



Grayson County Economic Development Authority

P. O. Box 217; Independence, VA 24348

July 20, 202

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present

Joseph M. Killon
Christopher J. Butler
Justine Jackson-Ricketts
Gary Rascoe

Staff Present

William L. Shepley
Mitchell L. Smith
Leesa A. Gayheart
Carl Caudill, II
Deb Jones

Members Absent

Elizabeth Hash
Elisa Blevins

Staff Absent

Tracy Cornett

OPEN MEETING & ROLL CALL

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Rascoe made the motion to approve the minutes from the April 20, 2021 meeting; duly seconded by Mr. Butler. Motion carried 4-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial report was distributed to everyone and Mrs. Gayheart noted that the current balance is \$703,177.34. Mr. Butler inquired about when the \$50,000 that was approved at the last meeting would come out of the balance and Mrs. Gayheart noted when the County receives the invoice. Mr. Shepley clarified that the EDA is a separate entity from the County and money that is placed in the EDA account is placed there by the County – there is no self-generated fund that keeps this account active and eventually the money will run out. Mr. Shepley noted it's very important to consider options but also how those decisions will affect the budget. Mr. Smith explained that everything doesn't have to be a grant, the EDA in the past would do interest loans. Mr. Shepley explained his thoughts on how he envisions the EDA operating which is the EDA members bringing ideas to the County. Mr. Shepley noted that sustainability is very important and examples of "claw backs" for the Tobacco Commission Grants was discussed. Mr. Smith also noted that the County is involved with VIAA (Virginia Industrial Advancement Alliance) and they have hired a person that is working with our existing industries, Jake Tabor, and the County is a member of this Economic Development organization which includes: Grayson, City of Galax, Carroll, Wythe, Bland and Smyth. Mr. Rascoe stated he would be interested in meeting Mr. Tabor. Mr. Shepley stated that staff will invite them

to the next EDA meeting. Mr. Butler made the motion to approve the financial report; duly seconded by Mr. Rascoe. Motion carried 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

- ✚ Mr. Rascoe asked about an update on the Mt. Roger's School and Mr. Shepley noted that the new part of the school will be removed and renovations will take place on the old part of the building and currently both of these are under bid. Mr. Shepley noted plans are for a Heritage Center which would highlight the heritage of the western part of the County - the County does have a business plan which shows it would be sustainable.

NEW BUSINESS

- ✚ Mr. Shepley noted there is a new restaurant that will be ready to open in Whitetop soon called Railroad Market & Café. Mr. Rascoe noted the restaurant will be open 7 days/week, 3 meals a day; some grocery items will be available and they are currently working with the bike rental facility for to-go lunches, etc. Mr. Smith asked Mr. Rascoe to contact the owner and ask them to call the County office to set up a time for County Staff to come see the place.
- ✚ Oak Hall Cap & Gown Recommendation/Update – Mr. Smith explained that the Tobacco Commission has approved the acceptance of Oak Hall's real estate investment to count towards the capital investment obligation for the Project upon written acknowledgement from the Town of Independence has received from Oak Hall the fee in Lieu of Taxes in the amount of \$5,338.62 – this is what Oak Hall had to do in order to meet the capital investment portion of the Tobacco Commission agreement. Staff recommends for the County to begin sending the in lieu of taxes invoices out this year. Mr. Rascoe inquired as to where the money would go, and Mr. Shepley noted it goes to the County to the general fund. Mr. Rascoe made the motion to approve staff's recommendation; duly seconded by Mr. Butler. Motion carried 4-0.
- ✚ Mr. Butler mentioned 21 Grocery in Elk Creek and noted they would like to add a charging area for electric vehicles and interested in any opportunity for grant funding. Mr. Shepley asked Mr. Butler to gather more information and report back at the next meeting. Ms. Jones noted that she would be looking for ways to help as well as suggested identifying locations that would work for visitors coming in for vacation.
- ✚ Mr. Shepley gave an update on the Broadband Project and the EDA needs to be thinking about the opportunities for a certified digital workplace County and the County needs to capitalize on that.

INFORMATION ITEM(S)

- ✚ Round House Update – Mr. Shepley gave an update on the 1874 Round House located on the New River in Mouth of Wilson, Va. that Mr. John Bryan bought as of May 18, 2021. Mr. Bryan will now start the renovation to preserving a historical building and to bring the home back to it's original stature.

INITIATIVE SUGGESTION(S)

- ✚ Mr. Rascoe presented a recommendation of moving the maple syrup equipment from the current location to a more suitable location such as the Mt. Rogers school with the newly renovated plans for this area. Mr. Rascoe is in the process of trying to meet with the Fire Department and see if they are open to this idea, then present this to the EDA with a formal recommendation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

ADJOURN

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