



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

**November 5, 2020
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

Staff Absent: None

Transcriber: Julia Peters

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

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Messier asked for a motion to approve and/or any amendments to the Authority's November 5, 2020 agenda.

Mrs. Gardner moved, seconded by Mr. Braud, to approve the November 5, 2020 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 - October 13, 2020

Chairman Messier asked for approval and/or any amendments to the Authority's October 13, 2020 meeting minutes.

Mr. Smith moved, seconded by Mrs. Milton, to approve the October 13, 2020 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 the Phase 2 of the Back to Business grant program was approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) in their last meeting. The Phase 2 was launched online today for companies with annual revenues between \$3 million and \$20 million. Two businesses have already applied. She asked for help in spreading the word that this Phase 2 will assist for-profit companies with ten or more employees in the manufacturing, professional, or construction services fields and have experienced some loss due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The BOS also approved another grant program Mrs. Blido presented regarding meat processors. There is one USDA meat processor located in Moneta, Eco-friendly foods, that has helped the County's small-scale farmers process their meat and can be reimbursed for new investments through this grant program. It can also reimburse small-scale operators that want to expand meat processing and can process their own poultry under VDACS and USDA guidelines. This program will help with local food security since Virginia's larger meat processors are currently booked into 2022.

Unemployment continues to trend down. For the week of October 24-30, 2020, there were 565 continued claims which was down 11% from last week. Initial or first-time claims totaled 59. CommScope has announced it is shutting down its operation in Forest by the end of this year. They laid off 38 people on Friday and Mrs. Blido helped with conveying available services. These lay-offs qualify for the Trade Act incentives which can provide free education for workers who want to be re-skilled. Ten more employees are expected to be laid off by the end of the year. However, the facility is already under contract and she always hopes it is a good project with more jobs. About 18-20 CommScope employees will remain in Bedford County if they find space to accommodate them and she is helping with that effort. Sentry Equipment was honored last week in the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance's Salute to Manufacturing event. They celebrate 40 years in Bedford County this year.

The Virginia Ready Initiative is something the EDA members will want to familiarize themselves with. Glenn A. Youngkin has launched a website Vaready.org which highlights the free or discounted college programs available to Virginians.

There are prospects looking at the shell building. Mrs. Blido and Mr. Hiss will be meeting with the Tobacco Commission Executive Director Evan Feinman next week to discuss the pricing of the shell building, what the EDA should consider, and what the Tobacco Commission has at stake while negotiations occur. Before she presents a project to the EDA, Mrs. Blido wants to get a better understanding of the Tobacco Commission's strategic plan since they have new board members. She reviewed with the EDA members the actual funding process of the shell building where they received the \$1.3 million grant from the Tobacco Commission. Normally that kind of money is not available from the Commission to fund a special project and therefore the EDA wants to make sure the grant sticks and the County can provide the best incentives to get the best jobs for its citizens. If the grant has to be paid back, she understood that the funds would still be earmarked for Bedford County projects. Discussion followed regarding the specific terms of the agreement with the Tobacco Commission and what items need to be considered when conveying a selling price for the shell building and what additional costs may be incurred once purchased or leased by a prospect. Mrs. Blido noted there was not an appraisal yet, but estimated \$3 million has been invested in the building at this time. Mr. Hiss said he hoped to get a firmer

idea of what the Tobacco Commission expects from any transactions once they meet with the Executive Director so conversations with prospects can occur. EDA members agreed that both the cost as well as the value of the building was needed to make educated decisions regarding the sale or lease of the shell building and its buildout. Guidance was also needed from the Tobacco Commission. It was also noted that a broker's percentage would need to be set and built into the cost.

Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mr. Braud to authorize staff to seek three quotes for securing a cost appraisal and a value appraisal for the completed shell building in the New London Business and Technology Center.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

Discussion continued regarding broker's protection and commission and how much is appropriate. It was noted that Amherst County provides 3% but there is no set rate and it is a negotiable fee. However, the agreed percentage fee should be built into the sales price of the property. There was consensus that any signage should read "Brokers Protected" so brokers will be aware that if he/she brings a prospect to the table and a contract leads to fruition, compensation will be received.

B. Marketing/Business Development Report

Ms. Bailey anticipated doing another tour for Bedford One but she is still working on its coordination. She was able to meet with the Director of Operations for Liberty University's School of Nursing as well as an Associate Professor there. A virtual tour of that campus is planned for March. It will be done a little differently than the tour of Framatome. The School of Nursing is having an open house in December and everyone is welcome at that event. She is also working on advertising and has a half-page ad in this month's issue of *Virginia's Business* magazine as well as a digital ad that is promoting the shell building. She is running an ad in the *Business Facilities Site Seekers Guide* and an advertorial will run regarding community well-being (quality of life). The multi-digital campaign has served about 140,000 impressions and she is tweaking some things to get the count a little higher. A variety of businesses both from inside and outside of the region have visited the page. Ms. Bailey is also writing a Press Release for the disc golf course in the New London park. The course needs five more hole sponsors. A sponsor pays a one-time fee of \$500 for one hole and the sponsor's name will be listed on a plaque at the beginning of the course and also on a small plaque at that particular hole on the course. She asked the EDA members if they would like to sponsor a hole. Discussion followed.

