

Economic Development Authority
Minutes
August 25, 2021
6:00 p.m.

The Lee County Economic Development Authority held a Joint Meeting with the Lee County Board of Supervisors Wednesday, August 25, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at the Lee County Airport located in Jonesville, Virginia. Present were Chairman Greg Edwards, Secretary/Treasurer Liz Myers, Vice-Chairman Paul Johnson, Board Members Ray Blair, Chad Hines, A.J. Hatmaker and Mark Long, Community Development Director Richard Johnson, Community Development Secretary Cathy Wilder, EDA Attorney Rick Callahan, Lee County Board of Supervisors D.D. Leonard, Larry Mosley, Sidney Kolb, and Charles Slemph, Jr., County Administrator Dane Poe, County Attorney Stacy Munsey and Ronald Wolford.

Chairman Edwards determined that a quorum was present then called the meeting to order.

Director Johnson stated that the invoice for The Lane Group needed to be paid, he said that the Board of Supervisors approved an advance from Economic Development Fund and that the Tobacco Commission Grant is a reimbursement grant.

Chad Hines made a motion to approve an expenditure of \$33,500.00 to pay The Lane Group invoice with the advance from the Economic Development Fund which will be paid back once the EDA receives the reimbursement from the Tobacco Commission. Ray Blair seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Leonard called the Board of Supervisors meeting to order.

Chairman Leonard stated that there wasn't an agenda to follow and that the meeting would be open for discussion. He stated that there were a couple of items that the Board would like to discuss regarding the promissory notes between the two entities.

Supervisor Larry Mosley stated that his concern was that the Board Members for the Board of Supervisors and the EDA would change and that later no one would have any way to know what the notes referenced, and if the EDA came into some sort of windfall the County could get their money back. He told the EDA Board that the Board of Supervisors had been good to the EDA Board in the past and that they have not pressured them about paying the money back. Mr. Mosley said that we have all made bad decisions and that he would be the first to admit that he had. He said that the Board of Supervisors would appreciate the EDA board's consideration regarding signing a new note. He stated that they were not talking debts from years past.

Chairman Leonard said it is a sign of loyalty, a moral obligation, basically what the Board of Supervisors are asking is for the EDA Board to say we owe this money and our intentions are to pay it back. It is not like anybody is legally obligated it's just a simple letter that we sign. He said that the Board does them for water projects and similar things like that and he thinks that it would be along the same line as those. Chairman Leonard stated that it was an open discussion and whoever wanted to speak should feel free to do so.

Supervisor Mosley asked if anyone knew the total amount owed.

EDA Chairman Greg Edwards stated that the amount is approximately \$400,000.00.

Supervisor Mosley asked what is current?

Chairman Edwards stated that he believed one note for \$50,000.00 the statute of limitations for collection had not been surpassed and another for \$50,000.00 that was for operating expenses with no note or anything on it. He said that everything else had expired (within 3/5 yrs.). He said that various EDA Board members had mentioned several times that they would like a budget. He stated that Scott County is getting approximately \$250,000.00 per year.

EDA Vice-Chairman Paul Johnson stated that as far as talking about the money from the Tobacco Commission claw-backs, we're way past asking for that.

Supervisor Mosley stated that is not what they are asking for, they are just asking about current enforceable notes.

Vice-Chairman Paul Johnson stated that he and Chairman Edwards have brought up in the past few years that the EDA does not have a budget. Every other EDA & IDA that he knows of in this area has a budget for operating expenses, they hire their own Director and they handle their own affairs, they pay their own bills. He said that to him it is like the Board of Supervisors is asking the EDA to sign a note for expenses that there should already be a budget for. He said that the EDA board was in an extremely fortunate position before he was appointed. At that time there was a call center lease that was paying the bills and allowed for quite a reserve to be established. But he also stated that this board is not intended to be profit making entity, we have no way to raise large amounts of funds. Reserves were used for operations as well as the significant portion to repay the Tobacco Commission leaving us with little to no funds

