



**MEETING MINUTES
BEDFORD COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

Bedford County Administration Board Room

122 E. Main Street

Bedford, VA 24523

March 7, 2019

5:30 p.m.

Economic Development Authority:

Present:

Dennis Novitzke - Dist. 1; Mickey Johnson, Chairman - Dist. 2; Wyatt Walton - Dist. 3; Matthew Braud - Dist. 4; Kristy Milton - Dist. 5; Kelly Harmony - Dist. 6; Jim Messier, Vice-Chairman - Dist. 7

Absent: None

Staff Present: Robert Hiss - County Administrator; Patrick Skelley - County Attorney; Traci Blido – EDA Secretary; Pam Bailey - Marketing & Business Development Coordinator; Sheldon Cash - Director of Public Works

Staff Absent: None

Transcriber: Julia Peters

Guests: Charla Bansley – County Supervisor District 3; Megan Lucas, CEO, Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance; Thomas Messier, student

(1) APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Johnson asked for a motion to approve and/or any amendments to the Authority's March 7, 2019 agenda. Two items were added to the agenda. "Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) regarding the potential disposition of real property held by the EDA" was included with Section 2.2-3711 (A)(8) Under **Item 7B. Closed Session**. Under **Item 10. New Business**, "A. Broadband Resolution of Support" was added.

Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mr. Messier, to approve the March 7, 2019 EDA agenda, as amended.

Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mrs. Harmony, Mr. Messier

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

(2) APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES - February 7, 2019

Chairman Johnson asked for approval and/or any amendments to the Authority's regular February 7, 2019 meeting minutes.

Mr. Messier moved, seconded by Mr. Novitzke, to approve the February 7, 2019 meeting minutes, as presented.

Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Mrs. Milton, Mrs. Harmony, Mr. Messier

Voting no: None

Adopted Unanimously

(3) INTRODUCTION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR - Robert Hiss

Mrs. Blido introduced Mr. Robert Hiss, new County Administrator for Bedford County, to the Economic Development Authority members. Mr. Hiss told the members that he previously worked in Athens, Georgia, and also worked as the Assistant County Administrator in Pulaski County. He hoped to become familiar with the EDA members as well as the support staff and looked forward to working with the Authority and growing the economy here in Bedford.

(4) REPORTS

A. Economic Development Director's Report

Mrs. Blido reported that broadband is moving quickly and Comcast is working in the Smith Mountain Lake area. Blue Ridge Towers is finishing up on work for the permits and will begin building the towers within the next month. A regional career fair, Career Expo, is coming up on April 9 and 10 at Liberty University's indoor track. Fifty companies will be participating and students will have several opportunities to speak with representatives of these companies and visit interactive displays. All of the Region's 7th or 8th graders, and 11th graders will be attending this fair and the homeschool association and private schools have been invited as well. Additionally, Staunton River High School has received a grant and are asking for eight Bedford companies to each take on an intern for three hours per day, five days a week for 16 weeks and the grant money will pay these interns' salaries. The internships would begin in January 2020. These students would generally not be planning on attending four-year colleges and would be taught soft skills in the classroom and then go out to their assigned company for hands-on learning while earning some money. Mrs. Blido asked the Authority members to contact her if they knew of any company that could utilize one of these interns. She is also working with a couple of companies on grants for the Virginia Jobs Investment Program. She is helping three agribusinesses that are looking to expand and Johnson's Farm was recently recognized as a Century Farm at the state level and honored here locally as well. Last week she attended the Virginia Ag Development Officers meeting in Richmond where representatives of 50 localities attended. One of the topics covered was about growing hemp in Virginia. It can be grown for any industrial purpose with no minimum acreage and random samples will be taken where the THC level cannot be more than .3%. A second hemp research program has been started at Virginia Tech and the background check requirement for farmers has been eliminated, but registration is required for both growing and processing. Mrs. Blido has spoken with Mr. Patel from Vista Foods. He told her sales have suffered a little due to the new Dollar General store opening, but he is doing well enough. He has until the end of the month to provide the documentation on the percentage of sales. The Teva facility has received some interest and the marketing materials have been approved of which an example was included in the EDA members' meeting packets. The Local Government Council has changed their name to the Central Virginia Planning District Commission and have put out population growth charts in their newsletter. The estimate for 2018 shows a county growth of 78,329 people which is up by 522 people year over year with a .67% growth rate. Our growth is second in the region with

Lynchburg rating as first. She noted that Ms. Bailey has been working for the county for one year now and the Authority members and Mrs. Blido wished her a happy anniversary.

