

## SPECIAL ARPA MEETING MINUTES

March 29, 2022

A special meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), of Stafford County, Virginia, was held at the Virginia Smart Community Testbed with Zoom option on Tuesday, March 29, 2022.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 2:04 PM. A quorum was present and accounted for. Mr. Griffin read the Conflict of Interest statement; no members had any conflicts.

#### Members Present

Joel Griffin	Chairman	(Zoom)
Howard Owen	Treasurer	(in-person)
Don Newlin	Vice Chairman	(Zoom)
Danielle Davis		(Zoom)
Jack Rowley		(in-person)
Marlon Wilson		(Zoom)
Heather Hagerman		(Zoom)

#### ED&T/EDA Staff Present

John Holden	Secretary, EDA; Director, ED&T	(in-person)
Josh Summits	Business Development Officer	(in-person)
Tammy Guseman	Administrative Assistant, ED&T	(in-person)
Dale Hendon	Specialist, ED&T	(in-person)
Linzy Browne	Marketing & Events Coordinator, EDA	(in-person)
Lisa Logan	Assistant Director, ED&T	(in-person)
Courtney Swenson	Marketing Manager, ED&T	(in-person)
Rick Cobert	Economic Development Manager	(in-person)

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Holden gave the floor to Mr. Rowley to discuss a Germanna item. Mr. Rowley mentioned the upcoming Germanna Gala on April 30 and the purpose of Gala is to raise money for the healthcare portion of the college and to honor our healthcare community and requested that the EDA sponsor this as they did last year. Mr. Rowley suggested a sponsorship of \$2500, which is what EDA contributed last year.

Ms. Hagerman moved to accept the recommendation for EDA to sponsor the Gala at \$2500. Mr. Wilson seconded.

### **VOTE: 7-0 Approved**

Mr. Holden shared that the International Economic Development Council has created Economic Development Week. Mr. Holden stated that, as part of this, the County and Board of Supervisors has approved the week of May 3 as Economic Development week and the BOS will issue a Proclamation to be read at the May 3 BOS meeting and Mr. Griffin will be in

attendance to accept. Mr. Holden noted that ED&T will also be submitting proposals for awards to coincide with the Economic Development Week.

## 2. **DISCUSS AND RECOMMEND HOW TO USE ARPA FUNDS**

### A. Summary Review of Rules

Mr. Holden proposed three primary issues:

1. Workforce
2. Hospitality Industry
3. Targeted Class or Communities

Recommendations made for use of ARPA funds:

1. Mr. Owen suggested focusing efforts on two or three huge projects instead of ten small ones. He also suggested funds to Stafford schools' special event this summer to train teachers on coming out of the Pandemic.
2. Mr. Rowley proposed funding Germanna College, perhaps using ARPA funds to cover the EDA commitment for GCC Stafford expansion.
3. Ms. Logan stated that the hospitality industry (restaurants, hotels) is still having trouble finding workers. Mr. Owen noted that workers will come or stay if paid more. Mr. Rowley stated that local hotel revenues have exceeded what they were in 2019 and inquired if it is advisable to offer funds to an industry that is doing better now than in 2019.
4. Mr. Summits stated that restaurants may use ARPA funds to develop outdoor spaces.
5. Mr. Rowley indicated his support of \$1000 bonuses to employees of low wage once they have completed 6 months of employment. Mr. Griffin suggested supporting programs that help to off-set working costs (i.e.-daycare, transportation) for the average family who is currently working to encourage those families to continue working.
6. Mr. Griffin stated that teachers in local schools create a 'supply list' for students each year and suggested paying for every teacher's list using ARPA funds.
7. Mr. Wilson recommended finding ways to introduce people into targeted workforce areas such as cyber security and technology.
8. Ms. Logan suggested funding internships for students that could partner with local businesses to introduce them to fields such as cyber/tech.
9. Mr. Owen recommended helping Stafford County schools buy the state-owned property that is slated to be used for high school vocational education. Mr. Holden suggested that this would not be eligible use of ARPA funds, in his understanding.
10. Ms. Davis suggested using funds to help working people seeking other certifications or pay for books or classes in order to better themselves. Mr. Rowley noted that Germanna offers two-year programs at no cost and cautioned against overlapping programs.
11. Ms. Logan and Mr. Rowley both suggested using funds for affordable housing (i.e.-Micah program, working with apartment complexes to issue lower rates for the needy or perhaps a housing bonus). Mr. Griffin suggested again ways to encourage people who are currently working (i.e.-offering to pay first and last month's rent as incentive to work in Stafford County).