Chairman Edwards stated that when he was appointed to the board that he was not involved with the unfortunate incident with Green USA that he was neither on the board or the attorney. He said that he tried to figure out what could be done to pay the money back. He said that he realized that the EDA had some property on the South side of the highway across from Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park. He was told by the Director at the time that it was free and clear, the EDA sold the property to come up with some money. He said they also came into some funds when the Pennington Town Hall burned

and the EDA was able to lease them space temporarily. The EDA was then able to sell the building and ended up with a tidy profit, which was fortunate for both entities. He said that the EDA sold timber at Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park and over a period of time was able to pay back \$20,000.00 to the County. He said that the EDA was also able to secure two buildings at St. Charles and an \$8,000.00 gift. He said that the EDA has cut expenses where possible. He said that he knows that the Board of Supervisors have forgiven debts in the past for the PSA and the Hospital Commission and we are in the same situation as those entities, we have an industrial park that has liens attached, there are claw-backs if we were to sell it. I believe we have to take part of the money to re-establish an industrial park as part of the initial parks funding guidelines. Chairman Edwards stated that the St Charles buildings were given to the EDA with the idea of them being utilized for industrial development. He said that the EDA has cut down expenses to the bare minimum to remain operational. The main expenses are insurance, audits, and an attorney which are all required.

Supervisor Mosley stated that this was the first he had heard about a budget request.

Chairman Edwards stated that the EDA cannot do the things that they are expected to do without any funding.

Supervisor Mosley stated that every time the EDA had asked the Board of Supervisors for any money that they were given it in the past.

Chairman Edwards stated that the EDA appreciated that and that the money was used for basic operating expenses and the rest went toward claw-backs. He said that the EDA got lucky when they sold the Supersac building.

Supervisor Mosley asked if Synergy Biofuels is operating now.

Chad Hines stated that they have three huge propane tanks out there now and there is a lot of movement at the building.

Chairman Leonard stated that it still doesn't justify the lack of a moral obligation to say I'm willing to pay a debt that I took on. When we say you're not held to it, it's just a moral obligation. He said if you go to the bank to borrow money your intentions are to pay it back. Anybody that doesn't have money they go to the bank to borrow money. It's a moral obligation not anything that anyone is bounded by. He said that he struggles with the fact that someone can't do that for their own county, and then ask for a budget.

Vice-Chairman Johnson asked what do you think the money was used for?

Chairman Leonard said that he wasn't sure what all of it was used for.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated that it was all documented; you can look at it and see what it was used for, so where do you think the money went?

Supervisor Mosley stated “Not \$100,000.00 you didn’t spend \$100,000.00 on”

Vice-Chairman Johnson said part of that went to claw-backs and we discussed that.

County Administrator Dane Poe stated that the \$451,000.00 on the accounts as far as the auditors are concerned that \$410,000.00 almost \$411,000.00 was used to pay claw backs to the Tobacco Commission on two separate grants, Elite Apparel and Green USA. He said that \$56,000.00 was advanced to EDA from January 2018-January 2020.

Vice-Chairman Johnson said so that left \$36,125.00 for operating expenses.

Supervisor Kolb asked if they were stating that \$100,000.00 was enforceable?

Chairman Edwards stated that one note expires next year, one that we don’t have a note for is for a three-year period for a total amount I do not recall.

Supervisor Kolb asked if that was the consensus of the board.

Chairman Edwards stated that this was probably the first time that the EDA had heard about this because he, Director Johnson and EDA Attorney Rick Callahan had discussed it earlier that week.

Supervisor Kolb stated that Cathy should know better than anybody, he asked if that sounded right to her.

Community Development Secretary Cathy Wilder stated that she did not know because she did not have that information in front of her.

County Administrator Poe stated that he had a spread sheet of it if anyone wanted to look at it.

County Administrator Poe stated that he had emailed all of the Board of Supervisors a copy of it. He asked if anything after 2018 without a written note would be enforceable.

Chairman Edwards stated that one note has already expired.

