



Grayson County Economic Development Authority

P. O. Box 217; Independence, VA 24348

March 19, 2024

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present

Christopher J. Butler
Todd Cannaday
Justine Jackson-Ricketts
Gary Rascoe
Jason Baumgardner
Jonathan Warren
Darin Young (non-voting)

Staff Present

Stephen A. Boyer
Mitchell L. Smith
Nikki Edwards
Lyndsie Young
Tracy Cornett

Members Absent

Elizabeth Hash

Staff Absent

Deb Jones

OPEN MEETING

Chair opened meeting, called roll and determined a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Rascoe made the motion to approve the minutes but noted that Jonathan Warren was present at the February 20th meeting and should have been listed under “members present”; duly seconded by Mr. Cannaday. Motion carried 6-0.

PRESENTATION(S)

- Wes Jurey, President & CEO, Redemption Bridge, ATIP Foundation –
 - Bio-Waste funded by USDA
 - Help recruit businesses into communities
 - Has spoken with 9 counties out of 13 so far and all want to partner with them
 - To move forward, County you need to make sure all local government is made aware and work with community colleges.

Mr. Cannaday made the motion to move forward with pursuing a relationship for possible partnership with ATIP; duly seconded by Mr. Warren. Motion carried 6-0.

- Kevin Spurlin, Ag/Natural Resources Agent – Virginia Cooperative Extension –
Economic Impact of Agriculture and Forestry in Grayson County
Presented to Grayson County Economic Development Authority (EDA)

The United States Census of Agriculture is conducted every 5 years with the most recent census done in 2022. Results were released in February 2024 – below are highlights from that data, as well as other data sources relative to the local economic impact of agriculture and forestry in Grayson County.

- **\$76,013,000 market value of agricultural goods sold** in 2022 compared to \$40,820,000 in 2017 (86% increase in 5 years). Of that value, 56% is crops, Christmas trees and nursery compared to 44% in livestock sales. In 2017, 26% of the value was in crops versus 74% in livestock.
- A typical multiplier effect to the local economy of \$1.45 per dollar of agricultural goods sold would lead to **total local economic impact of \$110,218,850** in 2022.
- Market value of products sold per farm was \$123,397 in 2022 compared to \$57,012 in 2017 (116% increase).
- Average farm production expenses totaled \$114,156 in 2022 compared to \$56,565 in 2017 (102% increase).
- Number of farms DECLINED to 616 in 2022 compared to 716 in 2017 (14% loss). The rate of farm loss has accelerated with a 6% loss between 2012 to 2017.
- Land in farms has INCREASED to 124,095 acres in 2022 compared to 119,340 acres in 2017 (4% increase). Of the total farmland, 52,594 acres (42.4%) is rented land.
- Average farm size INCREASED to 201 acres in 2022 compared to 167 in 2017. These data trends highlight ongoing expansion and consolidation within existing farms.
- Of the 1112 farm operators counted in the Census:
 - 63.8% are male
 - Number of female operators increased from 2017 while the number of male operators decreased over the same period
 - 61.1% of all operators have some off-farm income
 - Operators have worked on farm on average of 24.9 years
 - Average age of farm operators increased to 58.8 years old
- Only 2 farms were not held individually, in partnership or in a family-held corporation. Family ownership accounts for the vast majority of all legal ownership types.
- Sales of beef cattle totaled \$29.2M in 2022 compared to \$25.8M in 2017 (13.2% increase).
- Cut Christmas tree sales totaled \$20M in 2022 compared to \$6.68M in 2017.
- Dairy sales totaled \$3.7M from 8 farms in 2022 compared to \$4M in sales from 9 farms in 2017. Currently, the number of dairy farms in Grayson County is four, counting one that is technically in the City of Galax.
- Number of Christmas tree farms declined from 2017 to 2022, but acreage and number of trees harvested both increased. Grayson County continues to lead Virginia in cut Christmas tree production, even with much of the data reported in North Carolina.
- Almost \$64M in total farm equipment value in 2022 compared to \$49M in 2017. Average equipment value per farm in 2022 was \$103,843 in 2022 compared to \$68,462 in 2017 (51.7% increase).

