

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 14, 2022

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), of Stafford County, Virginia, was held in-person at the Testbed with Zoom option on Friday, January 14, 2022. Most Members joined via Zoom call.

### 1. **CALL TO ORDER**

This meeting was called to order by Chairman Griffin at 9:02 AM. A quorum was present and accounted for.

#### Members Present

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

#### ED&T/EDA Staff Present (in person)

John Holden	Secretary, EDA; Director, ED&T
Josh Summits	Business Development Officer
Rick Cobert	Manager, Economic Development
Tammy Guseman	Administrative Assistant, ED&T
Dale Hendon	Specialist, ED&T
Linzy Browne	Marketing & Events Coordinator, EDA

#### Also Present

Charlie Payne	Counsel (zoom)
Tom Snyder	RIoT (in person)
Rachael Newberry	RIoT (in person)
Jennifer Morgan	RIoT (in person)
Nick Hall	Executive VP, Fredericksburg Nationals (zoom)
Dexter Cummings	Stafford County Planning Commission (zoom)
Laura Sellers	Stafford County Planning Commission (in person)

### 2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

#### A. December 10, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Owen noted that the December Minutes had a typographical error under Item 6F. Mr. Newlin motioned to approve the amended December Regular Meeting Minutes with this error corrected. Mr. Rowley seconded.

**VOTE: 7-0 Approved**

### **3. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

Mr. Holden introduced Mr. Cummings as the Planning Commission's new liaison to the EDA. Mr. Hall, executive vice president of the Fredericksburg Nationals, introduced himself and stated his desire to support the EDA and help the community. Mr. Cummings and Mr. Hall signed off the meeting before the closed session began (and rejoined after).

Mr. Newlin moved to go into closed session. Mr. Owen seconded.

### **10. CLOSED 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.*

Closed session ended at 9:52 a.m. and Regular Meeting commenced.

### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

#### **A. Current Financials**

Mr. Owen noted that there were some audit questions regarding the paperwork on the Milde loan that are being addressed and noted that the Audit should be completed within the next 60 days. Mr. Owen recommended the EDA should incorporate, as part of the meeting procedures, time for members to state any conflicts of interest they may have around projects prior to the discussion of any new projects.

Mr. Holden reminded members that Stafford County has a new CFO and that the CFO has informed him that the EDA audits should be completed within 5 or 6 months of the end of the fiscal year. Thus, staff has begun to organize and will hope to engage the Auditor soon after completion of this year's audit so that work can begin in June.

Mr. Owen noted that EDA has \$1.2 million in cash assets and \$1.25 million in other assets.

Mr. Rowley stated that comments budget planning sheet were very helpful. Mr. Holden noted that this is still a work in progress but appreciated the comments as he is making efforts and plans to help the EDA become self-sustainable in the next few years.

Ms. Hagerman moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Mr. Rowley seconded.

**VOTE: 7-0 Approved**

### **5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

A. Mr. Griffin stated, for the record, that the EDA is a volunteer and appointed Board that manages the affairs for the EDA, established as a separate legal entity by the County. The Members (EDA Board) are appointed by the Board of Supervisors to four-year terms and those terms should be honored. He does not favor replacement of EDA Members until their terms have been completed. His position is that EDA Members should fulfill their terms regardless of new incoming Supervisors. This allows that EDA Members remain the non-partisan and non-political, which is critical to the successful operations of the

## Stafford County Economic Development Authority

EDA. Since the beginning, under the watchful eye of Don Newlin, the EDA has been successful as it has not had political turnover and has focused on its mission of economic development in Stafford County.

- B. Mr. Griffin added that there is a growing need for affordable housing in Stafford County. Mr. Griffin said that he would like to see the EDA work collaboratively with housing developers to better support the current initiatives that are failing to get to the Supervisors. Mr. Griffin suggested that retro-fitting older housing developments is not practical.

Mr. Wilson noted that many people train in this area (Quantico, FBI) but do not live here and have to travel here to attend the trainings. Mr. Wilson stated that affordable housing would help these individuals also and suggested possibly calling it by another phrase.

Mr. Holden added that the term “affordable housing” does come with a “stigma” and that it is as important to focus on a variety of housing stock, including small apartments, condominiums, to support the growing workforce of the future. Many new jobs in Stafford need workers who may likely desire housing options, many smaller units and not necessarily for children. Ms. Hagerman agreed that it is all about how it is marketed.

### 6. **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

- A. Audit Update (already shared in Treasurer's Report)
- B. Incentives in Place – information only

Mr. Holden shared that the Board did approve both the UVision and Virginia Oncology incentives. Mr. Holden noted that the First Line incentive is in its second year and reminded the members that ED&T has a process in place to track all incentive funds, some of which come from EDA.

- C. Marketing & Events Update

1. Beer & Business

Due to the Governor's recent State of Emergency announcement the next Beer & Business event to be held at Barley Naked has been moved from Feb. 9 to Mar. 2, 2022.

