



# Grayson County Economic Development Authority

P. O. Box 217; Independence, VA 24348

October 19, 2021

## MEETING MINUTES

### Members Present

Christopher J. Butler  
Gary Rascoe  
Justine Jackson-Ricketts (Teleconference)  
Elizabeth Hash

### Staff Present

William L. Shepley  
Mitchell L. Smith  
Leesa A. Gayheart  
Carl Caudill, II (Teleconference)  
Lyndsie Young

### Members Absent

Joseph M. Killon  
Elisa Blevins

### Staff Absent

Tracy Cornett

## OPEN MEETING

Mr. Butler, Vice Chair, opened the meeting and determined a quorum was present.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Rascoe made the motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 21, 2021; duly seconded by Mrs. Hash. Motion carried 4-0.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report was distributed, and Mrs. Gayheart noted that the balance is \$711,466.19.

## OLD BUSINESS

None

## NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Butler inquired as to how the County makes money and Mr. Shepley noted that money from the County is placed in the EDA account by the Board of Supervisors along with loan repayments. Mrs. Gayheart noted that in previous years, the money had been set aside for the EDA. Mrs. Gayheart also noted that the County is currently receiving \$3,010.42 each month which is rent payment from a joint venture with the Town of Independence and the County with Oak Hall Cap & Gown – the rent is split between the

Town and the County but it's another source of income. Mr. Rascoe inquired about the rent for the GATE Center Kitchen/Conference Center and Mrs. Gayheart noted that it is still a work in progress. Mr. Smith noted that it's not just grants, small loans are a good source in bringing money back into the EDA. Mr. Shepley asked the EDA members to be thinking on how much the County needs to budget for the EDA next year and to bring those recommendations to the next meeting on January 18, 2022.

Mr. Rascoe noted that work has begun at the Mt. Rogers School.

Mr. Shepley noted that the EDA has transferred a historical building, the Round House to a new owner, John Bryan who will restore the house.

## **PRESENTATION(S)**

Mr. Shepley introduced Amanda Shore who works with the Grayson County Department of Social Services, and has been helping the County with the development of Childcare in the County and will be sitting in on the meeting today. Mr. Shepley then introduced Mrs. Lyndsie Young, Agriculture and Economic Development Director for Grayson County. Mr. Shepley noted that Grayson is one of the few counties in Virginia that has an Ag/ED Director.

Mr. Shepley introduced VIAA (Virginia Industrial Advancement Alliance) staff, Josh Lewis-Executive Director, Jake Tabor-Business Retention/Expansion Specialist and Nicole Hair-Economic Development Manager and how they support Southwest Virginia with economic development. Mr. Lewis then gave the following presentation:

- One (1) of seventeen (17) regional groups in the state of Virginia
- Assist individual localities on projects and incentives for businesses
- Focus on lead & development side plus work with existing industries
- Special projects and individual needs – Nicole Hair
- Business and retention – Jake Tabor
- Nicole helps BRCEDA and has brought in a lot of grant money
- BRCEDA – Grayson, Galax, Carroll purchased property in Carroll County and developed the property to partner together and the birth of Wildwood.
- Nicole is housed at Crossroads
- Barriers to growth such as childcare, transportation, broadband, etc.
- Recommended the EDA look at a Comprehensive Strategic Plan

Ms. Hair spoke about the following:

- Have a background in planning & zoning and where we have needs and in grant writing
- Markets Wildwood and working on a strategic plan
- Assists Grayson, Carroll Counties and the City of Galax

Mr. Tabor spoke about the following:

- Building relationships with businesses in Grayson County
- Negotiates performance agreements
- Acts as a connector on international trade, workforce development, etc.
- Liaison between the businesses and the state

Mr. Butler inquired about the Comprehensive Strategic Plan and Mr. Shepley noted that the EDA has not had one but there is economic development components in the Grayson County Comprehensive Plan which was citizen driven and is a guide for the

County. Mr. Shepley noted that it might be a good thing to take the economic development components from the Comp Plan and build on that for the EDA. Mr. Butler then inquired about how the EDA would go about developing a Comprehensive Strategic Plan and Mr. Lewis suggested two (2) or three (3) members offer to help be a part of the planning process. Mr. Lewis noted that it would be good to have some outside help since the EDA is only a part-time board. Mr. Butler also noted that Grayson County needs lodging. Ms. Hair noted the barrier of housing in the area and Mt. Rogers PDC have received funding to do conduct a regional housing study.

**INFORMATIONAL ITEM(S)**

None

**INITIATIVE SUGGESTION(S)**

None

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

**ADJOURN**

Mrs. Hash made the motion to adjourn; duly seconded by Mr. Rascoe. Motion carried 4-0.

Next meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2021 at 3pm.