

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF THE TOWN OF FRONT ROYAL & COUNTY OF WARREN, VIRGINIA dba ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA)

At a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Industrial Development Authority of the Town of Front Royal and the County of Warren, Virginia, dba Economic Development Authority, held on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 8:00 AM at the Warren County Government Center, Conference Room, 220 N. Commerce Avenue, Front Royal, VA 22630, and streamed online.

Board Members Present: Jeff Browne (Chair); Greg Harold; Scott Jenkins; Jorie Martin; Jim Wolfe

Others Present: Joe Petty, Warren County Director of Economic Development; Zach Henderson, Office Manager for Economic Development; Walt Mabe, Warren County Board of Supervisors.

Others Present Online: Alex Bridges, Northern Virginia Dailey

Call to Order: Mr. Browne called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM with the following roll call vote: Browne, Aye; Jenkins, Aye; Martin, Aye; Wolfe, Aye. Mr. Browne stated that Mr. Harold would be arriving shortly.

Adoption of the Agenda: The agenda was adopted as is with a motion for approval made by Mr. Jenkins and seconded by Mr. Wolfe with the following roll call vote: Browne, Aye; Jenkins, Aye; Martin, Aye; Wolfe, Aye.

Approval of the January 27th Minutes: Mr. Browne stated that Wednesday Group should be capitalized and the minutes should reflect that it was for "Local Non-profit Churches and Government Agencies" instead of the broader, "programs". Mr. Jenkins then moved that the amended minutes be approved and the motion was seconded by Mr. Wolfe with the following roll call vote: Browne, Aye; Jenkins, Aye; Martin, Aye; Wolfe, Aye.

Reports:

- A. Executive Committee:** Mr. Browne emphasized the need to broaden marketing efforts and look at materials and steps that were taken in the past to see what can be updated and improved upon. He further expressed the need to focus on Avtex, Happy Creek, Stephens Industrial Park, etc., because they are the "game changers" in terms of paying off the debt. Mr. Jenkins suggested that the EDA should have an annual open house to showcase the properties for businesses and the larger community. Mr. Browne stated that there was a successful showcase approximately 3 years ago in conjunction with the Town. He wanted to do it again but transportation would be more of a challenge if the Front Royal trolley is not available.
- B. Asset Committee:** Mr. Harold arrived at 8:22 AM and said he had nothing to present during open session.
- C. Finance Committee:** Mr. Wolfe reminded everyone that the budget meeting with the Board of Supervisors will take place Thursday, March 2nd at 7:00PM. Mr. Petty stated that he will be doing the presentation that will cover the EDA, Economic Development, and Discover Front Royal. Mr. Petty will provide handouts that show the balances and the line-item budgets to make it as clear and transparent as possible. Furthermore, Mr. Petty stated that the \$3K in the Miscellaneous line-item is for the HOA Fees for Rivermont Acres, and also Stephens Industrial Park funding will be by grants instead of the General Fund. Ms. Martin asked if the loan amount being paid currently has been calculated into this request. Mr. Petty said it has but the revenue will not be there. He stated that there are 2 hits to the budget in terms of revenue, Sysco and IT Federal. Mr. Wolfe urged a more simplistic approach to the presentation to avoid, "getting lost in the weeds;" the message should be clear, concise, and with a tangible plan moving forward. Mr. Browne then asked who would attend. Mr. Browne, Ms. Martin, and Mr. Wolfe stated they would come but, Mr. Jenkins and Mr. Harold would not be able to.

- D. Board Member Updates:** Ms. Martin commented on the success of the first open-door session, emphasizing the turnout, networking, and overall presentations of those present. In addition, she also expressed enthusiasm for the next one that will focus on Workforce Development and is tentatively scheduled for May. In terms of specific networking, Ms. Martin stated that she had a good conversation with the Town representatives and discussed the RFI for Avtex with both the Town and the County. Mr. Browne asked if there were any representatives from Laurel Ridge. Mr. Petty stated that he had been in contact with them and one person was present at the session. Mr. Jenkins then expressed the need to look at the small businesses and to include the Chamber of Commerce moving forward. Mr. Browne asked if the session was recorded. Mr. Petty stated that the local press recorded only the first half of the agenda. Mr. Jenkins then asked how they can position the EDA for individuals who are looking for commercial property. Mr. Harold commented that thus far suggestions have come from the Planning Commission. Mr. Jenkins stated that, if the EDA can get developers to use the EDA as a sounding board, this would create a good working relationship with them as well as the Planning Department and Commission.
- E. WC Economic Development Director:** Mr. Petty echoed Ms. Martin's comments about the success of the Inland Port session. He is working with Economic Development Organizations in surrounding counties to host a job expo in May and they are recruiting presenters now. Furthermore, Worlds of Work is having a meeting Friday March 3rd which will give kids a hands-on experience for careers in which they may be interested. Lastly, Mr. Petty will be attending the Downtown Inc. meeting later in the day (February 28th). Mr. Petty has received information regarding the Tier status for Stephens Industrial Park and he is confident the Tier status will be upgraded.

