. Ten companies have responded. Because some businesses were assisted earlier through supplies from the Fire and Rescue Department, not as many companies applied as staff thought would. The businesses that were helped were: Sentry Equipment, BVA Mercantile, Blue Ridge Martial Arts, MJ Styles, Bedford Ride, Forest Farmers' Market, Bower Center, Eagle Eyrie Conference Center, Simply Vanilla Gourmet, and Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest. Funds are still available to help an additional eight to ten companies.

Another grant that staff is working on is a broadband application with Shentel. Briscnet will be rolling out their towers soon with completion expected by mid-August and Comcast has built out approximately 7,000 homes around the Smith Mountain Lake area. Shentel is planning to help the areas that are outside of the Blue Ridge Towers and Comcast coverage. Using high-speed fiber, Shentel will connect 362 homes in seven areas throughout the County. Information about the projects can be found on the County website under Broadband.

The sales and performance agreements have been submitted for the New London prospect that has not been announced yet and the company has completed its site plan. Staff is looking forward to making an announcement soon, once the agreements are signed.

The Montvale company that had not been announced yet has submitted its request for a special use permit. A Letter of Support on behalf of the EDA will be reviewed and voted upon by the EDA members later in the meeting.

Mrs. Blido reminded the Authority members about the BWXT building in Forest that will be vacated this month and she has received some interest already regarding the facility. There has also been some interest in the Teva facility this month. Teva is winding down its operation and will close by the end of the year. She said she received an email from the Tactical Review Committee (TRC) where she read that Teva is

requesting a permit to use one of the homes that they own on the property as an office for Teva. It appears the company may be keeping some employees and staff will work on obtaining confirmation.

Mrs. Blido also noted that the County unemployment rate was 9.5% in April at its highest during the COVID-19 pandemic and now it is 7.6%. The County rate is not too bad compared to the other localities in Virginia, and Virginia as a whole, when compared to other states has not fared as badly. She is hopeful that the unemployment rate will continue to trend down.

In response to a question from Mr. Walton, Mrs. Blido reported that Commscope has not publicly announced a closing and no WARN notice has been given yet. She has spoken to corporate staff and they are working on keeping some employees in Bedford County, but the site may be on the market soon. She has spoken to the company's Human Resources personnel and the changes coming are due to a corporate decision of outsourcing. Therefore, the lost jobs will be moving off-shore.

#### **B. Marketing/Business Development Report**

Ms. Bailey reported that she is currently working on an ad campaign and messaging with plans to launch the campaign in mid-August. Today, the Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce hosted a job fair where the EDA was a sponsor of the event. The people that attended were appropriately dressed for job seeking and had resumes in hand and hopefully, there was a good turnout. There was a good variety of businesses represented, including Neathawk, Centra, Generation Solutions, Sam Moore, Carriage Hill, Kelly Services, and WSET to name a few.

Ms. Bailey also said a Virtual Back-to-Business Roundtable will be held on Wednesday, July 29, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. Three local company representatives will share how they've adjusted their daily operations during the COVID-19 crisis.

She is also unsure what Bedford ONE tours will look like this coming school year. Companies are open to touring but it is not known how many students will be in attendance at school and on which days, so other opportunities are being explored, including virtual events. There will be a meeting on August 5, 2020, and hopefully it will bring a better sense of how to adjust the program.

#### **C. Monthly Financial Report (June 2020)**

Staff reviewed the financial report with the EDA members and answered questions. Mrs. Blido noted that since it is the beginning of a new fiscal year, Fiscal Management has not had time yet to take the approved EDA budget and input the figures. All the numbers currently available are itemized on today's meeting agenda.

#### **D. Monthly Accounts Payable Report – Bills that have been paid (June 2020)**

Staff reviewed the accounts payable report with the EDA members and answered questions.

#### **(5) TOWN OF BEDFORD**

Mrs. Blido said the shipping dock is done at Elba Butcher Shoppe and the owners are happy with it. Next month she will talk with the Authority about the tree planting project the Town has for Washington and Bridge Streets. Mr. Novitzke noted that he, Mr. Robertson, and Ms. Bailey toured the Elba Butcher Shoppe building and said a quote is being compiled for replacing the roof and addressing the drainage problems in the back of the building.

**(6) BEDFORD CENTER FOR BUSINESS**

Nothing new to report.

**(7) MONTVALE CENTER FOR COMMERCE**

**A. Letter of Support for Special Use Permit on Lot I-1**

A Special Use Permit is needed on Lot I-1 because the type of business interested in the lot does not fit as an allowable use of the property according to its industrial zoning definition. Mrs. Blido said it sometimes helps the Planning Commission to know that the EDA supports certain projects by providing them with a written recommendation.. The issue was discussed with the parties, including the County Administrator and the County Attorney. A joint meeting between the BOS and the Planning Commission is scheduled for August 10, 2020, to address the situation and if approved, should speed up the permitting process.