2. Business Appreciation Reception

The Business Appreciation Reception has been re-scheduled for May 25 at the Holiday Inn & Conference Center. All marketing materials for this event will be updated by end of today. Mr. Holden shared that the BAR had to be moved due to conflict with Modern Day Marine event that is an event ED&T and many in Stafford participate was moved to the date we had previously planned for the BAR.

3. More Event Plans for 2022-23

- Dates for the Veteran's Boot Camp 1.0 and 2.0 will be decided next week.
- RIoT Launch Party was a success and the Accelerator Program will be starting in March with six virtual sessions. Applications for this program are due March 11.
- Email regarding the EDA headshot available appointment times will be sent out soon and members may email Ms. Browne their own photos if desired.

## **7. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **A. Loan Committee (*H Owen, D Davis, J Summits*)**

Mr. Summits shared that two loans are currently in staff underwriting and will be shared with REDCO for additional review and another application is expected soon. A Loan Committee will likely be scheduled for mid-February.

### **B. Germanna Group (*J Rowley*)**

Mr. Owen noted that Germanna is holding virtual classes only through the end of January and Mr. Rowley confirmed this.

### **C. Property Group (*D Hendon, H Hagerman, J Rowley*)**

None

### **D. Broadband Expansion (*D Hendon, M Wilson*)**

Mr. Wilson noted that Stafford County was awarded the VATI grant and will work with Comcast to provide service to 600 homes, mostly in the western part of the county. Mr. Wilson shared that EDA will not have much direct oversight due to how the grant works and that EDA needs to focus on areas that are still without service. Mr. Hendon suggested a committee meeting with Stafford County IT within the next month or so to identify service gaps. Mr. Griffin requested a map of Stafford County showing the broadband gaps. Ms. Davis shared that the Telecommunications Commission did have a map of this at one time. Mr. Holden noted that IT is working on an updated map showing the coverage.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

This portion of the meeting was planned and was used as a strategic planning session for the EDA for 2022. Mr. Holden began by sharing a presentation, noting he would like EDA's input. He prefaced the presentation by saying that this was "my interpretation of Stafford and its economic development and history, notably the last three years. I recognize I am still new here, and I am humble, but wanted to emphasize the history as I see it and the success we have had, as I introduce four primary programs or initiatives that I am asking for in order to continue and expand our success."

Mr. Holden presented a history of economic development (slides). The presentation summarized the ED&T Department (the "Band") and the history of how Stafford has grown, over the past many decades. It concluded with Mr. Holden presenting four "tools" he would like to ask the Board for with support from the EDA—all to be further explained later in the presentation:

1. Economic Infrastructure Fund (EIF)
2. Data Center attraction and "Overlay Zone"
3. Tourism Zones
4. Regional Infrastructure Facilities Act (RIFA)

## Stafford County Economic Development Authority

Mr. Holden took questions. Mr. Griffin noted an addition to one slide, that being the addition of Hilldrup as a major company in Stafford.

Mr. Holden then summarized five areas of discussion for the EDA and the balance of the strategic discussion meeting:

1. Entrepreneurial development programs (RIoT and more)
2. Marketing and Events
3. Property Development
4. Financial Sustainability
5. Update and Revisit use of ARPA funds for economic development

Mr. Holden then asked Tom Snyder to reintroduce himself, RIoT, and his colleagues Rachael Newberry and Jennifer Morgan.

Mr. Snyder gave a history and background on RIoT and their approach with the main points being:

- RIoT is a non-profit that evolved from the 2008 recession and focused on “tech” development for new business
- Corporate sponsors see value and invest in RIoT as they see opportunity in the development of new innovations and services that the entrepreneur can provide
- Their expansion to Virginia, with Stafford EDA and GO Virginia, is launching this week
- Rachael Newberry emphasized that this will be their 11<sup>th</sup> “Cohort” (Program) for the RIoT Accelerator program (RAP)... being called the Virginia RAP.
- RIoT is open at no cost, equity or IP to entrepreneurs
- With additional GO Virginia grant money, RIoT is also launching “RIoT Foundations” which is a pre-accelerator program in the region. This program is for more of the true “startups” and “idea” or “tire-kicking” stage entrepreneurs.
- Responding to a question from Mr. Griffin, there are many opportunities for other business leaders to get involved as mentors in the program or simply attending and learning from the program and making introductions to other entrepreneurs

Mr. Holden emphasized the opportunity to engage the Stafford business community and asked EDA members to do so in any way possible. Mr. Griffin suggested engaging the entire region also.

