



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

September 3, 2020
5:30 p.m.

Economic Development Authority:

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

Staff Absent: Robert Hiss, County Administrator

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: Edgar Tuck - County Supervisor District 2; Charla Bansley - County Supervisor District 3; Mary Zirkle - Town of Bedford Director of Planning and Community Development; Rhonnie Smith - County citizen

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Messier asked for a motion to approve and/or any amendments to the Authority's September 3, 2020 agenda. Mrs. Blido stated that she would like to add **Agenda Item 5A. Lease Authorization - East Coast Fabricators.**

Chairman Messier questioned whether a new Vice Chairman needed to be elected, since Vice Chairman Dennis Novitzke had stepped down. Since a new EDA member for District 1 would be appointed soon, consensus was to wait until the October EDA meeting to elect a Vice Chairman.

Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mrs. Gardner, to approve the September 3, 2020 EDA Agenda, as amended.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - July 9, 2020

Chairman Messier asked for approval and/or any amendments to the Authority's July 9, 2020 meeting minutes.

Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mrs. Gardner, to approve the July 9, 2020 meeting minutes, as presented.

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

Voting no: None

Abstaining: Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mr. Messier

(3) REPORTS

A. Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido thanked the EDA members for attending various public meetings, business roundtables, maintenance meetings and prospect visits. She reported the Back to Business grant program is going strong. There had been between 30 to 40 applications so far. Advertisements came out that day, so she expected more applications to come. The CARES Act had been discussed at the Board level regarding how to use the federal funds. Some would be used for the Back to Business grant program, some funds would be used for a program for non-profit organizations, and also a program for individuals as well; such as those needing help with paying utility bills. Other opportunities may be identified once broadband is rolled out where some families and children in school will need help with internet access, so the Board of Supervisors (BOS) is looking into those areas as well.

She also reported that manufacturers were overall doing well, but they are addressing obstacles every day; such as problems with the supply chain, employees afraid to come to work because of a fear of COVID-19 exposure, and new Department of Labor laws, where manufacturers must follow certain or changing protocols. The types of companies that are applying for CARES Act funds through the Back to Business grant program are restaurants, beauty salons, various retail, hotels, vineyards and breweries, and other businesses.

Unemployment claims have come down significantly since the spikes in April. Claims dropped by 25% just this past week and continued claims fell 7%. In Bedford County last week, there were 1,262 continued claims, which is 50% lower than the peak in April. There were also 58 first-time claims which is still higher than normal. Commscope has been laying off people and BWXT has also incurred layoffs.

With the next wave of CARES Act funds, Mrs. Blido suggested revisiting the EDA's strategic plan, and possibly getting a facilitator since the EDA will be looking at recovery and redevelopment in some areas. In discussions with Chairman Messier, Mrs. Blido noted possibly creating small committees for each business park with a member each from the BOS, Planning Commission, EDA, and staff and brainstorming for smaller needs before the end of the year which would help lead up to the budget season. She asked the EDA members to be thinking of types of needs that could be addressed this way in the three business parks.

Mrs. Blido also noted there would be a joint meeting with the BOS next month, Tuesday October 13, 2020. The joint work session will be at 5:00 p.m. and then a short business meeting for Authority members right after. She believes the joint meeting will be in the Board Room, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Mrs. Blido also stated she was sorry to see Mr. Novitzke leave the EDA. He was on the Building and Maintenance Committee with Mr. Robertson, if any of the current EDA members would want to consider serving in his place on that committee.

Mrs. Milton asked about whether there was any progress in coordinating a meeting between the County EDA and the Town's EDA. Mrs. Blido will follow-up with County Administrator Robert Hiss regarding scheduling of such a meeting.

B. Marketing/Business Development Report

Ms. Bailey reported that a digital ad campaign was launched for the Bedford County business parks. There have been over 32,000 impressions so far. She will receive more data as the campaign progresses. There were 35 companies that applied for the Back to Business grant and only three companies were ineligible so far. One company had already received funds from the Town, one rental company did not meet the criteria, and one did not meet the financial requirement, but the business was steered toward the Governor's Grant instead. Other business applications are currently under review.