**General Discussion:**

Mr. Cobert stated he received calls this week from two companies: one needing 400 workers with CDL certifications and the other needing 500 workers with food service certifications.

Mr. Holden stated that the Members appear to want to help individuals achieve work-related trainings and asked Mr. Rowley who at Germanna could best guide the EDA to achieve this? Mr. Rowley suggested a meeting with President Gullickson. Mr. Holden recommended using already-established programs (or organizations) to help dispense ARPA funds.

Mr. Hendon suggested focusing on entrepreneurship to produce investments rather than individual trainings. Mr. Cobert noted the recent workforce statistic that the majority of workers will not need a college education. Mr. Holden recommended improving existing facilities and programs and then using them to promote entrepreneurship.

Mr. Rowley suggested providing financial incentives to attract high-end restaurants and stores to Stafford County. Mr. Holden noted that there is very clear guidance on what can be done with capital using ARPA funds. Mr. Griffin recommended buying properties and making them pad-ready or rejuvenate current buildings and turn them into Class A office space or restaurants. Mr. Holden noted that new site development not eligible but there is part of the Rules that allow for rehabilitation of existing structures. He also reminded the EDA that there is only \$2.9 million dollars to work with.

Mr. Summits suggested funding pop-up restaurants and Mr. Cobert recommended having students intern at restaurants and learn the business from the ground up. Mr. Hendon noted that if we have the industry, then creative restaurants will service those working in the area. Mr. Griffin stated that restaurants are only successful if they have steady lunch and dinner crowds and that Stafford's transient population does not offer that. Mr. Owen suggested having a new density/population survey done in order to get current data. Mr. Holden reminded the members that the County is working on getting smart kiosks installed which will help provide this data.

Mr. Holden concluded the discussion by asking for any other ideas on using ARPA funds:

1. Mr. Rowley reaffirmed focusing on several large projects.
2. Mr. Owen noted that the kiosks would provide the data needed for area restaurants.
3. Mr. Newlin stated his desire to help the schools/teachers with supplies. Mr. Rowley asked how many teachers are in the Stafford County schools? Ms. Logan gave an estimate of 2,000 teachers. Mr. Rowley suggested given each teacher \$200 of ARPA funds totaling \$400,000 of the \$2.9 million.
4. Mr. Cobert recommended using funds to help those currently working that have fallen and picked themselves back up again.

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- Ms. Browne suggested changing job applications for the younger workforce to include internships instead of experience or education so that they get paid to get educated. Local businesses would benefit from this as well. Mr. Rowley noted that Germanna already has 'Earn While You Learn' programs that offer in-practice credits.

Mr. Holden stated he will collect some thoughts on ideas for ARPA funding and have them ready for the April 8<sup>th</sup> Regular EDA Meeting. Mr. Owen moved to go into Executive Session and Mr. Newlin seconded.

### 3. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*The EDA Board went into closed session in accordance with Section 2.2- 3711.A.3 and 5, et al. of the Code of Virginia 1950, as amended. No Votes were taken while in closed session. Members of the EDA present at the meeting were in the closed session.*

Ms. Hagerman moved to come out of Executive Session. Mr. Newlin seconded.

### 4. **ADIJOURNMENT**

The next Regular Meeting will be in-person at the Testbed with Zoom option and is scheduled for April 8, 2022. There being no further business brought before the Economic Development Authority, Mr. Griffin adjourned the meeting at 3:26 PM.

#### **MINUTES APPROVED BY:**



Joel Griffin  
EDA Chairman

#### **MINUTES SUBMITTED BY:**



John Holden  
EDA Secretary