County Administrator Poe stated that since 2018 there has been \$25,000.00, so with the other \$50,000.00 you’re talking about \$75,000.00.

Director Johnson stated that Chairman Edwards has a copy of a letter dated December 18, 2018 from Aaron Fee detailing what the \$20,000.00 was to be paid toward. He said that only \$5,000.00 would be enforceable if it were applied this way.

County Administrator Poe stated that he was not disputing what Director Johnson said but looking at all sides of it you can write on your check to the County or to the Treasurer that you are paying 2021 taxes but if you owe delinquent taxes it would be applied to

that. You can't say you have to apply that to a certain thing. If you owe a debt they can apply it wherever they want to.

Supervisor Kolb stated that what got him to looking at these notes in the first place was the Board of Supervisors were talking about raising taxes and someone told him if you could get back the money you loaned the EDA over the years you wouldn't have any problems. He said that he got to looking at what the EDA owed and that what he found was that there were notes on some things and some things there wasn't any written notes. He said as far as the statute of limitations it's not the date that would start ticking from the time that the loan was made until the loan was suppose to be paid and wasn't. He said that he wasn't exactly sure when some of the loans were suppose to be paid back. He said that the ones written on paper are obvious but the ones that were oral he didn't know what the deal was on them if there was a note on them or who would say what on them. He said that statute of limitations is a technicality you can win on technicality, but to win on a technicality on something that you know you owe it kind of applies flies in the face of what D.D. was talking about moral obligation. Either you owe it or you don't, whether or not it is enforceable or not is a different matter. But really if you think about it what the purpose of the statute of limitations is it's somebody's ability to defend an action against them that's been hampered because it took so long to bring it. It's well documented everybody understands that the money is owed so to say we can beat you on the statute of limitations just doesn't seem like a moral thing to even say. He said that he thought that Paul & Greg both mentioned that the EDA had mentioned several times to the Board of Supervisors that they wanted a budget, he said that he has read all of the minutes since January 2012 (Didn't read June or July) and there is nowhere in the minutes where anybody made a motion or anything was done to try to formally ask the Board of Supervisors for the money. He said that he knows that nobody has sent anything to the Board of Supervisors since he has been on the board. He said he thinks that Greg mentioned it to him after this thing with the note came up and other than that no one has said anything to him about it.

Chairman Greg Edwards stated that I said something to you (Mr. Kolb) about it before then about all of the stuff you were wanting us to do and you just dropped your head and didn't mention it again.

Supervisor Kolb stated he didn't recall the interaction.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated that it was mentioned in one of the Committee meetings.

Supervisor Kolb said that was with just two members of our board that attends the meeting.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated that is why we have a committee meeting but if it needed a formal motion one could be made.

Supervisor Kolb stated that just because you have a joint meeting that does not mean that DD and Larry will come back and say alright Sidney here's everything that we talked

about. He said that he thinks that if you want something you put it in a form of a letter or you come to a meeting and say here's what we would like and this is why we would like it. But if you look at your minutes there's actually a very detailed discussion where you all said (it was mostly Paul & CR Wynn) were talking and said that it wouldn't be right to ask the Board of Supervisors for money because we know they don't have any money. He said nothing has changed; we still don't have any money. The statement being made we need a budget so we can pay our bills but there's over \$500,000.00 that the Board of Supervisors has paid toward the 1.3 million that the EDA owed. The board pays for Richard's and Cathy's salary provides office space which isn't done in all counties. The Board just bought a \$5,000.00 copier for the EDA office. A lot of expenses you are talking about that would be paid by the EDA are being paid by the Board of Supervisors anyway. When somebody cheats you out of money or something unfortunate happens and we pay it back we are essentially paying your bill for you even though we are not paying you a regular budget.