Bedford One will take a new shape this year since students cannot be taken out safely due to COVID-19. However, there is opportunity to get more exposure to jobs and industry with virtual tours and have all three schools participating without limiting the number of students. Ms. Bailey spoke with the Vice President of CVCC, Pat Gatti, and career coaches to get their input. Virtual tours can be conducted on Zoom and representatives from the companies will be included on the call. A video can be shown describing the particular business. A CVCC representative can also be included, who could explain pathways and classes available that would focus on the job skills needed for the specific companies' needs. She also found out that Bedford County high school seniors this year can have their diplomas completed by December. They are encouraging these students to not take a semester off, but enroll in Spring 2021 college courses instead. Bedford One's goal is to have six virtual tours this school year.

Mrs. Gardner noted that there is a contest currently to select the top three best small towns through the Blue Ridge and Bedford is one of them. She encouraged everyone to put in their vote as this would be a big deal and give Bedford much exposure.

Mrs. Milton saw the pictures posted of the new shell building in the New London park and asked if there were any aerial pictures of the park overall that could be posted. Ms. Bailey said there is a video of the New London park on the website and there is some drone footage covering the other parks as well. Mrs. Blido said they have about 30 drone shots from Brian Key which they have not reviewed yet but they will put more updates on the website soon.

C. Monthly Financial Report (July-August 2020)

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

D. Monthly Accounts Payable Report – Bills that have been paid (July-August 2020)

Staff reviewed the accounts payable report with the EDA members and answered questions. Mr. Walton and Mr. Robertson noted that insurance will be needed on the shell building once it is completed. Mr. Cash said he has spoken with the Virginia Association of Counties who are the insurance provider for Bedford County and once the Certificate of Occupancy is issued, they will be ready to acquire insurance.

(4) TOWN OF BEDFORD

A. Authorization for Department of Forestry Tree Grant

Mary Zirkle, Director of Planning and Community Development for the Town of Bedford, reviewed the Bridge Street Revitalization Plan which she spoke about when she last appeared before the EDA. One of the components of the plan is a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDF) to do planning for greening up the Bridge Street area. She met previously with the business and property owners in January and presented a final draft to them last month and made some adjustments for the final report. She found a grant opportunity through the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDF) called the Trees for Clean Water Grant, which could be used for improving the area around the Elba Butcher Shoppe lot. Due to COVID-19, there is no cash match required this year. A simulated picture done by the architectural firm was included in the EDA members' agenda packets. Ms. Zirkle explained further what the completed project would look like and noted the Town is happy to do the benches. Mr. Cash is making assessments regarding the ground and what would need to be done before the trees could be planted potentially in the Spring. The project cannot interfere with the overhead communication and utility lines as well. The deadline for this grant is October 2, so if the EDA wants to commit to the project, the decision must be made tonight, in order to apply for the grant in a timely manner. Discussion followed regarding the feasibility of the project and its beautification of the Elba property, as well as whether the Town can construct sidewalks for pedestrian safety.

Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mrs. Milton to authorize Ms. Zirkle to submit the request for the Trees for the Clean Water Grant through the Virginia Department of Forestry
Voting yes: Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Messier
Voting no: None
Adopted Unanimously

Ms. Zirkle also gave an update on Winoa's shutdown and thanked Chairman Messier for helping her make contact with the company in Canada. They did close at the end of June, but some staff are staying on through October to clean up and send equipment out to France or to a Canadian facility. At least 10 employees out of the 38 have been hired by other Bedford companies.

At Westgate Shopping Center, Gordmans has closed, so there is a 25,000 square foot building that is vacant. Ms. Zirkle is speaking with a commercial real estate agent to find something that could work in the space. Blue Ridge Community Church is the property owner of everything surrounding the 25,000 square foot building, so a good fit will be needed.

Ms. Zirkle also reported that 43 grants were paid out in the Town's business support program. Those companies that did not make it were referred to the County program and she thanked the EDA members for their continued support of the community's businesses.

B. Authorization for Roof Replacement Adjoining Elba

Mr. Cash directed the EDA members to the letter he wrote regarding the two issues that need addressing, one of which is the failing roof system on the building adjoining Elba. Currently, the building is housing the County's General Properties Maintenance Department on the lower level and Elba uses the upper level for storage. The area has a flat roof of unknown age and water is coming through the roof and making its way into the store itself now. Three roofing vendors have submitted bids and all three have a 15 year warranty. There is some rust on the metal deck underneath the roof, but it is unknown how much. He is recommending some contingency funds of \$4,600 be set aside to cover unknowns. Cost of the roof replacement is approximately \$33,500 but finding asbestos would be the exception. Costs will go up if asbestos is found and testing is currently being done, but there are no results yet. Results are expected within the next couple weeks. Discussion followed regarding the asbestos issue and its effects on the store, County and EDA property, and a long-term plan/vision needed for the entire complex. Funding the roof project was also discussed.