- Government payments received by participating farms averaged \$18,341 in 2022 compared to \$2,526 in 2017.
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers federal Farm Bill programs such as disaster relief, youth/veteran/beginning farmer loans, and many others.
- USDA FSA, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and New River Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) administer federal and state conservation programs. In the last FY, approximately \$4.2M in federal and state government funding supported conservation programs in the Twin Counties such stream exclusion fencing, alternative livestock watering systems, manure storage, cover cropping, and others. About \$1M of that is from state funds that flow through the New River SWCD.
- Greater use of risk management strategies, many of which are subsidized by federal or state government
- Check-off programs from many agricultural commodities are used for R&D and marketing
- Partnering non-governmental organizations/associations include:
 - Carroll Grayson Cattle Producers Association
 - Grayson LandCare/Independence Farmers Market
 - Mount Rogers Area Christmas Tree Growers Association
 - Mountain Empire Beekeepers Association
 - New River Valley Sheep and Goat Club
 - Virginia Cattlemen’s Association
 - Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association
 - Virginia Pumpkins Growers Association
- Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission has supported many agriculture and forestry- based projects in Grayson County including cost-share grants where farmers provide grant match through their portion of capital improvement projects. Projects over the last 20 years have included farm structures, livestock equipment, produce harvest and handling, improved livestock genetics, precision agriculture technology, and others.

Forestry Information (not a part of Census of Agriculture):

- **Figure 1. – Forest land ownership by class in Grayson County.**

	Ownership class				
	Total	National Forest	State	County and Municipal	Private
Grayson 2013	155,557	23,088	6,152	2,030	124,287
Grayson – most recent	163,934	30,920	11,042	1,850	120,122
Change	+8,377	+7,832	+4,890	-180	-4,165

- Housing markets driven by overall economy greatly impact timber industry for building materials and furniture. Currently, sawmills and loggers are both facing economic challenges.
- White pine can be tipped for holiday greenery at 7 to 10 years of age, and typically reaches economic maturity at 40 years old. Most white pine is planted in plantations. White pine is one of the most economic timber species because our area is especially suited for rapid, high quality growth.
- Hardwoods generate naturally and are rarely replanted following harvest. They typically reach economic maturity around 80 years of age. Red oak was historically one of the highest value timber species. That has declined greatly in recent years. White oak species continue to be in high demand for cooperage (whiskey barrels).

Mr. Cannaday made the motion to move the ARS Project discussion to after the Grayson County High School Welding Center; duly seconded by Mr. Warren. Motion carried 6-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT

- Mrs. Edwards presented the current financial report (listed below) and noted the only lines that changes were 86, 87, 88 and line 82 (LGIP) has been added. Total available balance is \$791,066.67. Mr. Cannaday made the motion to accept the financials as reported; duly seconded by Mr. Rascoe. Motion carried 6-0.