Chairman Edwards stated that at one point the EDA was paying the Economic Development Officer \$40,000.00 or \$50,000.00 we were paying for everything else at that point. He said that he spent a lot of time trying to get everything worked out and they were undermined (relating to the Tobacco Commission claw-backs). It was worked out to where it could've been paid back over a long period of time rather than lump sums. The Tobacco Commission was told that we had money which was in fact the Duffield Re-Development money that had been returned and saying at that time belonged to the EDA. It wasn't our money it was the county's money and we have paid back a bunch of that money on our own. The Attorney General for the Commonwealth determined that the County was the fiscal agent for the EDA. He said that the school board previously over spent and the county had to pay it, it's still county money it comes back to Jonesville to the courthouse. You have forgiven money to the PSA, and forgiven loans to the hospital commission.

Supervisor Kolb said we also made the hospital commission sign notes for money that they borrowed.

Chairman Edwards said and you forgave them.

Vice-Chairman Johnson asked how much money are you saying is owed?

Supervisor Kolb stated that he thought what Larry is saying is sufficient, Greg is saying \$100,000.00, my figure is \$55,000.00.

Vice-Chairman Johnson asked over how many years this sum was given to the Board?

Supervisor Kolb stated that he did not know when it was given and that he is looking at the date that it is supposed to be paid back because that's when the clock starts ticking. One note was signed 7/7/16 for \$50,000.00 that one is within the statute of limitation it was suppose to be paid back in 2019. The other one there is no note on it but it was 11/29/18.

Vice-Chairman Johnson said 2016 \$50,000.00 so 5 years ago so that is \$10,000.00 year. I'm pretty sure our operating expenses are more than that for a year, where does that money come from?

Supervisor Kolb asked what are your operating expenses and what would you ask for if you were going to ask for a line item in our budget what would the money be spent on?

Vice- Chairman Johnson stated that the EDA has electric bills, insurance premiums and they have to have funding for things that keep coming up for example England. He said the EDA has to pay repair bills for sewer issues and the most recent issue has been a door that has to be repaired.

Supervisor Kolb asked what power bills that the EDA has now.

Chairman Edwards stated that over a period of time the EDA had power bills in several different locations, he said they were paying power bills, sewer and water and also paying insurance, in addition to the audit which directly affects the county audit. He said all of this overlaps and meshes together and is part of the county government.

Supervisor Kolb asked what the EDA's position would be if they don't get something in the budget.

Chairman Edwards stated that if the EDA does not get a budget they are not going to be able to come up with the money, they are not going to be able to pay the auditor, so they won't have an audit. They won't be able to pay their legal counsel and lord knows the first rule of thumb a lawyer show know is that you don't serve as counsel for the board that you are on because that would put yourself on the line and your malpractice insurance and you lose your immunity. He said he would not do that for any board. He said that the EDA has the pre-audit, the expense for the EDA vehicle, still responsible for the Dryden building which there have been several issues, the sewer and the issue with the birds.

Mark Long stated that there have been damages to the sign at Constitutional Oaks Industrial Park.

Chairman Edwards stated that the insurance company allowed the EDA to back up and include the sign to the insurance policy. He said it's not like we are spending money off the wall he said we are being very frugal. He asked the EDA board how many of them have turned in paperwork for payment for mileage to and from for attending meetings. He said no one had but years ago the board members turned in mileage sheets all the time. He said it's not like we are wasting money, we are trying to keeps things running and it is at the point it is frustrating. He said that he could pretty much guarantee where the talk about the money and loans came from, when most likely those are the same people that cost us having to pay it all out and put us in this situation to begin with. It's frustrating just trying to keep things running then being treated like the red headed step

child at the family reunion. He said that everyone at the meeting is an intelligent person, good natured and trying to do what is right. He said he can understand the Board of Supervisors looking at that and what's coming forward, but we have done everything that we possibly can on less than a shoe string. The only time that the EDA came before the Board was when they were against the wall and had to have things done.

Supervisor Kolb asked why Green USA and Elite Apparel were not sued.

Chairman Edwards said that he had no idea. The owner was not on the note personally and the business went defunct so what's the use of filing and paying attorney fees and getting nothing. That's not the way to do business to throw good money out to bad and get nothing in return.

