

Economic Development Authority
Minutes
January 5, 2023
6:00 p.m.

The Lee County Economic Development Authority met in regular session Thursday, January 5, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the General District Courtroom of the Lee County Courthouse located in Jonesville, Virginia. Present were Chairman Greg Edwards, Secretary/Treasurer Ray Blair, Board Members A.J. Hatmaker, Chad Hines, Mark Long and Richard Sprinkle Jr., Community Development Director Richard Johnson, Community Development Secretary Cathy Wilder, EDA Attorney Rick Callahan, Rick Watson with Powell Valley News, Emma Kelly with Appalachian Voices and Keith Harless with the Town of Pennington Gap. Vice-Chairman Paul Johnson was unable to attend the meeting.

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

Approval of EDA Minutes

Chairman Edwards called for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2022 meeting.

Richard Sprinkle made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2022 meeting. Ray Blair seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

None

Approval of EDA Financial Report, Bills & Payments

Mark Long made a motion to approve the financial report and paying the bills for the month of January. Ray Blair seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Edwards requested to allow Emma Kelly to speak before the Board discussed Old Business.

Appalachian Voices – Emma Kelly

Emma Kelly of Appalachian Voices spoke to the Board regarding the organization and its mission to bolster economic development and support recovery initiatives in areas that were heavily reliant on mineral extraction.

Old Business

Whistle Pig EDF Request

Director Johnson stated that he had met with Jan Brown in reference to Whistle Pig's construction start date to better understand when they intend to draw down their loan. He stated that Jan expected construction to begin around March 1st.

Seed Capital Spring Round

Director Johnson stated that he had received information regarding the spring round of the Seed Capital Matching Grant program and the local SBDC would start working with applicants on January 16th.

Ray Blair asked if the common person would know about seed capital.

Director Johnson stated that it is on the website.

Produce Auction Reimbursement

Director Johnson stated that he submitted the information for the reimbursements last month but we had not received them yet. He said that he was informed that it should be in the bank account within the next few days.

England Building Plumbing

Director Johnson stated that there are photos of the plumbing system in the board packets. He stated that the issues lie outside the building based on the results and would likely result in a repair that was not nearly as costly as previous expectations.

VDOT Resolution- Flanary Bridge Dollar General

Director Johnson stated that in the previous meeting it had been mentioned about the potential need for a resolution in support of an application to VDOT. He said he has been in contact with JMB Investments since then and the issue was likely going to be resolved internally. Director Johnson stated that the Board did not need to take any action.

New Business

Town of Pennington Gap – Keith Harless

Keith Harless gave a presentation regarding future plans for the Town of Pennington Gap.

RFQ Award

Director Johnson recommended that a committee be selected to review the engineering services proposals for the Dryden building. It was the consensus of the board for Greg Edwards, Chad Hines, Ray Blair and Director Johnson to be the committee members.

Audit Information Request

Director Johnson stated that is has been requested by the EDA's auditor to verify the Authority's liability to VCEDA. He said that he has taken care of the request and included the documents in the board packets.

Reports & Recommendations of the Board

A.J. Hatmaker stated that if the Vocational School could be included in the solar training that Emma Kelly spoke about that some great things could come about in a short amount of time.

Ray Blair questioned if Emma Kelly would keep the board apprised of their initiatives in the future. Mr. Blair also asked about the Facebook page that was discussed earlier.

**Reports & Recommendations of the Director
Virginia Housing Innovations Grant**

Director Johnson stated that the applications have been closed for some time but are expected to re-open the application window in the near future. He also indicated that a Lee County business was slated to be one of the first applicants seeking funding in the new round.

Legislative Reception

Director Johnson reminded the Board that the Legislative Reception will be January 31, 2023. He invited the board members to attend.

Chad Hines made a motion to go into executive session to discuss 2.2-3711A.5 Discussion of prospective business and 2.2-3711 A.6 Investing of Public Funds (Contracts) and 2.2-3711A.1 Personnel. A.J. Hatmaker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ray Blair made a motion to come out of executive session. Chad Hines seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Edwards polled the board that they only discussed issues pertaining to the entry of executive session.

Chad Hines made a motion to give clerical staff a \$750.00 bonus. Richard Sprinkle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ray Blair made a motion to adjourn. A.J. Hatmaker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Community Development Secretary
Cathy Wilder
January 9, 2023

Community Development Director
Richard Johnson II
January 25, 2023