The discussion turned to input on EDA and Stafford business marketing and events. Mr. Owen asked how the EDA could best help with marketing efforts. Mr. Holden urged the EDA members to continue to share email announcements and social media put out by ED&T and Linzy. Mr. Holden asked EDA members to “talk up” all EDA is doing with other business leaders, etc. Mr. Holden gave the example of the Beer & Business events being designed as a way to tell the community what the EDA is doing strategically around all parts of the County. Mr. Griffin expressed a concern of “mixed messages” from the EDA and the Board of Supervisors and encouraged the EDA to express the plans, events, and marketing messages with the Board of Supervisors.

Ms. Browne noted that the revised Veterans Business Boot Camps are designed to serve traditional veteran “startups.” The spring 1.0 event is designed more for the initial startups or those considering to start a business, while the fall 2.0 event that provides more seasoned, second phase training and programs for more experienced veteran-owned businesses. The 2022 Boot Camp schedule will be announced in coming weeks.

The EDA Members and member of the public, Ms. Sellers, noted the following groups that the EDA might reach out to in order to engage and spread the word about all the EDA is doing and wanting to do to help new businesses:

- Local AFCE
- Quantico Corporate Contractor Association
- QASIC

Mr. Holden shared that as Stafford grows its tech-based entrepreneur system and message, the Testbed offers is a place that is ‘home’ to a major a statewide program and that RIoT will use the Testbed as its Virginia office. There and there have been and will continue to be many meetings and “Smart Pilot Projects” run out of the Testbed. Mr. Hendon noted the importance of this place for convening and hosting events and meetings.

The discussion turned to the EDA’s desire to pursue property development. Mr. Holden noted that much of Centreport’s success was due to the private market creating “site ready” properties, with the County’s assistance to permit those sites. Mr. Holden added that Stafford will likely run out of property in Centreport in 18 months.

Mr. Griffin asked Ms. Hagerman to define a “pad-ready” site. Ms. Hagerman explained that those are sites that, in the end, are much more valuable to a new business investment and usually already have grading completed and utilities installed. Mr. Rowley noted there is risk in purchasing pad-ready sites and cited those developed by Mary Washington Health Care. Mr. Holden noted that there are significant funds available to help get sites ready in Virginia: the EPA and Virginia Brownfield programs. Mr. Hendon noted that ED&T is tracking these programs and looking into the best way to leverage these program funds.

Mr. Rowley noted that the loss of the property on Route 1 near the proposed Fountain Park was disappointing but that the EDA need keep its mission in mind. Ms. Hagerman noted that there may be opportunities to purchase land in Stafford as there are many large parcels that have been owned by the same families around the County for over 30 years, and the next generation of owners may be willing to partner with the EDA to develop such properties.

Mr. Griffin summarized by noting that there is clearly EDA interest in exploring ways to develop additional property in sync with its mission—for economic development in Stafford. Mr. Summits noted that there have been new business prospects lost as we do not have sites of size or site-ready sites. Mr. Summits also noted that he is still exploring opportunities for the EDA to help finance and build hangars at the airport, notably, corporate hangars. The members continued to express interest in this project.

Mr. Wilson asked if there would be regular meetings between the EDA members with the Board of Supervisors and if so, when the next one would be. Mr. Holden explained that these meetings are always a challenge to schedule with the Board but that he will look into options especially with the three newly-elected Board of Supervisors.

At this time the discussion turned to the update and use of ARPA funds. Mr. Griffin had to leave and Mr. Newlin took over the meeting. Mr. Holden began to make a presentation to update the EDA on how ARPA funds may be used and what he was proposing at this stage, notably the desire for additional professional help to design and administer the proposed \$2.9M in proposed allocation to Economic Development.

However, there were technical issues as most of the EDA Members could not see the slides or hear Mr. Holden. There were many minutes with confusion and lack of communication between Members on Zoom and in the Testbed. After many minutes of attempting to fix the situation, Mr. Holden suggested the meeting be ended and that this conversation continue at a future meeting.

Before leaving the meeting, Mr. Rowley expressed his concern over the costs for a consultant. Mr. Newlin expressed the same concern. Mr. Holden attempted to explain his reasoning for the need of a consultant, but the sound connection was lost (and those on Zoom did not hear). Mr. Holden tried again, after it seemed the connection between Zoom and the Testbed had been made. Ms. Hagerman, after having heard Mr. Holden's explanation as to why the consultant is needed, expressed her understanding and willingness to support this need. Mr. Wilson expressed the same.

Still, after the connection was restored, Mr. Newlin recognized that some members were no longer in the meeting (Mr. Griffin and Mr. Rowley) and there was poor connection and dialogue between those on Zoom and in the Testbed and he brought the meeting to close with no action.

**10. ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

None

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The next Regular Meeting will be in-person at the Testbed and is scheduled for February 11, 2022, pending the Covid-19 situation. There being no further business brought before the Economic Development Authority, Mr. Newlin adjourned the meeting at 12:10 PM.

**MINUTES APPROVED BY:**



Joel Griffin  
EDA Chairman

**MINUTES SUBMITTED BY:**



John Holden  
EDA Secretary