Economic Development Funds
Grayson County, Virginia

As of 3/19/2024

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount Received</u>	<u>Amount Encumbered</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>	<u>Savings (if any)</u>	<u>Balance</u>
1								
2								
3	5/31/2022		Balance	\$ 742,228.74				\$ 742,228.74
4	6/9/2022	Cresthaven Farms, Inc	Feasibility Study - Creamery			\$ 10,000.00		\$ 732,228.74
6	7/5/2022	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 732,937.74
7	7/6/2022	McAllister Mills	clawback of grant funds; to be held for Tobacco Commission (Pass Through)	\$ 2,893.36	\$ 2,893.36			\$ 732,937.74
8	7/15/2022	Va Foundation of Ag	Feasibility Study - Ag/Multi-Use Facility		\$ 9,000.00	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 724,937.74
9	7/19/2022	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 727,948.15
10	7/29/2022	Interest		\$ 991.50				\$ 728,939.65
11	8/8/2022	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 729,648.65
12	8/16/2022	MRRP (formerly VIAA) BRCEDA	regional strategic plan		\$ 25,000.00	\$ 16,816.67	\$ 8,183.33	\$ 729,648.65
13	8/23/2022	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 732,659.06
14	8/31/2022	Interest		\$ 1,301.37				\$ 733,960.43
15	9/6/2022	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 734,669.43
16	9/8/2022	NRV Sheep & Goat club	wool baler			\$ 5,000.00		\$ 729,669.43
17	9/20/2022	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 732,679.84
18	9/30/2022	Interest		\$ 1,486.28				\$ 734,166.12
19	10/4/2022	McAllister Mills	clawback of grant funds; to be held for Tobacco Commission	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00			\$ 734,166.12
20	10/14/2022	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 737,176.53
21	12/8/2022	Mt Rogers Heritage Center	storm water, survey, engineering, etc		\$ 6,742.90	\$ 8,257.10		\$ 728,919.43
22	10/14/2022	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 731,929.84
23	10/31/2022	Interest		\$ 1,877.07				\$ 733,806.91
24	11/7/2002	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 734,515.91
25	11/16/2022	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 737,526.32
26	12/19/2022	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 740,536.73
27	12/30/2022	Interest		\$ 2,536.30				\$ 743,073.03
28	1/5/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 743,782.03
29	1/31/2023	Interest		\$ 2,727.30				\$ 746,509.33
30	2/3/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 749,519.74
31	2/7/2023	AFID Grant - NRV Sheep & Goat	wool baler project	\$ 7,500.00				\$ 757,019.74

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32	6/26/2023	Transfer from County		\$ 290,000.00				\$ 1,047,019.74
33	2/9/2023	Mt Rogers Heritage Center	engineering, etc			\$ -		\$ 1,047,019.74
34	2/21/2023	NRV Sheep & Goat club	wool baler			\$ 7,500.00		\$ 1,039,519.74
35	2/28/2023	Interest		\$ 2,565.97				\$ 1,042,085.71
36	3/6/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 1,045,096.12
37	3/6/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 1,045,805.12
38	3/9/2023	BRCEDA	Strategic Plan			\$ 6,050.00		\$ 1,039,755.12
39	3/9/2023	Mt Rogers Heritage Center	engineering, etc			\$ 1,512.00		\$ 1,038,243.12
40	3/20/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 1,041,253.53
41	3/21/2023	Mt Rogers Heritage Center	demolition			\$ 119,656.80		\$ 921,596.73
42	3/31/2023	Interest		\$ 2,925.85				\$ 924,522.58
43	4/5/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 925,231.58
44	4/13/2023	Mt Rogers Heritage Center	engineering, etc			\$ 1,500.00		\$ 923,731.58
45	4/13/2023	Tri Area Community Health	xray machine			\$ 61,000.00		\$ 862,731.58
46	4/17/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 865,741.99
47	4/28/2023	Interest		\$ 2,913.89				\$ 868,655.88
48	5/5/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 869,364.88
49	9/14/2023	Transfer from County	reimbursement for demo	\$ 19,656.80				\$ 889,021.68
50	5/22/2023	Tobacco Commission	RPM passthrough	\$ 252,225.00				\$ 1,141,246.68
51	5/31/2023	LGIP Interest - May	Interest	\$ 3,148.49				\$ 1,144,395.17
52	6/5/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 1,145,104.17
53	6/6/2023	AFID Grant - NRV Sheep & Goat	Wool Baler	\$ 5,000.00				\$ 1,150,104.17
54	6/8/2023	BRCEDA	Strategic Plan			\$ 6,050.00		\$ 1,144,054.17
55	6/8/2023	RPM-Passthrough from TRRC	Complete Performance Agreement			\$ 252,225.00		\$ 891,829.17
56	6/27/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.14				\$ 894,839.31
57	6/30/2023	LGIP Interest - June	Interest	\$ 3,114.26				\$ 897,953.57
58	7/5/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 898,662.57
59	7/31/2023	LGIP Interest - July	Interest	\$ 3,278.96				\$ 901,941.53
60	8/7/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 902,650.53
61	8/9/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.14				\$ 905,660.67
62	8/14/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.14				\$ 908,670.81
63	8/23/2023	BRCEDA	Strategic Plan			\$ 4,716.67		\$ 903,954.14
64	8/23/2023	BRCEDA	Strategic Plan Training			\$ 324.50		\$ 903,629.64
65	8/24/2023	LGIP Interest - August	Interest	\$ 3,366.69				\$ 906,996.33
66	9/5/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 907,705.33
67	9/13/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 910,715.74

