



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

**March 4, 2021**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**Economic Development Authority:**

**Present:** Rhonnie Smith - Dist. 1; Vicki Gardner - Dist. 2; Wyatt Walton - Dist. 3; Matthew Braud - Dist. 4; Kristy Milton - Dist. 5; James Robertson - Dist. 6; Jim Messier - Dist. 7

**Staff Present:** Robert Hiss - County Administrator; Traci Blido - EDA Secretary; Pam Bailey - Marketing & Business Development Coordinator; Patrick Skelley - County Attorney (by phone); Sheldon Cash - Director of Public Works; Doug Coffman - General Property Manager

**Staff Absent:** None

**Transcriber:** Julia Peters

**Guests:** Edgar Tuck - County Supervisor District 2; Charla Bansley - County Supervisor District 3

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**(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Messier asked for a motion to approve and/or any amendments to the Authority's March 4, 2021 agenda.

**Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, to approve the March 4, 2021 EDA agenda, as presented.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Smith, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Messier**

**Voting no: None**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - February 4, 2021**

Chairman Messier asked for approval and/or any amendments to the Authority's February 4, 2021 meeting minutes.

**Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mr. Walton, to approve the February 4, 2021 meeting minutes, as presented.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Smith, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Messier**

**Voting no: None**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(3) REPORTS**

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

Mrs. Blido reported that Sheldon Cash, Director of Public Works, would be leaving the County Administration staff but would not be far away since he would be working for the public schools. She introduced Doug Coffman, the General Property Manager, who would be the interim public works director. Mr. Coffman gave the EDA members a summary of his work experience and Chairman Messier noted that Mr. Coffman was the staff member who discovered the vapor barrier issue with the shell building during its construction. Mrs. Blido presented Mr. Cash with a farewell gift from the EDA and office staff as a token of their appreciation for his many years of dedicated service to the County. Mrs. Blido said WSLs TV was airing a story regarding the shell building tonight and commended Chairman Messier for his comments in the report. She had spoken with Brendan Farrell from the Bank of the James and he will be ordering the shell building appraisal. They also discussed the project fees the EDA will pay and the real estate commission fee. They will be sitting down with Coleman-Adams and Belvac and look at what was agreed to be paid by each of the parties. At that point, the EDA can decide whether to use the first draw to cover these fees and utility costs or pay cash for them and use the entire loan for the buildout. She will be providing more details to the EDA in the coming weeks. The appraisal should take about three to four weeks to complete.

Mrs. Blido stated that Virginia Delegate Rasoul had to cancel his meeting with the EDA and BOS members yesterday but they will try to reschedule with him. She spoke with Rich Diddams about Liberty University CERE plans. He said LU has built out their labs as promised but no new developments are currently in the works on the other 28 acres. LU has a couple more years on their agreement with the EDA so right now they are focusing on the inside of the CERE building and using the space to their best benefit. They are also discussing partnerships with BWXT and others. Mr. Hiss noted that LU is still interested in locating industry/industries onto the property but not necessarily growing LU. With changes in leadership within LU, they are in a state of transition as to how to market that property.

Mrs. Blido reported that she and staff have also been busy with other prospect activity. More information will be presented at next month's meeting. Mariner's Landing has been talking with the County about all of their investments which has led to discussion of a Tourism Zone, which would allow tax rebates/incentives when adding investment in the County. She would like to see Mariner's Landing used as a pilot. The EDA would be the entity to approve a Tourism Zone request, but the County would use the project's revenues to fund the incentives/rebates if a zone is established by the County.

The Teva site continues to be marketed and there is an interested investor and prospect.

Mrs. Blido noted this is budget season and there are many CIP requests so the Montvale project may be put off for another year or two. There is general Board support to get New London Lots 10A and 12A graded and to obtain the \$80,000 match required from CIP funds if the Tobacco Commission grant is awarded.

**B. Marketing/Business Development Report**

Ms. Bailey reported that the March Bedford One virtual tour was very successful. The interim director of the SIM Lab at LU and two LU students gave great testimonials and spoke to students about things they should consider when touring schools, and also what courses to take while in high school. Students were very engaged and the tour was recorded so it can be shared with others. A virtual tour of Sam Moore is planned next. The last hurdles for the Burnbridge Road sewer project have been overcome and Ms. Bailey is collecting signatures for the new easements. All the drawings have been revised and approved. Groundbreaking is expected in the next month or so. New businesses are interested in the status of the project. Mrs. Blido noted that Ms. Bailey had done a great job with this project and appreciated her hard work.

**C. Monthly Financial Report (February 2021)**

Staff reviewed the financial report – as it currently stands during the Tyler Munis transition – with the EDA members and answered questions.

Mrs. Milton requested that once the transition to the new financial system is complete, that someone from Fiscal Management walk the EDA through the reports and explain how to read the sections more efficiently. Staff agreed to check when Finance would be at a place during the transition to present that.