Mr. Robertson moved, seconded by Mr. Walton, to authorize staff to proceed with roof replacement of the building adjoining Elba Butcher Shoppe for \$33,500, which would not include an asbestos finding.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

C. Authorization for Design Services for Drainage Improvements at Elba

Mr. Cash reviewed the ongoing drainage issues behind the store as identified in his letter to the EDA members. He said water seeps through the back wall during heavy rain events. There are underground storm water pipes, but it is unknown how they tie in or where they go. Inside the store, there are trenches and sumps with drains that no one knows where they go and the issue is complicated. He reached out to Master Engineers who would partner with Accupoint to do some of the civil and stormwater work not to exceed \$10,000 in order to develop a plan to get the water off of the back of the building. Discussion followed about whether to hold off until a plan is made for a long-term vision for the property as well as addressing the parking lot issues. Discussion also included completing a temporary maintenance repair fix rather than spending the \$10,000 now for preliminary engineering and design work. This would simplify the repair until the major site improvements can be planned and completed. Consensus was agreeable to Master Engineers completing work for a temporary, smaller maintenance repair fix for the stormwater flow off the lot and verifying that the downspouts are connected and not just flowing onto the ground. Mr. Cash will direct Master Engineers to perform the necessary work for the temporary smaller fix.

(5) BEDFORD CENTER FOR BUSINESS

A. Lease Authorization for East Coast Fabricators

Mrs. Blido stated that East Coast Fabricators make metal cabinets and are located in the CVCC building and utilize 30,000 square feet. Mr. Skelley noted the company has been in the space since 2004 and have renewed several leases over time. The existing lease expires on October 31, 2020. A new lease has been drawn up using the same format as the old lease with rent remaining at the current amount of \$10,106.67 per month. It will be a three-year lease with options for two additional one-year terms upon agreement of both parties.

Mrs. Gardner moved, seconded by Mr. Braud to approve renewal of the lease of East Coast Fabricators for \$10,106.67 per month for a three-year term with options for two additional one-year terms upon agreement of both parties.

Voting yes: 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 prospect for the park that was going to proceed with a special use permit pulled out before their meeting with the BOS. They decided not to go forward when they realized they were a heavier manufacturing business than what the park was designed for. They want to remain in Bedford County and continue to look for a heavy industrial space for relocation with direct access to Route 460. Mrs. Blido is working with the company to find an appropriate space.

(7) NEW LONDON BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER

A. Shell Building and Meade Road Construction Progress

Mr. Cash reported that the shell building is on the home stretch and is almost finished. The front of the building still shows insulation at the top but they are awaiting delivery of the aluminum panels that go on the top of the building. Estimated delivery time is three weeks. Structural wires and cables that support the building had crossed over windows which was unacceptable. A portal frame was designed to get the cables out of the windows but the upright supports of the portal frame must be redesigned to be tapered so the beams do not cross over the windows like the structural wires and cables did. The changes will not affect the marketability of the building and there are no cost issues either. Dressing up the site is also needed. Weather has had an impact on the dirt work although most of dirt has been moved. Hydroseed needs to be completed and parking lots swept. The building inspector did a final walkthrough this week. Everything should be wrapped up at the site within the next two to three weeks and within budget. Contingency funds have a remaining balance of \$21,000.

The Meade Road project is basically done. Some hydroseeding needs to be done, and some dress up on the road shoulders. The cost for the road project came in at 10% less than expected. With three or four days of dry weather, the project will be completed.

B. BRWA Pre-payment for Sewer Connection

Mrs. Blido said she spoke to Sarah Capps from the Tobacco Commission and explained to her the situation with reserving the shell building's sewer capacity now before Forest's capacity is used up causing a problem for New London. While in this meeting, she received a response from Ms. Capps noting that the Tobacco Commission will consider paying \$23,387.62 of A&E costs originally budgeted to the match, freeing those funds to be used toward the sewer connection fee of \$32,000. Mrs. Blido explained the Tobacco Commission has not done this before and this is a huge advantage for Bedford County and the shell building. The Tobacco Commission is in business with Bedford County in this project and are helping to market it and this is very good news. In order to have capacity in the sewer system, the Bedford Regional Water Authority (BRWA) needs the \$32,000 Capital Recovery Fee paid to have a two-inch incoming water line and a six-inch outgoing sewer line. It does not address the water fee but at least there will be sewer capacity reserved. A future tenant or the EDA will need an additional \$24,000 to turn on the water. Discussion followed regarding ERC's and how many different projects use different amounts of available ERC's. Funding options were also discussed as well as timeliness in reserving the sewer capacity.

Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mr. Walton to authorize \$32,000 Capital Recovery Fee be paid to BRWA for reservation of the new shell building's sewer capacity in the New London Business and Technology Center.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

C. Parks & Rec Disc Golf Course Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Mr. Skelley reviewed with Authority members the disc golf course concept plan that was presented by Kenny Palmer in the June 4, 2020 EDA meeting. The course would be built over the wooded and easement areas of New London park. He spoke with BRWA about the plan and they were thrilled as long as the maintenance on the easements and course were more intensive than they would require and it did not interfere with any of their operations. He drew up the MOU where the County would be responsible for the maintenance and installation of the course with a clear understanding that if a lot were to be sold and the course would interfere with the use of that lot, the course would have to be moved. It would be considered a license and not an easement. He said the only issue would be where people would park to

use the course which could be sorted out as the project developed. A copy of the MOU document was included in the EDA's agenda packets that were emailed. The Parks and Rec. Department will be responsible for mowing and maintaining the course and the EDA is not obligated to fund any portion of the project.

Mr. Walton moved, seconded by Mr. Braud to execute the MOU for the development of a golf disc course in New London Business and Technology Center.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

D. Ratify Lot 3B Sale and Incentive

Mrs. Blido reminded the Authority members that several months ago in Closed Session they discussed Damage Prevention Solutions, LLC and selling Lot 3B in the New London Park. A press release will be published once the site plan is approved, and tonight they have an option to ratify that action taken in Closed Session and authorize the EDA Chairman to sign three documents: the Performance Agreement, Sales Agreement, and Purchase Money Note all related to what was discussed in that Closed Session. The Performance Agreement includes 15 new jobs created and a minimum investment of \$650,000.

Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mrs. Gardner to authorize the EDA Chairman to sign the Performance Agreement, Sales Agreement, and Purchase Money Note for Lot 3B, New London Business and Technology Center, a 4.21 acre lot with a purchase price of \$189,450 and a Performance Agreement with Damage Prevention Solutions, LLC; that provides credits as they achieve certain measures.

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

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

(8) OTHER BUSINESS

A. CARES Act Grant Briefing

Mrs. Blido spoke earlier about the business grant program and the opportunity to help 200 companies at \$5,000 each. If 200 companies do not apply and there is money left in the program, she would like the thoughts of the EDA members regarding talking to the BOS about helping companies at a greater level. Currently, the funds are for businesses making between \$50,000 and \$3 million, so perhaps the second phase could include businesses making between \$3 million and \$10 million. Mr. Braud thought it would be a good topic for the Joint Meeting with the BOS on October 13, 2020.

Chairman Messier thanked the BOS members who were in attendance for supporting Mrs. Blido regarding the business grant program. He stated that the EDA members could do more to help the staff by representing a particular park and in talking about needs in the business parks. He thought if the EDA members agreed, each could let Mrs. Blido know which park they would like to represent, and by March, the EDA would have some good documentation regarding the particulars of the three business parks and possibly including the Elba property as well. Consensus was agreeable to the idea.

Supervisor Tuck mentioned the BOS allocated \$250,000 additional dollars to help and assist businesses long-term. The long-term issues must be COVID-19 related but reminded the EDA about this additional funding that must be used by the end of the year. Discussion followed about possible uses.

Supervisor Tuck also noted that the Smith Mountain Lake Airport expansion was approved so hangars and planes will be added over the next couple years. There were concerns about the airport being on a private road. He worked with VDOT and they found \$500,000 that Virginia has for infrastructure for airports, which will allow the road to be state-maintained at least to the airport entrance now.

Mrs. Milton said she was at a grand opening in downtown Lynchburg and when she was in the elevator, the elevator buttons were covered with a Nanotouch product. Mrs. Blido said she will mention it to Mr. Cash so the County's elevator buttons can be protected like the County's door handles using Nanotouch products.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

7:13 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chairman

Secretary