



**MEETING MINUTES  
BEDFORD COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

**Bedford County Administration Building  
Board Room  
122 E. Main Street  
Bedford, VA 24523  
March 5, 2020  
5:30 p.m.**

**Economic Development Authority:**

**Present:**

Dennis Novitzke - Dist. 1; Kristy Milton - Dist. 5; Jim Messier - Dist. 7

**Absent:** Vicki Gardner - Dist. 2; Wyatt Walton - Dist. 3; Matthew Braud - Dist. 4; James Robertson - Dist. 6

**Staff Present:** Traci Blido - EDA Secretary; Pam Bailey - Marketing & Business Development Coordinator; Sheldon Cash - Director of Public Works; Amanda Kaufman - Deputy County Administrator; Patrick Skelley - County Attorney

**Staff Absent:** Robert Hiss – County Administrator

**Transcriber:** Julia Peters

**Guests:** Edgar Tuck - County Supervisor District 2

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**Chairman Messier said that the EDA did not have a quorum tonight, and therefore the meeting would be for informational purposes only and no votes would be taken.**

**(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

No vote was taken to approve the agenda since a quorum did not exist.

**(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - February 6, 2020**

The approval of the February 6, 2020 meeting minutes will be postponed until the next EDA meeting when a quorum exists.

### **(3) REPORTS**

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

Mrs. Blido welcomed Mary Zirkle, Economic Development Coordinator for the Town of Bedford, to the meeting and thanked Amanda Kaufman, Deputy County Administrator, for coming since County Administrator Robert Hiss was traveling and unable to attend. Mrs. Blido reported that the past month was busy for the Economic Development office with 11 active prospects currently and a few company expansions in the pipeline, one of which is in the Town of Bedford and has been discussed previously in closed sessions. There are new and past grants that she is working on or following up on, including some involving broadband. Comcast sent in over \$500,000 worth of invoices for the Smith Mountain Lake broadband project. Ms. Bailey went through each one painstakingly to get them ready for Fiscal Management's review and then mailed to the Tobacco Commission for their review. There are also several past grants from the Tobacco Commission for economic development projects over the last five years that they are now gathering data from, which requires a lot of time spent digging. There was great news today, announcing the future opening of Elba Butcher Shoppe in the old Vista Foods building. It is the third shop for the owners, Wendell and Stephanie Dawson. They have a store in Gretna and another one in Altavista. They will start cleaning out the building this month and plan to open in April. Ms. Zirkle is seeing if some community folk will be able to help them with the cleaning maybe on Saturdays and Mrs. Blido will be bringing some of their needs to the EDA in the next couple months. Yesterday, she spent time at Teva Pharmaceuticals, where 51 people will be laid off tomorrow. We held employee meetings and connected them with workforce partners, both at the regional and state level, and they qualify for the Trade Assistance Act, so they can get that extra layer of help if they want to go back to school. Teva is providing a good severance package and because of the Trade Act they do not have to count that package toward their unemployment so they can still collect some unemployment benefits. We do expect the Teva site to shut down this fall and we are working hard to find a buyer. The building is 425,000 square feet and they are in negotiations at the corporate level but if the negotiations do not come to fruition, the facility is still good for any "clean operation", such as food and beverage, cosmetics, or a different type of pharmaceutical. There will be 150 employees left after this wave of layoffs and we expect continuing waves of reductions. Mrs. Blido said on the state level, she learned from Chris Lloyd, who lobbies for the Virginia Economic Development Association (VEDA) that there are a staggering 200 legislative bills now. Many decisions on big items such as collective bargaining and minimum wage are being hashed out behind closed doors in committees and not in the public view. They are keeping eyes on the Virginia Jobs Investment program, which several of our Bedford County companies have benefited from, and also watching site development grant programs, such as Go Virginia, for any changes. At the County level, the Board of Supervisors (BOS) will begin talking about the budget in their next meeting. She has requested level funding for the EDA at \$163,000 that can be used for incentives and some operations. She heard Stephen Moret, the head of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) say on yesterday's VEDA Board call that there are 5,000 new jobs in the pipeline with confidential projects still in motion. Even in our corner, we have upward of 50-70 jobs in the pipeline so things are moving forward. She will be going to two site selector events in Atlanta this month. Megan Lucas cannot go to one of these events and asked if another economic developer would like to go. One conference is called the Site Selector Guild and it is a \$2,000 value trip that Ms. Lucas gave her. She will also attend the Meet the Consultants of the Southern Economic Development Council. She believes these conferences will be worthwhile for Bedford County because we have the shell building under construction, the Teva facility, and many graded lots ready for prospects.