Mr. Robertson moved, seconded by Mr. Walton to pay the \$500 fee for the EDA to become a sponsor of the disc golf course located at the New London Business and Technology Center.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Bailey is also making revisions to the shell building flier to include additional information. She will be sending the completed flier to many support organizations who help to market the facility.

Ms. Bailey also reported on the Burnbridge Road sewer project. Several representatives involved in the project walked the new sewer line path which will go around Mr. Aldridge's property since he would not sign easement papers. VDOT is allowing the line to be put in under the sidewalk on Rt. 221. Doyle Allen is working on the drawings and is still waiting on some surveys to be completed. Once the surveys are

done, BRWA will reissue some easements and signatures will be obtained again. There is a small shortage in EDA funds for the project, and the BOS may need to approve additional monies to get to the \$150,000 County commitment for the project. It has taken over two years for this project to get done but it seems the team has been able to bypass the final obstacle. Businesses located on the road want to expand but their plans are on hold until the sewer line construction is completed.

C. Monthly Financial Report (October 2020)

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

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

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

Ms. Bailey noted that Fiscal Management's current financial system does not allow direct deposit of mileage reimbursements. However, the new Tyler Munis accounting software system being installed will allow direct deposits once the system is live with the HR/Payroll module, which is unlikely to happen before 2022.

(4) TOWN OF BEDFORD

A. Washington and Bridge Streets Tree Grant Update

Mrs. Blido reported that the grant to cover the tree plantings was awarded. In the Spring, trees will be planted all the way up the hill where the School Board offices are on Bridge Street and over to the church location on Washington. A phone conference will be held with the Department of Forestry, Staff, and Mary Zirkle, who worked very hard on the grant application. The owners of Elba, the Dawsons, were notified today and they believe it will draw people to come and visit their store, the Farmers' Market and neighboring areas as well. The soil will need to be prepared so the trees will grow and they plan to use a local nursery to supply the trees. Tree watering will be needed since it was not part of the grant but it was suggested that Public Works be asked to help with the watering. The only other expense would be trimming the trees when they grow too tall. Mr. Robertson said he knew of a municipality, when the fire department had to test hydrants and drain tankers, that the water expelled was used for the trees and landscaping which was a great way to recycle discharged water.

(5) BEDFORD CENTER FOR BUSINESS

Nothing new to report.

(6) MONTVALE CENTER FOR COMMERCE

Nothing new to report.

(7) NEW LONDON BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER

A. Authorization of Building Drawings for Lot 3B

Mrs. Blido explained that the EDA must approve the architectural plans of the building for Damage Prevention Solutions, LLC, per covenants. She asked that the EDA members review the building drawings included in the agenda packets. Once approved, Damage Prevention Solutions could move forward with their building permit. Discussion followed and staff answered questions.

Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mrs. Milton, to approve the building facade design for Lot 3B, subject to conforming to the EDA covenants for the New London Business and Technology Center.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

Discussion followed about the business park and reaching out to the state legislators on the Tobacco Commission Board who would be interested in touring the center and seeing what type of work is being done there. Chairman Messier thought it was good business and good exposure to do so. Mrs. Blido will follow-up and also check with Mr. Diddams to see if there is a new lab in the CERE that could be toured as well.

(8) OTHER BUSINESS

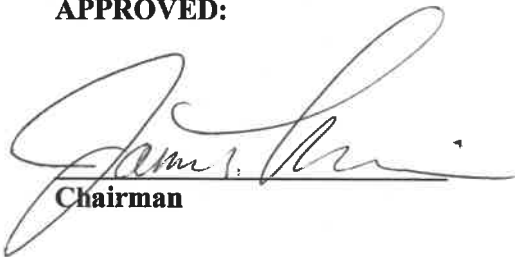
A. Review structure for task forces

Mrs. Blido provided a document for the EDA members to review regarding the scope of the task forces which included questions, comments and input from individuals. Discussion followed regarding the objectives of the task forces. Each group's leader would set the meeting schedules for the group and email everyone. Phone calls and Zoom could also be used as well as meeting rooms such as the CERE building and library community rooms, etc. Mrs. Blido included email addresses and internet links in the document to make contact easier for the EDA members. Chairman Messier said he hoped to have each group's input and final reports by March as a goal and suggested the teams begin now rather than waiting until January which would make a March deadline more difficult.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

6:50 p.m.

APPROVED:


Chairman


Secretary