



## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), of Stafford County, Virginia, was held at the George L. Gordon Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Rd, Stafford, VA 22554 on Friday, February 14, 2025.

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

Mr. Rowley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM, emphasizing the necessity for all members and staff to declare any conflicts of interest with the agenda items. No conflicts were stated.

A quorum was present and accounted for.

#### **Members**

Jack Rowley, Chair  
Marlon Wilson, Vice Chair [departed 9:56 AM]  
Price Jett, Treasurer  
Jeff Roosa, Secretary  
Janette Holland [arrived 9:04 AM]  
Frank Porcelli  
Daryl Weedeman

#### **ED/EDA Staff Present**

Liz Barber  
Linzy Browne  
Savannah Wimbush  
Laura Sassano

#### **Also Present**

Logan Burnette, Esq.  
Michael Graff  
Paul Brown  
Joseph Baclit  
Philip Cox  
Laura Sellers

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

Mr. Rowley asked if anyone had any modifications to make to the meeting minutes. No modifications were presents and Mr. Rowley requested a motion to approve the minutes of the



January 10, 2025, meeting as presented. Mr. Jett made the motion and Mr. Porcelli seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 6-0**

## 8. OLD BUSINESS

- b. McGuire Woods Consulting Letter of Engagement: Mr. Rowley discussed a letter from McGuire Woods, drafted by Mr. Graff and reviewed by himself and Ms. Barber, regarding EDA revenue bond financing for April Housing. Mr. Rowley clarified that the EDA does not need to sign the letter and has no liability in the transaction.

Ms. Barber clarified that any fees related to the bond attorney would be included in the EDA's agreement with April Housing and asked whether fees would still be owed the project does not move forward. Mr. Graff confirmed that applicants cover all costs, including legal fees.

Mr. Rowley requested a motion to accept the McGuire Woods Consulting Letter of Engagement. Mr. Porcelli made the motion; Mr. Weedeman seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 7-0**

- a. English Oaks Bond Request: Mr. Baclit provided an overview of April Housing and then discussed the four properties located in Stafford County, highlighting English Oaks as the first to undergo renovations due to the upcoming expiration of its Land Use Restrictive Agreement (LURA) in 2033. Planned improvements focus on enhancing energy efficiency, replacing outdated mechanical systems, and ensuring accessibility compliance. Residents will be temporarily relocated to nearby hotels for one to two weeks during construction, with relocation specialists assisting in the process.

Mr. Baclit outlined the financial requirements for the project, estimating a total development cost of \$52 million. Under the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, approximately \$26 million would be financed through tax-exempt bonds. The Economic Development Authority (EDA) is being asked to act as a pass-through bond issuer. In return, the EDA would earn fees and have its legal expenses covered. The project aims to fully renovate the housing community, extending its lifespan by another 30 years.

Mr. Jett asked for clarification on the \$52 million cost. Mr. Baclit estimated that approximately \$75,000 to \$80,000 in hard costs would be spent per unit. Ms. Barber asked for confirmation that the renovations include improvements to common areas, roads, and security. Mr. Baclit confirmed explaining that these extensive upgrades contribute to the high cost. Mr. Roosa asked who owns the roadways in



the community and inquired if due diligence had been done to confirm that the development would be responsible for the upkeep. Mr. Baclit acknowledged they haven't determined roadway ownership.

Mr. Roosa asked if a cost analysis had been done for the current residents. Mr. Baclit explained that the renovation is structured to forecast modest rent increases based on current rents and the guidelines of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program, which limits how much rents can rise. He emphasized that the renovations are not intended to cause significant rent hikes.

Ms. Barber asked Mr. Baclit if the rent increases are regulated under the tax credit program and asked for clarification on rent increase caps. Mr. Baclit explained that the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regulates rent levels based on the area median income. Currently, the property charges rent well below what HUD deems achievable, and they do not plan to increase rents to HUD's maximum allowed rate.