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

Earlier this week, Ms. Bailey and Mrs. Blido met with Dr. Shawn Trosper, the new principal at Liberty High School and shared with him that the Bedford One tours were not just field trips, but career development and exploration events for students. We were very encouraged by speaking with him and

told him about the tours we have taken so far this year and about the three or four tours that remain for this school year. He shared he was excited about a new career coach from CVCC who will be joining Liberty High School and will split time between Liberty and Staunton River High Schools. Earlier this month, she took a total of 52 students enrolled in BTSC on tours to Radford University Carilion. A different group of students from Staunton River and Jefferson Forest toured Sam Moore and Blue Ridge Optics. One student has already applied at Sam Moore and hopes to work there after graduation. She will be taking another group to tour Framatome and Innerspec on March 17. On March 25, Ms. Bailey will be serving as a judge for Mini Economy Market Day which is held for students from around the region from different schools. About 200 students will operate approximately 50 businesses and are learning skills of entrepreneurship, economics, and government in a classroom setting. They have established their own classroom currency, earned income by performing classroom jobs, and have started their own classroom businesses. They pay taxes, apply for business licenses, purchase resources for producing goods and services, calculate profits for their businesses, and participate in a currency exchange for market day occurrences. They will open their businesses on market day and compete for awards. Ms. Bailey said she is looking forward to participating and it should be a fun day. She has also worked on more advertising options, with some digital advertising possible, dependent upon next year's budget. She is currently working on a small brochure for Mrs. Blido to take with her to Atlanta. She also has three tickets left for the Chamber awards dinner if any members of the EDA would like to go. Sam Moore has been nominated for Best Large Business, Beale's for Best Small Business, the Bedford firefighters for Citizen(s) of the Year, and the Bedford Y for Best Non-Profit.

**C. Monthly Financial Report (February 6, 2020)**

Staff reviewed the financial report with the EDA members and answered questions.

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

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

**(4) TOWN OF BEDFORD**

**A. Vista Food Update**

Mr. Cash met with the new owners and everything is progressing well. He has ordered the new front doors. Master Engineers has been authorized to do the loading dock design. He has already notified the Dawsons that the loading dock will not be ready when they open the store. A new exhaust fan was installed in the basement at no cost because we had an extra one and our maintenance staff completed that work today. Once the store is emptied, we will need to get an electrician to look at some of the wiring issues since it is an older building. Several of the old refrigeration units will be taken out. We have agreed to patch and paint some of the ceiling tiles. He does not see anything coming down the road that would be a significant expense except the loading dock. Everything else should be fairly routine and the maintenance department can do much of the repairs internally. The main electrical feed should be fine since it was upgraded about 10 years ago, but the submeters or subpanels are showing some age, and we will probably have to do some work on them. He noted that the Dawsons are great to work with and he thinks this will be a good partnership in keeping the building up. Mrs. Blido said people are really excited about this opening and WSET did a report with her today. She also thanked Mr. Cash and his team for the help they have given and their willingness to do some of the building maintenance work, as it is much appreciated.

**B. Update on Town Incentives**

Ms. Zirkle spoke about how she had met with Mr. Dawson earlier today and he was highly complimentary and grateful for the upswell of support to this venture and it has been a positive experience. She told the EDA about the Town's Small Business Program where they have a USDA grant of \$76,000 that can be given out in \$5,000 increments to businesses for every full-time job or two part-time jobs equivalent to one full-time job for 5 yrs at 2% interest. They will be giving the money out until July and the Town's Economic Development Committee vets the applications making sure the applicants meet all the criteria before it goes to USDA to release the funds that the Town gives out as a loan. The Town has the grant, but gives the money out as a loan. In response to Mrs. Blido's question about whether the \$10,000 that the EDA gave the Town for a low interest program a few years ago is part of this program, Ms. Zirkle relayed some background information. When Bedford Main Street was an organization, they applied for a grant through the Department of Housing and Community Development for \$40,000. The Town and County put in \$10,000 each and Main Street put in \$20,000. It was that kind of split. When Main Street folded, they asked DHCD to keep the money and forgive the debt essentially since we were able to show the Town was already matching what they put in through the incentive program. They said we were basically good and done with the DHCD and could keep the \$10,000 and the County's \$10,000 as well. This new program rolled out of that agreement. The County still has that \$10,000 and can use it if they choose for the Vista Food project. It is in the Town's account with EDA's name on it. The Town also had a meeting about a forestry grant for planning for green spaces for Bridge Street. One of the implementation strategies was to green up and keep people in downtown Bedford longer. We used that as leverage for a planning grant and met with building and business owners in January. We are looking forward to having a plan in place for where to put green spaces in April or May to be released to the public. A lot of conversation centered around the space around Vista Foods where trees could be planted. Other areas are encumbered by underground utilities. Business owners also said that there is enough parking and we could eliminate some street parking so people would use the parking lots and then would walk along Bridge Street which was the purpose of the plan. All these suggestions have been put into a big pot and Ms. Zirkle wanted the EDA to know that Vista Foods is in a highly visible area that could have some positive immediate effect with a green space. She will present Mrs. Blido with a plan as soon as they have a draft. There was a meeting about the Longwood and Independence Boulevard intersection and whether there are congestion problems as well as solutions. Ms. Zirkle said the Central Virginia Planning District Commission is doing the plan for that project and we will see what the outcome is.