**D. Monthly Accounts Payable Report – (February bills that have been paid)**

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

**(4) TOWN OF BEDFORD**

**A. Tree Project Update**

The tree grant project kicked off on February 16, 2021 when staff met with representatives from the Virginia Department of Forestry. Mrs. Zirkle, Town of Bedford Director of Planning and Community Development, applied for a grant which will provide 20 trees and shrubs along Washington Street and South Bridge Street. The grant was awarded as a 50/50 cost share. However, it will be very expensive to create soil to fill in and allow the trees to grow and thrive. Mrs. Blido provided a spreadsheet to Mrs. Zirkle to show what the EDA has paid throughout the years in order for Elba's to open. Mrs. Zirkle will request the Town's EDA assist in the cost of this project. Mr. Coffman reported that based on the Department of Forestry's recommendations, a depth of 18 inches of fill and six inches of topsoil is needed to provide tree growth. Sidewalks would remain in their existing location, but eight feet inside of the sidewalks, which is currently pavement and/or gravel, would be cut out and the material removed. The removed material will be replaced with nutrient rich soil, grass and trees interspersed with mulch around the trees, totaling 235 linear feet. This cost, including the planting of the trees, totals roughly \$12,000, but the grant is only \$3,000. Mr. Coffman said the DOF said they may be able to cover more and staff will work with them to determine how much more. Discussion followed regarding funds spent on Elba's, past unsuccessful tree projects, the timeline for this grant, overall curb appeal, and the Town's Bridge to Bridge Street Plan. Mr. Cash noted that this was a scaled-down version of the original plan which would have lined the entire lot with trees rather than this L-shaped design. Mrs. Blido will keep the EDA abreast of what the Town may fund and whether a partnership would be possible.

**(5) BEDFORD CENTER FOR BUSINESS**

**A. Extension of landscaping contract**

Mrs. Blido referred to the Extension of Contract that was included in the EDA members' agenda packets. She said the contract had expired and she contacted Peakview Landscaping and they are willing to continue the contract at the current price until December 31, 2022. After that, there would be a new EDA RFP for Landscaping. She asked the EDA to approve extending the current contract as presented.

**Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mr. Robertson to authorize an extension to the contract with Peakview Landscaping for all landscaping services for the Bedford Center for Business until December 31, 2022.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Smith, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Messier**

**Voting no: None**

**Adopted Unanimously**

#### **(6) MONTVALE CENTER FOR COMMERCE**

Mrs. Blido reported that the CIP request for \$680,000 to grade the remaining two lots will likely need to be delayed a couple years, but the Board of Supervisors will revisit the request next year or the year after. Discussion followed regarding the Montvale School and possibilities of development, including community interest in saving the building or selling the school to someone who would renovate. Mr. Hiss said an RFP is going to be done for the buildings and property, so various options for the 13 acre site will be discovered. Discussion also included tax breaks through the historic registry, and the costs/revenues of different possibilities.

#### **(7) NEW LONDON BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

##### **A. Ratify Shell Building Lease**

Mrs. Blido stated that a public announcement had been made regarding Belvac which was discussed in previous Closed Sessions. She requested the EDA ratify the Chairman's execution of the lease for the shell building.

**Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, to authorize Chairman Messier to sign the five-year lease for the shell building with Belvac as the tenant.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Smith, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Messier**

**Voting no: None**

**Abstained: Mrs. Milton**

**Motion passed**

Mrs. Blido also requested the EDA ratify the Chairman's execution of the real estate commission agreement which was also discussed in previous Closed Sessions.

**Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, to authorize the Chairman to sign the real estate commission agreement for \$65,000 paid to Thalhimer and its agent, Norman Moon, Jr.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Smith, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Messier**

**Voting no: None**

**Abstained: Mrs. Milton**

**Motion passed**

##### **B. Lot 7 Construction Report**

Mr. Coffman reported that Belvac is designing the interior cranes which is their major focus right now. There are three interior crane lines inside that are critical to their work. They are in the design process and construction is anticipated for 90-100 days. Mrs. Blido said they want to be operating by mid-summer. She also noted that Mr. Coffman will be the EDA contact for the construction project and he will report each month to the EDA with any updates, either live or in writing.

**C. Extension of Landscaping Contract**

Mrs. Blido said she is requesting authorization to extend a separate landscaping contract for New London with Peakview Landscaping through December 31, 2022. She stated there is no change in costs and the terms and conditions remain the same. She will come back to the EDA to authorize an RFP to go out to bid for the next term(s) thereafter.

**Mr. Robertson moved, seconded by Mrs. Milton to authorize an extension to the contract with Peakview Landscaping for all landscaping services for the New London Business and Technology Center until December 31, 2022.**

**Voting yes: Mr. Smith, Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Messier**

**Voting no: None**

**Adopted Unanimously**

**(8) OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Brief Updates from EDA Subcommittees**

Mrs. Gardner reported her Smith Mountain Lake (SML) group met every two weeks and has identified a number of properties/areas of recreational opportunities. Their next step is to come together with an overall SWOT analysis. The committee is on-track for a good report and the process has been enlightening. Mr. Smith noted that the Tourism Zone will be critical to the economic development of SML.

Chairman Messier stated his committee is currently reviewing information and trying to interpret the lands of the Bedford Center and are moving forward slowly.

Mr. Walton said his New London committee will be meeting within the next week or two.

Mrs. Blido reminded EDA members that she is open to attending any of these committee meetings if her presence would be helpful to them.

Mr. Robertson's committee members will be visiting and seeing what the needs are of the Montvale businesses. He found it interesting that some companies were surprised that anyone was interested in their needs.

Discussion followed and topics touched upon during discussion included staff member ratios, towns losing commercial development, infrastructure grants, and natural gas availability and its cost.

**(9) ADJOURNMENT**

6:48 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

  
Chairman

  
Secretary