B. Marketing/Business Development Report

Ms. Bailey reported the Bedford One students toured the Virginia Technical Institute facility at their open house/job fair. While there, a Staunton River High School student actually received a job offer. The Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) students from Bedford Science and Technology Center (BSTC) took a health care tour to the free clinics in Lynchburg and the Centra Health College of Nursing. Next week they will be going to US Pipe and Delta Star and she reached out to Senator Steve Newman and hopes to get the students a photo op with him. The next Business Roundtable is next week on Thursday at 8:30 am at the LU Center of Engineering Research and Education (CERE) building in New London. The Business Appreciation Event is scheduled for May 16 at Beale's Brewery. She has continued doing marketing updates, and adding information to the VEDP website, working on signage for Lot 7, and waiting on an image for Lot 4. She has been working on a sales data sheet for the shell building, and the Virginia Grown bags are being distributed to the Farmer's Market Managers to be handed out to their customers. The Forest Farmer's Market had their meeting last night to go over their policies and Dorothy McIntyre gets two new potential vendors each week. Ms. McIntyre has been asked to speak at the USDA Direct Market Success Meeting which is spotlighting Women in Ag in Bedford County on March 26. The winter markets have been very successful with 25 vendors each month and a strong customer base. In February, Ms. McIntyre had a pancake breakfast which raised funds for animal rescue. This Saturday will be the last indoor winter market in Forest. The Bedford market is under new management with 13 vendors so far, they have been approved for SNAP, and applied for a grant for matching USDA funds.

C. Monthly Financial Report (February 2019)

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

D. Monthly Accounts Payable Report – Bills that have been paid (February 2019)

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

(5) SITE READINESS PROGRAM - Megan Lucas, Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance

Mrs. Blido introduced Ms. Lucas, CEO of the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, who spoke to the EDA about site readiness. The Region completed the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which had four key goals and 11 initiatives. She would be addressing Initiative #9 "Develop and implement a regional site evaluation and improvement program to accelerate the preparation and availability of shovel-ready industrial sites in the Region". The Alliance hired Draper Aden Associates to do a site analysis of the publicly-owned industrial sites in the region which consist of Bedford County, Campbell County, Appomattox County, Amherst County and the Town of Amherst, Lynchburg City, and the Town of Altavista. The Town of Bedford is not a part of the Alliance, but is still represented at the table by the county's Economic Development Director, Ms. Blido. Site readiness is defined in tiers with Tier 1 being basic pasture land and the final Tier 5 as being a pad-ready site which a company can purchase and within six weeks can begin putting in footers, or gravel, or building what is needed. The only site in Bedford County that is currently at Tier 5 is in the New London Business and Technology Center. The Alliance wants to move 29 acres of the Montvale Center for Commerce from a Tier 2 site to a Tier 3 site by obtaining a Go Virginia grant. The Alliance will put in \$50,000 and the Go Virginia grant will match it. There are six sites in the region that the Alliance will be working on to move them from Tier 2 to Tier 3. Most localities hold off doing the due diligence piece (i.e., historic resources, waterway analysis) because that portion has a sunset and the localities do not want to take the risk of spending the money and then waiting thereafter. The Alliance hopes to help the localities with the due diligence piece

so that once done, the localities can continue moving their sites forward to meet the Tiers 4 and 5 requirements. For the Montvale Center, the due diligence piece is estimated at costing \$30,000. Discussion followed regarding the volume of water available in the Montvale Center for prospects who use large amounts of water. In responding to a question, Ms. Lucas said there are only two shell buildings available in the region. One is in Campbell County and the other is in the New London park. She noted there is a shortage of manufacturing sites ready to go throughout the country and companies want pad ready sites, existing new buildings, and access to a workforce. In response to a question about no interstate highway access, she said the economic development directors and the Alliance know to tell companies that there is access to great two-lane highways and many presently located companies can verify that there is no impact to their moving product. More discussion followed and Ms. Lucas answered further questions from the Authority members.

(6) TOWN OF BEDFORD

Ms. Blido reported that Mary Zirkle received a brownfields grant for \$225,000 for Old Yellow. She is now applying for an IRF grant and she hopes it will be well received so the Town can move forward with that project.