Old Business:

- A. Social Media Update:** Mr. Petty spoke with the County IT Staff about how to make a new Facebook page or ask the current owner for the rights. Mr. Browne commented that the owner may be Jennifer MacDonald but he doesn't know for sure. This led to a discussion about the logistics of both options but no decision or vote was taken.
- B. I.T. Transition:** Mr. Petty stated that Ms. Pandak drafted a MOU. Mr. Browne and Ms. Martin met with Queen Consulting and the IT Department. IT can't do anything without the administrative rights which are currently held by Queen. Mr. Petty stated that, if the EDA wished to continue with Queen, then the current contract may need to be restructured. Mr. Browne asked if the MOU could be edited to only include email merging through IT and Office 365. Mr. Petty said that it could but the EDA priority and the IT priority may not be the same. Mr. Jenkins expressed his frustration that the MOU was written a month ago and there has been little to no activity since then. Ms. Martin commented that the original MOU was "outrageous" but there has been no correspondence from the County IT. She also urged that the MOU explain in detail the security for their documents. Mr. Harold agreed with both Ms. Martin's and Mr. Jenkins' frustrations and commented about the key difference in the staffing levels between Queen and IT. He wanted to get something more tangible in writing. Mr. Petty then commented on potential FOIA requests that will need FR-WC EDAR review.

New Business:

- A. Avtex Property RFI:** Ms. Martin asked the Board if the plan was ready to be sent to the Town and the County to be put into its final form. Mr. Browne wanted to take time to discuss the RFI and what it may take to make it to the next step and pass. He does like the concept plan thus far. Mr. Petty stated that the Pennoni plan from 2017 included a lot of traffic analysis. Mr. Jenkins asked if they are willing to meet with the EDA. He stated that the plan should make sure that all the RFI needs have been met. Ms. Martin stated that she wants to approve the RFI now and document it in the minutes and she was not interested in a straw poll. Mr. Wolfe wanted to move forward with the RFI as well but does not want the EDA to approve it yet. Mr. Jenkins stated that it was important to get an action plan done within

the next few days. Ms. Martin asked if the Board could vote on a draft that can be sent for correspondence, and, if not, she wanted it to be included in the minutes that the Board did not want to vote at this time. Mr. Harold asked the purpose of a vote. Ms. Martin explained that it would show good progress on a project that has been in the making for several years. Ms. Martin then moved for a vote on the draft RFI to be sent to the County and the Town for review and comment. The motion failed for lack of a second.

- B. Financial Process MOU:** Mr. Petty spoke to Dr. Daley and the Board of Supervisors but there is currently no official document. However, the MOU will better define how to manage the money that comes in and where said funding will be dispersed in one document. Mr. Browne asked if there was an ETA on the document, and Mr. Petty stated that the goal is to have it ready for a vote at the next meeting. Mr. Harold expressed the importance of an agreement and understanding to help account for where exactly the dollars go and to review how all costs are being incurred. Mr. Wolfe asked if the County auditor will be used. Mr. Petty said that they would. Mr. Wolfe commented in favor of the County but there is a potential conflict of interest. Ms. Martin asked why this wasn't done sooner. Mr. Wolfe said they very well may go back to the previous auditors if the County Auditors see a conflict. Mr. Jenkins stated that regardless of who does it, the EDA has to own the results.

Closed Session:

Mr. Browne read the meeting into closed session at 9:27 AM and a motion was made by Mr. Jenkins, seconded by Mr. Wolfe and approved with the following roll call vote: Browne, Aye; Jenkins, Aye; Harold, Aye; Martin, Aye; Wolfe, Aye.

- A. 4 matters – Discussion of disposition of publicly held real property where discussion in open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, Stephens Industrial Park, 1321 Happy Creek Rd, Avtex redevelopment, Happy Creek Industrial Park, and legal advice related thereto, pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-3711.A.3 and 8.
- B. 2 matters – Consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body, *EDA vs Jennifer McDonald et al.*, *EDA v. Town of Front Royal et al.*, pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-3711.A.7 and 8.

At 10:57AM Mr. Petty read the meeting out of closed and a motion to certify closed meeting was made by Mr. Jenkins and was seconded by Mr. Wolfe. The motion was approved with the following roll call vote: Browne, Aye; Jenkins, Aye; Harold, Aye; Martin, Aye; Wolfe, Aye.

Mr. Harold then moved to adjourn, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Wolfe. The motion was approved with the following roll call vote: Browne, Aye; Jenkins, Aye; Harold, Aye; Martin, Aye; Wolfe, Aye.