

AT A MEETING OF THE ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA) HELD ELECTRONICALLY AND AT THE ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES LOCATED AT 150 SOUTH MAIN STREET, LEXINGTON, VA 24450 ON JANUARY 19, 2021 AT 8:30 am.

PRESENT IN PERSON: J. LINGON JONES, JR., ROY POWELL, JANIE HARRIS, DAVID HAWKINS, AND BOYD BROWN,
PRESENT ONLINE: DAVID FERRIS AND ANNE HERRING
ABSENT:
EDA COUNSEL: LEE TAYLOR (not present)
SECRETARY: BRANDY FLINT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: DAVID MCDANIEL (present online)
MEDIA: NONE
OTHER: SPENCER SUTER (present online)

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Mr. Jones called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

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The second agenda item was citizen comments.

Ms. Flint indicated that no citizen comments were received via email or the Zoom platform, and there were no phone call-ins.

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The third agenda item was the Election of Officers.

Ms. Flint advised that the current slate of Officers was Mr. Jones as Chair, Ms. Harris as Vice-Chair, and Ms. Flint as Secretary.

Upon a motion by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mr. Brown, the EDA voted unanimously to reelect the current slate of Officers as listed above.

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The fourth agenda item was the approval of the November 16, 2020 meeting minutes.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hawkins, seconded by Mr. Brown, the EDA voted unanimously to approve the minutes as presented.

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The fifth agenda item was the financial report.

Ms. Flint reviewed the financial report as presented below.

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| 1. Regular Checking Account Balance as of December 31 | \$ 9,483.10 |
| 2. COVID-19 Relief Fund Balance – Round 1 as of December 31 st | \$73,394.38 |
| 3. COVID-19 Relief Fund Balance – Round 2 | \$ 26.71 |

4. Certificate of Deposit – Cornerstone Bank as of October	\$ 51,839.65
5. Restricted Escrow Account	\$176,498.90

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The sixth agenda item was the activities report.

Ms. Flint reviewed the following activities report:

- a. Continuous Participation with VEDA
- b. Impacted ED Sessions monthly
- c. VEDA P2P Session
- d. Presented at the SVP Economic Development Forum held at White's on December 15
- e. Closed out COVID-19 Round Two grant files
- f. Participated in the monthly Tourism Networking meeting
- g. Live Health Rockbridge monthly meeting.
- h. Several meetings with local partners to discuss the GoVA grant
- i. Attended the monthly department head meeting
- j. Attended the SVP Lead Generation Committee Meeting
- k. Attended the monthly Chamber Economic Development meeting
- l. Attended the monthly CSVRC meeting
- m. Participated in a webinar titled "Intro to Energy Storage."
- n. Attended the REDI grant community input session on Higher Education
- o. Attended a Gauntlet Meet and Greet
- p. Attended Gauntlet informational/input meeting
- q. Attended webinar titled "Supplier Readiness Event: Dominion's Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind Project."
- r. Attended Genedge webinar on manufacturing retooling

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The seventh agenda item was the Virginia Horse Center Report.

Ms. Flint indicated that Mr. Nicholson has asked for an extension on his annual report to the EDA, which is a part of the performance agreement. She advised that he has been dealing with COVID issues and needs more time. The EDA agreed to postpone until their February meeting.

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The eighth agenda item was an update on Financial Disclosure Forms.

Ms. Flint advised that the forms must be turned in by January 31st to Ms. Brandy Whitten.

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The ninth agenda item was a discussion on the impacts of COVID-19.

Ms. Flint noted that there is still a rise in cases locally, vaccine distribution has begun, and the PPP program reopened with the latest stimulus package. There was a brief discussion on the vaccine distribution before Ms. Flint noted that she closed out the COVID-19 grants and showed some pictures from the modifications done at Fine Points Salon in Glasgow and how grateful all the recipients were for receiving the funding from the EDA. She indicated that grant funding was used to purchase inventory, PPE, in addition to modifications to buildings and equipment to mitigate COVID. Mr. Hawkins asked if the EDA should start making plans for the remaining funds, they have left in the first grant round. Ms. Flint noted there is a lot of funding that is coming in through the recent stimulus packages, but if the EDA wanted to consider another round of grants, they could. Ms. Harris stated that she would like to see if there is a way to use some of the remaining EDA funds for workforce development programs to help retrain those who cannot go back to work. She specifically mentioned holding a job fair for displaced workers and how to deal with child care issues. Ms. Flint noted that she is working with a regional group of representatives to flush out grant applications for GoVA along those same lines. She moved the discussion forward to Economic Development to discuss further.

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The tenth agenda item was a discussion on Economic Development.

Ms. Flint noted that job fairs are being held virtually, but they do not get expected employers and job seekers' attendance. She advised that the Chamber Economic Development Committee is discussing ways to retrain, deal with childcare issues, and getting people back to work. She noted that if a grant application is formulated, the EDA could match GoVA grant funds. She indicated she would keep the EDA updated on the Committee's progress. Ms. Flint advised that we have some regional manufacturers looking for workers, including Dynovis, Modine, and Munters. Mr. Brown noted Dynovis is looking for over 20 jobs. Ms. Flint pointed out that workforce, GoVA grant funding opportunities, a regional education update, site development initiatives, and affordable housing are all economic development items that the EDA can discuss. She will plan to do so for future meetings.