(7) NEW LONDON BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER

A. Shell Building Construction Update

Mr. Sheldon Cash said the site plan approval has been delayed. VDOT will not approve the site plan without a design for the road going into the shell building property. Hurt and Proffitt are working on the design and said they can turn it around within 30 days. The existing gravel road will be used for construction and contingency funds will cover the \$20,000 cost for the necessary road design plan. The regional water authority, natural resources department, and VDOT have completed their comments and initial review.

B. CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Braud moved, seconded by Mrs. Harmony, that the Bedford County Economic Development Authority go into Closed Session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) and (8), for discussion or consideration of the acquisition or disposition of real property for a public purpose, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.

Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Ms. Milton, Mrs. Harmony, Mr. Messier

Voting no: None

Adopted unanimously

Mr. Novitzke moved, seconded by Mrs. Harmony, to return to regular session.

Voting yes: Mr. Novitzke, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Walton, Mr. Braud, Ms. Milton, Mrs. Harmony, Mr. Messier

Voting no: None

Adopted unanimously

WHEREAS, the Bedford County Economic Development Authority has convened a Closed Meeting on the 7th day of March 2019, pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Bedford County Economic Development Authority that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on this 7th day of March 2019, that the Bedford County Economic Development Authority does hereby certify that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting was heard, discussed or considered by the Bedford County Economic Development Authority.

| <u>MEMBERS:</u> | <u>VOTE:</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Kelly Harmony | Yes |
| Wyatt H. Walton, III | Yes |
| Matthew Braud | Yes |
| Jim Messier, Vice-Chairman | Yes |
| Dennis Novitzke | Yes |
| Kristy Milton | Yes |
| Mickey Johnson, Chairman | Yes |

(8) BEDFORD CENTER FOR BUSINESS
A. Environmental Study

Mrs. Blido reported the cultural review is now complete at the Bedford Center. This moves the Center from the Site Readiness Tier 2.5 to Tier 3. The next two tiers will cost money so we will put it for future discussion on a planning day to see how we can move the property to site-ready completion.

(9) MONTVALE CENTER FOR COMMERCE
A. Bobblett Gap Update

Mrs. Blido stated that we closed on the Lot 5, six acre property with Bobblett Gap, on Feb 21, 2019 and a copy of the press release is in the Authority members' packets.

(10) NEW BUSINESS
A. Broadband Resolution of Support

Mrs. Blido reported that the County IT Director has put in for a DHCD grant to help fund the broadband project and is waiting to hear if any money will be received. Meanwhile, we also are applying for a grant with the Tobacco Commission and she asked the Authority members if they would provide a resolution supporting the request.

At a regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority of the County of Bedford, Virginia, held at the Bedford County Administration Building the 7th day of March, 2019 beginning at 5:30 p.m.:

| <u>MEMBERS:</u> | <u>VOTE:</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Mickey Johnson, Chairman | Yes |
| Jim Messier, Vice-Chairman | Yes |

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Wyatt H. Walton, III | Yes |
| Dennis Novitzke | Yes |
| Matthew Braud | Yes |
| Kristy Milton | Yes |
| Kelly Harmony | Yes |

On the motion of Wyatt Walton, seconded by Kelly Harmony, which carried by a vote of 7-0, the following resolution was adopted:

WHEREAS, On March 7, 2019, the Economic Development Authority of the County of Bedford met at its regular board meeting and discussed the opportunity for Bedford County to submit a Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC) Broadband grant due March 21, 2019 to assist in building out high speed Internet access to underserved or unserved areas of the county.

WHEREAS, Bedford County EDA supports the Broadband Authority's signed agreement with Roanoke-based Blue Ridge Towers (BRT) for an estimated \$3 million project to fulfill that mission; and recognizes that the county only has about \$1.5 million to carry out that agreement at this time.

WHEREAS, the EDA supports the County request for a grant from the TRRC and/or the DHCD to complete the funding requirements to complete the buildout of the planned towers and project requirements to fulfill said mission.

WHEREAS, the EDA recognizes that this TRRC application from the county supports the county's economic development mission to sustain and improve the quality of life for all of Bedford County through a prudent and cost effective economic development program that results in good quality jobs for all residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Economic Development Authority of the County of Bedford that the Board does hereby support the application to the Tobacco Commission for County-wide Broadband Buildout.

(11) OTHER BUSINESS

None to report.

(12) ADJOURNMENT

7:05 p.m.

APPROVED:


Chairman


Secretary