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68	9/28/2023	NRV Sheep and	Wool Baler			\$ 5,000.00		\$ 905,715.74
69	9/29/2023	LGIP - Interest September	Interest	\$ 3,307.18				\$ 909,022.92
70	10/23/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 912,033.33
71	10/31/2023	LGIP - Interest October	Interest	\$ 3,440.94				\$ 915,474.27
72	11/14/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 918,484.68
73	11/30/2023	LGIP - Interest	Interest	\$ 3,367.88				\$ 921,852.56
74	12/6/2023	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 922,561.56
75	12/6/2023	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 925,571.97
76	12/14/2023	Taff & Frye	demolition			\$ 46,083.20		\$ 879,488.77
77	12/20/2023	Gold Hill, LLC	Forgivable Loan			\$ 50,000.00		\$ 829,488.77
78	12/31/2023	LGIP - Interest	Interest	\$ 3,490.96				\$ 832,979.73
79	1/9/2024	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 833,688.73
80	1/23/2024	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 836,699.14
81	1/26/2024	Grant		\$ 2,800.00				\$ 839,499.14
82	1/31/2024	LGIP - Interest	Interest	\$ 3,496.23				\$ 842,995.37
83	2/20/2024	EDA	Reimbursement to EDA for Demo	\$ 46,083.20				\$ 889,078.57
84	2/20/2024	McAllister Mills	Grant			\$ 75,000.00		\$ 814,078.57
85	2/20/2024	Angela Biram	Grant			\$ 30,000.00		\$ 784,078.57
86	2/20/2024	Oak Hall Rent	Return on Investment	\$ 3,010.41				\$ 787,088.98
87	2/29/2024	LGIP - Interest	Interest	\$ 3,268.69				\$ 790,357.67
88	3/5/2024	Grayson Millworks	Loan Repayment	\$ 709.00				\$ 791,066.67

OLD BUSINESS

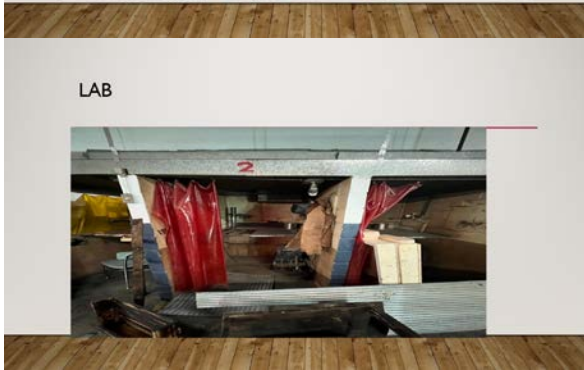
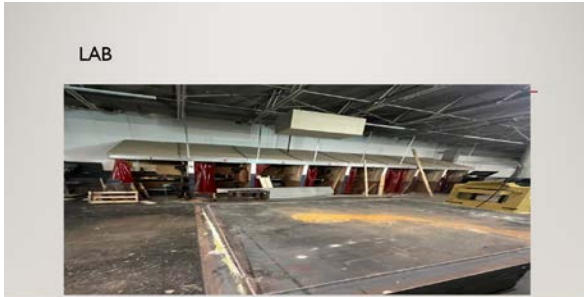
- None

NEW BUSINESS

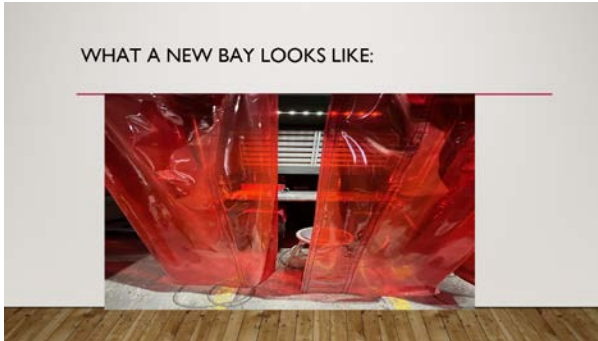
- Eda Grant Application – Steve/Kit Marshall – moved to April 16 meeting.
- Grayson County High School Welding Center – Mr. Kelly Wilmore, Grayson County School Superintendent presented the need for new welding booths at the CATE Center at the Grayson County High School. Mr. Wilmore requested funding from the EDA of \$100,000 and showed a PowerPoint presentation:

