

Economic Development Authority

August 20, 2018 Minutes

Page County Government Center

Board of Supervisors Room

103 S. Court Street, Luray, VA 22835

5:30PM

Members Present Craig Lancto, Chair
 Leslie Currle, Vice Chair
 Joshua Knight
 Jay Dedman

Members Absent Mark Dofflemyer
 Greg Foltz
 Bart Price

Staff Liz Lewis, Page County ED
 Brooke Newman, ED Assistant

Others in Attendance
 Cathy Grech
 Margaret Stevenson
 Mike Uram

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Craig Lancto called meeting to order at 5:30pm

AGENDA

Jay Dedman motioned to approve the agenda. Second by Joshua Knight.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS & GUESTS

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were tabled until members proof and submit revisions.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer's report was presented by Liz Lewis. Blue Ridge Bank holds \$63,610.36 in conjunction with the CD's \$ 85,684.16 and \$100,097.81. No checks were written at tonight's meeting. Mr. Lancto stated the EDA received a check from IBR for leasing of the property by the animal shelter which is 16 acres at \$35 for six

months and prorated for 50%. Liz Lewis did research on the economic development membership. No one in the valley as heard of the membership. Lancto inquired about the HUBZone membership. Leslie suggested being a member and following up with Carl Knoblock about the benefits of the locality being a member.

OLD BUSINESS

Loan Program Report: Leslie Currle spoke about updates to the loan program. The default rate was added as well as some revisions which improved the document. Jay Dedman commented on his approval of the addition of the default rate. Noted changes by the EDA are to revised “increased by 3%” to “increased to 3%”. There is \$99,000 in loan funds.

Leslie Currle made the motion to approve the loan program with noted revisions of the default rate being increased to 3%. Second by Jay Dedman. **Approved 4-0**

Hub Zone Round Table: Leslie Currle informed the EDA that the Round Table will be held on Thursday, August 23, 2018. It was marketed to existing Hub Zone Companies in hopes to bring them together with the new Hub Zone Companies. Carl Knoblock will give the presentation. Jay Dedman inquired as to how many HUBZones we have. Liz Lewis responded 28.

By Laws: Liz Lewis presented the Bylaws. Bylaws were tabled due to limited time.

Starkey Loan: Liz Lewis presented an update on Mr. Starkey’s loan. Mr. Starkey has sent in a payment and has stated he will pay off the loan by the end of the month.

Conceptual Drawings for Clover: Liz Lewis stated she should have the drawings within the next week.

Challenge Grant for Diesel Scholarship: Mr. Lancto presented information on the scholarship. He stated the farmer’s association is concerned that there is no one to take over repairing heavy equipment. LFCC in combination with the Tech Center offers 11 different courses in automotive. The one thing completely lacking is a diesel program. By sending a student to the diesel program in Nashville with a commitment to stay five years in Page County, we would be moving towards having someone here to do what the farmers need. This would be a matching grant. He proposed a \$20,000 match. This is one of the two economic development drivers of the county. Jay Dedman proposed having a local business match the grant. He brought this up at a farmers meeting and they are very receptive to the idea. The concern is that the men who do work on this equipment are single men who work by themselves. They would not be able to match a loan. An employee from Southern States made the comment that it’s not just farm equipment that gets worked on, it’s trucks. This employee mentioned reaching out to owners of car shops and asking if they would consider sending one of their employees to the diesel program. Mr. Lancto asked Jay Dedman what Southern States spent in Rockingham County per year on diesel repairs. Jay Dedman stated \$100,000. This is just one business. Liz Lewis suggested putting together an outline for the project and assisting with business plans.

Brochure: Mr. Lancto stated he has written an introduction and included some things the EDA has done this year. He will send it out to the members by the end of the week, asked for their ideas as well. Liz Lewis will design the brochure.

Hemp Plan: Liz Lewis presented her synopsis on hemp. Thousands of acres are needed to cultivate this crop. Processing facilities are looking for big incentives. The location of these processing facilities, are typically up to 50 miles away from where the crops are cultivated. Manufacturing would create up to 22 jobs. She is involved with a grant from JMU. They will find out what the supply chain looks like so we can determine where we need to put a supply chain and manufacturer. Someone just bought a plant in Shenandoah County to do manufacturing of fiber. They are also buying 200 acres along with the plant to grow hemp. This will be included with a Go Virginia Grant.

New Business

Inland Port: Jay Dedman stated he contacted Inland Port and they want to give a tour next Monday, August 27, at 10: am. Anyone can attend.