Mr. Brown discussed the Business Scale-up Program that he participated in through GoVA. This program was formerly called the Economic Gardening Program through GoVA. He discussed the economic gardening model of growing an existing business. He completed the program and did not know how much it will benefit his company because he has not had the time to delve into it. He noted he went through the program without accepting financial support from EDA to avoid any interest conflicts. He discussed the steps taken and that it was all done virtually. Details of his business and where the company plans to go were provided. The Economic Gardening Center does research and data collection that applies to the participating business's growth plan. Data is mapped and supplied, which was very useful. He concluded that he is looking forward to using the data and seeing what comes from it.

Mr. Powell mentioned that Dominion Energy provided a flyer in their bill last month that presented their plans for the energy industry and the green energy proposal implemented by the Governor. He stated that it indicated that the cost of energy would increase, which will impact Economic Development in Virginia.

Supervisor McDaniel stated that the discussion on retraining employees is good. He noted that we are under the unemployment average in the state, and we need to recruit people here to work. He said that he hears from young adults here that there is nothing to do here, and

we need to consider expanding our economy to attract and keep those people by providing more amenities and things to do. He noted that is something that the EDA could consider tackling. Ms. Flint stated that in the GoVA grant application, the Committee is discussing how to promote what we have here to offer and how to enhance our recruitment efforts. She noted this is a regional effort, and she will provide more details as plans are flushed out.

Mr. Powell stated that we have to increase our cellular data capacity to recruit and keep young professionals. He noted that broadband is excellent, and he is an advocate for it, but cellular data is a must as well.

Ms. Herring stated that broadband and cellular communication are essential for Economic Development. She mentioned the REDI grant and the fact that it is nearing its completion. Ms. Herring then talked about Allegheny's recruitment efforts and how that went with a housing shortage and amenity shortage in Allegheny. We need to tweak our message to recruit and highlight what we have. She noted the Small Business Development Centers partner with localities to hold localized learning opportunities, and she suggested we look into that. Ms. Flint stated she has spoken with the Shenandoah Valley SBDC to discuss how they can be more present in the Rockridge Region. She then noted the REDI grant input session would be held on Thursday, January 21. This REDI grant input session is for the general public to discuss Economic Development topics, make suggestions, and provide input.

Ms. Harris suggested a partnership with the Tourism Office to present the quality of life to recruit and keep people here. There was a brief discussion on branding the region and promoting it regionally because visitors do not know jurisdictional boundaries. Ms. Flint noted that all these items are part of the talks being held by regional representatives. She stated the REDI grant would get us a strategic road map to economic development that we can use regional and that each locality can use to piggyback. She then talked about the regional tourism website and their branding of the Valley versus each locality. She noted she would ask Ms. Clark if she could present to the EDA.

There was a brief discussion on cell towers, specifically the Smith farm. Mr. Suter noted that one is moving forward, but it remains to be seen if it will impact the Buffalo Creek area. It was meant to deal with the capacity, not coverage. Mr. Suter stated that Mr. Slaydon contacted the company several times to move that cell tower project further along, and that is why we are now seeing some action at the site.

Ms. Flint advised the hotel project at Stonewall Square is moving forward as well. She then noted that she would provide a Route 60 project update. There was a brief discussion on the project and progress observed by EDA members and staff.

Mr. Hawkins stated that this conversation about working lifestyle and attracting people back to the community has a sense of urgency now since COVID-19. He noted his children and their contemporaries say they no longer want to live in the area where they work in a honeycomb. He also stated that there is a business in Charlottesville and the owner has a significant amount of land here in Rockbridge, but he does not have the service he needs to live and work here full time. There was a brief discussion on working from home, the future of office rental spaces, tourism as an economic engine, and converting visitors to residents. Ms. Herring suggested that we tie in destination development as a driver to bring people here and keep people here.

Mr. Suter then provided an update on the Route 60 project. The project has been extended and should be completed by February 8th due to equipment breaking, leaking pipes, and COVID impacts. He also stated that the County is actively going after things that are within

our control. Broadband is influenceable, whereas cellular coverage is not, and broadband greatly enhances cell coverage.

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The eleventh agenda item was Board Comments.

Mr. Hawkins noted that he had been associated with the Virginia Horse Center (VHC) since it was established in 1985. He advised that he reviewed and signed off on all the VHC audits up until two years ago. He indicated that now that he has retired from his accounting firm, he no longer reviews the audits, but he has reviewed the 2019 audit. He stated that he has no direct financial gain or benefits from the VHC. He indicated that he would abstain from discussing the financial statements regardless. He then asked Ms. Flint to provide him a copy of the VHC's performance agreement. He concluded by saying that he is a fan and supporter of the VHC since he is a neighbor who lives right down the road. He sees it every day, and there are ways to leverage what the VHC has to offer.

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With no further business to discuss, upon a motion by Mr. Powell, seconded by Mr. Hawkins, the EDA voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:36 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandy Flint,
Secretary