Supervisor Kolb asked why you would have to throw any money at it, Green USA or Elite Apparel.

Chairman Edwards stated that they have nothing what attorney is going to take a suit waste their time and all that effort when you are going to collect nothing.

Supervisor Kolb said that he thought that would be Chairman Edwards' answer. The solution would be to pierce the corporate veil and that he's certain they taught that at law school.

Chairman Edwards said the guy with Green USA his attorney was Speaker of the House of the Indiana State House of Delegates. It's not going to happen.

A.J. Hatmaker asked if this was going to be a meeting in law school in some shape, form or fashion.

Supervisor Kolb said that he didn't say statute of limitations that someone on the EDA board was the one that said statute of limitations, Paul or Greg.

A.J. Hatmaker stated that he would accept that.

Supervisor Kolb asked what the status is and is anyone marketing the St. Charles buildings.

Chairman Edwards stated that several people have looked at them but they haven't gone out and looked through them. He said that one of them was used for a community center. Just standing there locked up.

Supervisor Kolb asked if they were for sale.

Chairman Edwards said we will sell anything.

Supervisor Kolb asked if anyone knows that they are for sale.

Chairman Edwards stated that at one time rehab was looking at it.

Supervisor Kolb said that two people that he knows of looked at it and that he sent both of them, he asked if there was anybody else other than those two.

Chairman Edwards stated that the buildings are sitting there that the EDA has not marketed them.

Supervisor Kolb said that's what I am getting at, not trying to poke at you but when you say that you have done everything and even sold timber but we didn't go after Green USA or Elite Apparel, you have these buildings that you've had for more than a year now and they are not listed for rent that doesn't feel to him like you're doing everything that you can do.

Chairman Edwards told Supervisor Kolb that the EDA would just give the St. Charles buildings to the county.

Chairman Edwards asked the Board if they wanted to give the St. Charles buildings to the county.

Vice-Chairman Johnson made a motion to give the St. Charles buildings to the county. Liz Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Edwards stated that the EDA would prepare a deed and give it to the county.

Supervisor Kolb said thank you.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated as far as the marketing is concerned we have marketed a lot of our buildings and that the cost was \$5,000.00.

Supervisor Slemph stated that he didn't think it was a very good deal for the county and that he was against it. (in regard to the St. Charles buildings)

Chairman Leonard stated getting back to it, my take on it is just a moral obligation, it's not like anyone is going to be held to their debt.

Vice-Chairman Johnson said Well why do it?

Chairman Leonard said Why not? Why would we have anyone come in and ask for money and ask them to not at least be willing to pay it back. People that elect us want to know all the time how you spend your money especially when the tax issue came up, they get really quick on asking questions, and saying why don't you do this and why don't you do that.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated that it feels like if it's not going to be enforced or obligated then that's a lie. Isn't that what you are saying?

Chairman Leonard stated that it would be a lie to borrow, if you don't plan on paying it back either.

Vice-Chairman Johnson said our point is that \$50,000.00 over a period of five years our audit alone cost that much and that is all that we have asked for and he was told that we weren't discussing this claw-back stuff although Sidney brought it back up anyway, that was things discussed at the time and the decision was made there was no sense in spending more money for suing people that we knew didn't have any money. Back to the point at hand if we are talking about \$50,000.00 on this note, that's not sensible to sign something when that money was used to pay operating expenses. He said that if the County doesn't want the EDA to exist we can address that issue.

Supervisor Mosley said that he thinks that what the EDA needs to do is prepare a budget and present it to the Board of Supervisors. He stated that he had never seen one.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated that the EDA could certainly do that, that it would not be a problem. He said we can find ways to spend money we'd love to have the educational services and other things that Sidney has brought up at past meetings. We would love to allow for that kind of stuff but we don't have the money and we're not a profit making entity.

Supervisor Mosley stated that he knows the EDA has not had any money but the county has always covered what they needed.

Vice-Chairman Johnson said that's why we've never formally asked for a budget because you were doing that.