Discussion followed about a joint event such as a meet and greet for the Town Economic Development Committee and the County's Economic Development Authority so the members could get acquainted with one another. Mrs. Blido and Ms. Zirkle will talk and Mrs. Blido will present something to the EDA members at their next meeting.

**(5) BEDFORD CENTER FOR BUSINESS**

**A. Update on HVAC Progress**

Mr. Cash reported that all three of the HVAC units for the CVCC project are in Roanoke and ready to be installed and work will be done the week of spring break which is April 13-17, with minimal impact to the school.

**(6) MONTVALE CENTER FOR COMMERCE**

**A. Update on Bobblett Gap**

Mrs. Blido reported that Bobblett Gap received their Certificate of Occupancy and has moved in. They are going to put up a sign soon. They are a little over budget and have asked if we can possibly find them a grant for broadband expenses because it came in at a pretty hefty price with Comcast. She reached out

to Mid-Atlantic Broadband who has the superhighway to see what we might be able to get for them. She also asked the owner if we could have a ribbon cutting event for them, and although Ms. Galanes appreciated the gesture, she was not interested in that kind of publicity.

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

**A. Shell Building Construction Progress**

Mr. Cash said we are approximately 80% through with the financial portion of the project. We are still waiting for the loading dock concrete pad to be poured which was delayed due to weather. Masonry work has started on the outside of the building. The glass door for the front has been ordered and should be received any day now. The asphalt plant had shut down but should reopen around mid-March for the asphalt paving of the lot. Substantial completion of the work is expected by the end of March with final project completion by mid-April. It has taken a few weeks longer than was anticipated early on, but with weather delays and other items, we are pretty much in line with where we want to be. We have spent \$97,000 in change orders and have \$120,000 budgeted so we are within budget. Mrs. Blido noted that electricity is needed to the building even without a tenant so there will be monthly costs associated with that. Mr. Cash explained that a 3,000 amp service was originally designed for the building keeping it in line with the Simplimatic building across the street which is a 3,000 amp service. In talking to Southside Electric, they recommended that we downsize from 3,000 to 1,200 amps so we have lowered it because of the cost of the monthly usage. Even Simplimatic does not typically use more than 1,200 amps. The switch gear is in place if we need to convert back to 3,000 amps and is easily upgraded if needed, dependent on the tenant. If we keep the service at 3,000 amps and the building remains vacant or the tenant does not need that 3,000 amp service, the minimum usage fee would be very high. There will be a minimum usage fee with the 1,200 amps but not nearly as significant as the 3,000 amp service. Southside would only need to change out a transformer to restore the building to 3,000 amp service but Mr. Cash did not know how much it would cost to make that change. He also said that the Meade Road Extension has not broken ground yet. They are waiting for the weather to dry out a bit more before beginning construction. It is expected to be complete within 60 days of commencing work. The contractor has been told that they must maintain access to the trailhead during the road construction.

**(8) OTHER BUSINESS**

**A. Burnbridge Road Sewer Project Update**

Mrs. Blido said we are still in limbo with this project and the engineers are trying to work it out amongst themselves. Mark Aldridge has many concerns and Doyle Allen is trying his best to address the concerns and wants to see this through because he has so much invested in the project. In the meantime, the money invested by the other land owners is being held in escrow.

**B. EDA Audit**

Mrs. Blido stated that the EDA had a great audit with no findings. The audit is posted on the EDA website where the Authority members can read about it if they choose.

Mr. Tuck reported to the EDA that the Rucker Road water line extension project in Moneta has been completed. He also told the Authority members that the Springlake Stockyard's annual sales were \$26 million last year. The stockyard is located in Moneta and is healthy financially with zero debt and has

increased its dividend to its stockholders. He noted as well that Bette Brand, who is from Moneta in Bedford County, was just named the new deputy undersecretary for the USDA.

Mrs. Blido said Apocalypse Ale Works is having a ribbon cutting on Friday at 5:30 p.m. for the work that was completed on their closed-in back deck. They will also celebrate their seven-year anniversary on Saturday with the Coleman Band playing.

**(9) ADJOURNMENT**

6:26 p.m.

**APPROVED:**

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**Chairman**

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**Secretary**