Board Resignations:

Brooke Newman
Leslie Currle
Romeo Pugliese

Community Planning Partners Feasibility Study: Craig Wilson from Community Planning Partners is doing a feasibility study in the town of Shenandoah. Mr. Lancto suggested having a feasibility study in the county before there is further discussion about the counties focus. There was no further discussion at this time.

Municipal Bonds

Mr. Lancto briefly discussed the EDA having authority to float bonds. He requested additional information.

Economic Development Report

Enterprise Zone Rebates/Amended Approval: Liz Lewis presented an Enterprise Zone amendment. The boundaries were approved. She has contacted those that are now included in the zone. She presented the rebates given to local businesses. Jay Dedman moved that the EDA pass the enterprise zone rebates as presented. Second by Leslie Currle. **Approved 4-0**

Economic Development Strategic Plan: Liz Lewis presented the economic development strategic plan. She stated she presented it to the board of supervisors. She requested the EDA assist in figuring out if it makes sense for Page County. Jay Dedman inquired as to why it does not specifically include the bike park planned for **Stanley?** Ms. Lewis pointed out that there is a lot of infrastructure and small business development to do first. Mr. Dedman asked what this does to make a difference in what the EDA is already doing. Ms. Lewis stated there is accountability in this plan. We state the action plan and state that we need to put some money behind it. That is what differentiates this plan from the other plans. Ms. Lewis asked for EDA input. The topic was tabled until the next meeting.

EDA Logo: Liz Lewis presented the old logo and new logo.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Margaret Stevenson - "I would love to hear Liz's hemp development going for the land use. Because, if these solar projects are approved by our county, you have not seen the end of health problems. My husband is a chiropractor, acupuncturist and he uses lasers. We are so concerned about us and all the Hope Mills Subdivision and Old Farm Subdivision being unable to use any of our wells. There is cadmium, lead, anemone in the solar panels. I know what urban grid is trying to tell you and it is not true." Mr. Lancto informed her we do not have anything to do with the solar panels. Ms. Stevenson – "I know but the county needs to be aware and contact the supervisors, county commissioners, Todd Gilbert, Mark Obenshain, and anyone else who can get this stopped."

Cathy Grech – "I live in District 1 and my back ground is in law and ?. I don't know your group and I don't know who you are but what I've heard tonight and after hearing Liz's economic development plan....I was at the board of supervisors meeting when she presented it and I am impressed. What concerns me, I was concerned at the board of supervisors meeting because I saw these gentlemen being quite dismissive and rude in my opinion. I see them, the planning commission contemplating permits that to me go against the comprehensive plan and the very nature of what you are doing to support farming and tourism. I see the solar plants going in a totally different direction. I don't see them cohabitating. I don't think we can be tourist, and agriculturally friendly and industrially friendly. I'm concerned that all you efforts here and the people that have worked for so long on the comprehensive plan and the commitment to the principles to the comprehensive plan and preserving them to the nature of our county are going to be compromised. I want to commend you and make you aware that what you are trying to do might be compromised by what may be coming. I welcome any input or any information you have for the public, you are heading in the direction that a lot of the public support. Solar plants are not. I can introduce you to people who have concerns and the direction this county is taking. I just wanted to share that and bring it to your attention.

Mike Uram – "I am here as a citizen, not as a councilman. I look at our direction of what we are doing which is to me on target but we also need to be futuristic looking at what is happening. One we are unemployment. Presently right now Page County is at 3.8%. It went up only 1%. Compared to the sister towns that went up quite a bit. In other words we are looking good, but let's see how we can focus on looking better and project in having better jobs. Its part of LFCC and the Tech Center and our schools on how we can look futuristically. And how we educate them and put them in the right places for what they want to do and how well they want to do it and at what cost. The other thing is I am an ambassador for the chamber of commerce and I went to business after hours and one thing I was impressed with was a place called River Cross Farm and Event Center. It's in Rockingham County. This place, the owners bought this place a year and a half ago. They are booked solid all the way through 2019. They employ a lot of people. What I am saying is how do we measure what we have here in our county? Do we have a system that we can? Do we want to do it or should we do it? Because we have to have a barometer. Like what chairman Lancto talked about, the feasibility study. They are very good and well supported. But it also means that it is going to cost money. There was a feasibility study done in 2009. Nothing has been done. It starts right where you are at, right where you focus and how well the programs are initiated. Looking at the supervisors and you look at their budgets, look at page 10. That sets the format for the direction the county wants to go in relation to the towns and the towns are going the other way."

CLOSED SESSION

Member Comments

Adjourn

With there being no further business or discussion Ms. Currie made the motion to adjourn the meeting,
Second by Mr. Knight. Adjourn 6:55pm.

Liz Lewis, Economic Development Coordinator

Brooke Newman, Economic Development Assistant