Supervisor Mosley stated that we have had a good working relationship and that he wanted it to stay that way.

Chairman Leonard stated that the truth of the matter is everybody knows that each and every one of us in here and across the county has to work together to makes things work, we gotta' work hand in hand to make things work and you sure can't have any bad blood among your co partners so to speak. He said the EDA is an important part of the county by all means. He said that his concern is that he can't understand the thought process based on signing the note but that he was just one of five board members.

Supervisor Mosley stated that he thought we've had enough discussion and you guys can vote and do what you want to.

Chairman Leonard asked if anyone else had anything they would like to say on the matter?

Ray Blair stated that all of this happened before he came on board. He said that the EDA board does not have any money to pay back and he understands the Board of Supervisors is wanting a way to hold some accountability. He asked what we can do together rather than argue who owes who to solve this problem completely so that the money is not this big of an issue. That would be the main goal here to work together. What can we do as a team? He said that he is still learning the job as an EDA board member, things that we can do and cannot do. He said if we can put this much effort into your side and our side, can we put this much effort into a team for Lee County.

Supervisor Slemph stated that it should not be your side or our side. It should be Our Side.

Ray Blair said we need to come up with a solution we can't really push our extent of marketing because our hands are tied to a certain extent.

Mark Long stated that the EDA has a new website and said that the EDA has discussed putting available buildings in our community on the website.

Chairman Edwards explained that VCEDA gave \$3,500.00 toward marketing. The website updates will be \$100.00 a month and that price will be renegotiated if we don't use that much. He said at this point the EDA is down to one building, we have no buildings of our own available to market.

Chairman Edwards stated that the EDA had initialized a land swap to obtain the road frontage back at the industrial park in an effort to utilize VDOT grant funding for an entry road without utilizing any county funds.

County Administrator Poe stated that with the cost of construction today we will have to have some local funding.

Chairman Edwards said otherwise without doing this we would not have the opportunity for VDOT funding. We are looking at stuff trying to save money trying to get some things done that will open a whole new section of the Industrial Park that will be available we've had meetings with Paul's Fan Co we are using our small business fund we are doing a closing for a business in Pennington (garden center) our needs at this point is going to have to look at small businesses, anything we can get in any of our localities will help us whether it is in Jonesville or Pennington. He said the Town of Pennington gave the EDA permission to do what they can to help. Otherwise tell us where we should be looking. I don't see any other options until we can get the road in because we have no finished product to push. It took forever previously with the shell building we even marketed it with an international company that does shell buildings they did not want the contract anymore they said that it was the worst location they ever tried to market.

County Administrator Poe stated that the marketing firm that was working on that was also trying to sell a 72,000 square foot building in Lebanon they didn't get a hit on either one of them. The Lebanon IDA eventually had to give that building away.

Supervisor Kolb asked if there is anything on paper as far as what the EDA's goals are and the plan to get there.

Chairman Edwards stated that the EDA does not have an outline on paper.

Supervisor Kolb stated that he has read all of the EDA minutes and that something like a county marketing plan was mentioned several times but he has never seen it.

Chairman Edwards asked how many years ago was that.

Supervisor Kolb said 15 to 16 years ago.

County Administrator Poe stated it was most likely something sponsored through VCEDA or a similar organization.

Chairman Edwards talked about the Produce Auction feasibility study and about the small business loans that the EDA had made recently.

Vice-Chairman Johnson spoke of the success of the small business lending fund through the past few years as small businesses have become the focus of the EDA.

Supervisor Mosley spoke to the Boards regarding the VCEDA Seed Capital Grant and the lack of applicants from our County when compared to those that surround us.

Supervisor Kolb asked if the EDA see's a problem with putting a plan on paper. He said that he agrees with them on the mom and pop businesses.

It was the consensus of the EDA that it was not a problem, in the past it was discussed utilizing UVa Wise's economic development department to help develop a comprehensive plan.

Supervisor Kolb discussed the LMU housing study with the boards.