**Mr. Novitzke moved, seconded by Mr. Robertson, to approve the Letter of Recommendation from the EDA to the Planning Commission regarding the Special Use Permit application of Eddie Dooley, Inc., dba Dooley Logging & Chipping.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Robertson**

**Voting no: None**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**B. Survey Estimate Approval for Lots I-1 and I-2**

Mrs. Blido stated that the Letter of Support previously approved pertains to Lot I-1, and as part of the process a survey will need to be done. It will be cost-effective to have both available lots surveyed at the same time. She conferred with EDA member, Ms. Milton, who agreed that both lots could be surveyed at the same time as long as the pins would remain in place on the lot that was not being sold at this time. The cost savings would be approximately \$1,000 to have both lots surveyed together. The paper street reflected on Lot I-1 must be vacated officially thru the survey company, and the second lot will also be recorded. Basically, a new plat will be created and the land will be subdivided. The work would not begin until the Special Use Permit is granted to Eddie Dooley, Inc., and the company proceeds with the Lot I-1 purchase as indicated by the Letter of Intent. Estimates for the survey work were received from four companies and reviewed by the EDA members.

**Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mr. Robertson to authorize staff to choose Cardinal Survey to complete the survey work needed on Lots I-1 and I-2 for \$3,500.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Robertson**

**Voting no: None**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(8) NEW LONDON BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

**A. Shell Building Construction Progress**

Mrs. Blido stated that Mr. Cash could not attend the EDA meeting but had sent an email to her. He reported that the brick work is progressing well and completion of the project is anticipated by the end of August. She said that Price Building's report dated June 24, 2020, had noted that site work was completed except for clean-up and seeding, and the soil stockpile is being used for the Meade Road project, and will be removed in coordination with its completion. Brick work is in progress, pavement and stone are in place, the Meade Road water line has been installed, grading is mostly complete, and curb and gutter work is beginning.

**B. Meade Road Extension Progress**

Mr. Cash reported in his email that completion is expected by the end of July.

**C. Parks & Rec Disc Golf Course Report**

Mrs. Blido stated that this report has been moved to August. Mr. Skelley was unable to attend tonight's meeting and he is currently working on a revocable license agreement for Parks & Rec to take the responsibility and maintenance for the course. Parks & Rec staff reached out to the Bedford Regional Water Authority (BRWA), that has a sewer easement on the property, so Mr. Skelley will work on an agreement with them as well.

Mr. Novitzke asked about the meeting on the New London and Forest sewer issue that was discussed in previous EDA meetings. Mr. Hiss responded and said there will be a joint meeting between the BOS and BRWA on August 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m., if any EDA members want to attend. The meeting will be held in the County Administration Building's Training Room. EDA members expressed concern for BRWA's future plans regarding New London's available sewage capacity and that research on the paper trail since the pump station was built did not uncover any specifications dedicated to the EDA or New London Park. Mr. Tuck pointed out that the EDA may want to consider paying for the shell building's hook-up fee now so its sewer space would be reserved. Ms. Bailey added that Lot 3B's fee could also be paid ahead of time to reserve its space. Discussion followed. Mrs. Blido will continue searching for any historic agreements with BRWA and the County which may possibly specify what capacity was reserved for the EDA. If found, the information will then be sent to EDA members prior to the August 10 joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors and BRWA.

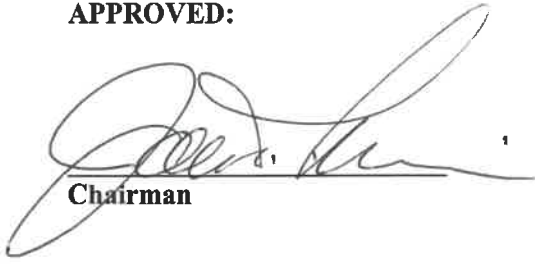
**(9) OTHER BUSINESS**

Mrs. Blido disseminated a handout regarding a County CARES Act grant proposal. She is recommending a \$1 million Back-to-Business Grant for small businesses. She said the Town has already had a \$5,000 grant program and the County could provide one as well and could also cover any Town business that did not receive funds from the Town program. For-profit businesses would be eligible and 501(c)6's, which are generally Chambers of Commerce and would be the only exception regarding non-profit businesses. A different fund would cover the non-profit agencies. The applicable businesses would have 100 or fewer employees, be current on taxes and fees, and have been in business for at least one year prior to COVID-19. Annual revenues must be at least \$100,000 but not more than \$2 million. The program could help 200 of the hardest-hit companies that need it the most. These businesses must be able to show a minimum of 20% loss in revenue since March 1, 2020. A website will be set up asking applicants to upload their profit/loss figures for 2019 as well as the figures for each month in 2020 which will be used to identify qualifying companies. Mrs. Blido wanted the EDA to review the program and its requirements before she takes it to the BOS for approval. Discussion followed and suggestions were made to change the revenue criteria to \$50,000 to \$3 Million regarding what businesses would qualify, limits and caps for annual gross revenues, and other qualifying factors. Consensus was agreeable to the grant program and recommended Mrs. Blido go forward with finalizing the details.

**(10) ADJOURNMENT**

6:23 p.m.

**APPROVED:**



Chairman



Secretary