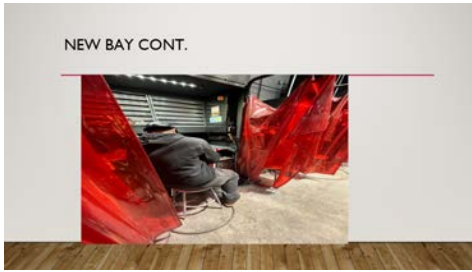
- Purpose - Add welding as a vocational course to Grayson County High School & add an evening course of welding to the community
- Fees – Architect/Engineer fees for plans: \$55,000
 - Equipment: \$167,290 – includes welders/welding stands/iron worker
 - Welders are \$11,000 each, minimum
 - Currently have 8 welding stations – wants to extend to 12
 - Wiring, mason/block, curtains, ventilation: \$50,000
 - Demo/set up will be conducted by school maintenance crew
 - all welders are Lincoln Electrical 350 X model

Current Lab:



What a New Bay Looks Like:





- Possible Partnerships with WCC and RPM
- Evening Classes – would ask WCC to provide instructor for evening welding classes at the CATE Center for adults in the Twin County Community
- Requesting \$100,000 to go towards costs in renovating the current welding lab at the CATE Center

Mr. Butler noted that the EDA members would discuss the request over the next 30 days and Mr. Wilmore needs to come to the EDA meeting in May.

- ARS (Acquire, Renovate, Sell) Project – Mr. Butler noted that on March 11, a meeting was held with Jimmy Moss with MRPDC and others to discuss this program. Mr. Butler noted some of the highlights of this program – Mr. Cannaday made the motion if a property comes up then an emergency meeting could be called by a group text/zoom/or being present, of which a quorum present would make the decision; duly seconded by Mr. Warren. Motion carried 6-0. Mr. Butler noted he would like to start looking at properties. Mr. Butler will call Mr. Moss for procedures to be followed and covered more details of the program.

EDA MEMBER TIME

- Mr. Young spoke about Brian Brown's presentation this morning at the Ag Breakfast who works with SERCAP and might be a good resource for new business start-ups (grants/loans/counseling) – might be interested in attending an EDA meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cannaday made the motion to amend the agenda to go into closed session pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia for discussion relating to the acquisition or disposition of real property purchases for ARS; duly seconded by Mr. Warren. Motion carried 6-0. – Mr. Cannaday amended his motion to include discussion of a personnel matter pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia involving EDA personnel; duly seconded by Mr. Warren. Motion carried 6-0.

Mr. Cannaday made the motion to come out of closed session and amended his motion to include the property purchases for ARS and to also include EDA personnel; duly seconded by Mr. Warren. Motion carried 6-0.

Whereas, the Grayson County Economic Development Authority (EDA) has convened a closed session on the 19th day of March 2024, pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with provision of the Virginia Freedom of information Act; and

Whereas, §2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Grayson County Economic Development Authority (EDA) that such closed session was conducted in conformity with the Virginia law;

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved that the Grayson County Economic Development Authority (EDA) hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (I) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed session to which this certification resolution applies, and (II) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed or considered by the Economic Development Authority with recorded confirmation from members as follows: Darin Young – I so certify; Gary Rascoe – I so certify; Todd Cannaday – I so certify ; Jason Baumgardner – I so certify; Justine Jackson-Ricketts – I so certify; Jonathan Warren – I so certify; Chris Butler – I so certify.

Mr. Cannaday made the motion for Mr. Butler to move forward with what was discussed regarding ARS property; duly seconded by Ms. Jackson-Ricketts. Motion carried 6-0.

ADJOURN

- Mr. Rascoe made the motion to adjourn; duly seconded by Mr. Warren. Motion carried 6-0.