The two boards had a discussion regarding tourism and why the populous continues to leave the area and how we can entice them to stay.

Chairman Edwards mentioned the last hotel study that was done years ago.

The board had a discussion regarding Paul's Fan Company and the progress they've made with the shell building renovation.

Chairman Leonard asked the EDA board if they had any ideas for the Lee County Airport.

Chairman Edwards stated that the EDA Directors office should be at the airport not only to man the airport but it would put someone here 5 days a week. If someone flies in it

would be convenient to be able to meet and take them wherever. He stated the building and zoning should be left at the courthouse. He also said this is one of the nicest buildings in Lee County and it is basically empty. The other thing that needs to be done is to get jet fuel and some more hangers. He mentioned the difference in taxes on air planes and how the County could make it more appealing to pilots.

Supervisor Kolb asked Director Johnson what his plan and goal is.

Director Johnson stated that we needed to focus on small businesses first. He said the most important question we face is how we are going to keep people here and/or entice people to move here. An active and growing population requires things to do and places to eat, of which we have very few that are appealing or marketed to outsiders.

County Administrator Poe suggested that Director Johnson develop a relationship with existing business owners in the county.

Chad Hines stated that broadband and internet is needed.

There was discussion amongst both Boards in regard to the broadband disparities across the County and how they need to be remedied in order to appeal to a teleworking audience such as those in the region that have left their physical locations and sent employees to work from home. (Sykes & Ttec)

The two Boards then discussed the status of the sewer project in the Western end of the County. The project is going to be completed in phases over many years and they are currently trying to obtain rights of entry to each of the affected properties in the preliminary phase.

The Boards then discussed programs offered by the vocational school and how they could be expanded and better utilized.

The Boards discussed revitalization of a Chamber of Commerce or putting forth a Lee County First initiative with interested individuals within our communities to brainstorm ways to progress.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated that he would like to see the spotlight business of the month get started again.

Supervisor Kolb asked what each Board's specific role would be in making sure the County succeeds moving forward?

Chairman Edwards stated that it should be the Board of Supervisors' job to bring in the crucial infrastructure before it was the EDA's job to get out and market it to get out and sell what we have.

Ray Blair stated that it will take a collective approach and that we need to build off of each individuals skillset moving forward.

The Boards discussed the by-passes and if there was any possibility of the project happening.

Chairman Leonard stated it was never going to happen although it would be beneficial. People were scared that by-passes would hurt businesses within the towns but that isn't the case. Those that go to the grocery store in your town will still do so. It is one of the biggest losses that Lee County will ever suffer.

Chad Hines mentioned that we need to work with neighboring counties and states in a collaborative effort to help promote tourism within our region.

County Administrator Poe stated that the multi-state effort has been attempted before and has never worked. The state tourism commission doesn't want to work with the other states.

Ray Blair stated that we have to find the common denominator and make it happen.

Chad Hines suggested we push the ATV/UTV side of tourism with the other states.

Chairman Edwards mentioned the possibility of travel ball team facilities.

The Boards then discussed the potential problems with a lack of by night housing within the County.

Supervisor Kolb stated that this would help to address the quality of life issue Director Johnson had previously mentioned which plays into why we have a populous that continues to leave the area.

Chairman Leonard asked if anyone else had anything to add before the meeting was closed?

Supervisor Kolb stated that he appreciates the EDA boards help and that he would like to see some closure on the notes as well as scheduling another collaborative meeting in the future.

Vice-Chairman Johnson stated that he would like to discuss one particular item to focus on in the future before moving on to the next steps on the list.

Chairman Edwards stated that the EDA's regular meeting is next week and if the Board of Supervisors would get a note prepared and send it to them that the EDA would consider it then.

Chairman Leonard stated that he would personally like to thank everyone for what they contribute because it is not an easy task and thanked them for attending.

Chad Hines made a motion to adjourn. Liz Myers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Community Development Secretary
Cathy Wilder
August 31, 2021

Community Development Director
Richard Johnson II
September 29, 2021