Mr. Roosa expressed concerns about residents being unable to afford potential rent increases. Mr. Baclit acknowledged the concern, assuring that it is a common issue they address carefully. He explained that the goal is not to miscalculate rent increases, as this could lead to vacancies and negative outcomes. Mr. Roosa asked if the rent increases are indexed to the cost of living in the specific area, noting that this area is unique and differs from other regions in the U.S. Mr. Baclit explained that the rent increases would be indexed to the local market, and they hire a market specialist, such as KPG, to prepare a detailed market study that guides their decisions.

Mr. Wilson suggested that it would be helpful for the company to provide a presentation on its overall business model to understand how the company makes money to offset the cap on rent increases despite significant investments in renovations.

Mr. Jett requested more information on LURA and what would happen after the expiration. Mr. Baclit explained that the property could be converted to market rate through a process with HUD, but this is not the approach April Housing takes. If funding for the community isn't received, April Housing would self-impose affordability restrictions and reach agreements with Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to secure new debt at a reduced interest rate. Rent increases would still be capped at what the market can bear.



Ms. Barber asked for confirmation that the process being discussed would extend the LURA; Mr. Baclit stated that was correct. Ms. Barber added that the process would extend the LURA by 30 years, preserving affordable housing for seniors in the community. Mr. Baclit explained that the renovation must be significant because it's a one-time opportunity and will rely on limited cash flow for future expenses.

Mr. Roosa asked if the company could share its projected operating margins and projected bottom-line margin percentage in the company's projections.

Mr. Porcelli asked if there are management fees that tenants must pay in addition to rent. Mr. Baclit confirmed there is. Mr. Porcelli asked if the new construction and renovation would affect the insurance coverage and costs, and whether those costs would be passed on to the tenants. Mr. Baclit explained that the cost would be covered as part of the operating expenses.

Mr. Roosa asked if the Board of Supervisors (BOS) had been briefed on the project. Ms. Barber explained that an initial meeting regarding the project was presented to the County Chair, County Administrator, and that the BOS has been briefed. She suggested a work session with the BOS to present the project more casually and allow for discussion. This work session would ideally lead to approval for a public hearing, engaging the public in the process. Ms. Barber highlighted that the application to the state is due in April.

Mr. Rowley expressed support for the project.

Mr. Baclit outlined the project timeline as the application window for the project is from April 1 to April 30. Mr. Rowley asked Mr. Baclit if the EDA's regular meeting time of the second Friday in March would meet the timeline. Mr. Baclit and Mr. Graff acknowledge that it should.

Mr. Roosa asked for an evaluation of the site's current condition based on April Housing's visit. Mr. Baclit stated that the site appears to be a great community and has been well maintained. He noted that key systems, such as HVAC, are aging and nearing the end of their lifespan.

Mr. Graff discussed the project schedule, emphasizing the state's application deadline for tax-exempt bonds. Mr. Graff clarified that the public hearing is required at the EDA level but not at the BOS level, which could streamline the process. He stressed the need to coordinate with county officials. Mr. Graff explained that a special notice in the newspaper, at least seven days prior to the meeting, is required



for tax-exempt bond financing. He stated that once the EDA is ready, a public hearing will be held immediately before the decision at the same meeting.

Ms. Barber suggested that the public hearing could take place at the next EDA meeting on March 14. She mentioned the BOS work session on March 25, which would provide flexibility to discuss the details. She then outlined the possibility of addressing any final details and resolutions during the April 15 BOS meeting, potentially including a consent agenda item for ratification.

Mr. Graff stated that drafts of the EDA and BOS documentation could be circulated in advance of the work session. This would allow for modifications based on feedback without delaying the process. Mr. Graff asked for clarification on the timeline for the newspaper ad, confirming that it would need to appear by March 7, given the EDA meeting on March 14.

Ms. Barber suggested a meeting with the County Administrator to ensure the Chair and Vice Chair are aware of the upcoming actions. She recommended EDA members call their supervisors to ensure involvement and avoid any perception of circumvention.

Mr. Roosa asked Mr. Rowley if the EDA has ever held a public hearing related to the current bond process. Mr. Rowley mentioned that a public hearing was held during the hospital bond process, as well as when the bond was renegotiated after interest rates decreased. Mr. Roosa strongly recommended being fully prepared, emphasizing the importance of understanding the EDA's authority to address any questions. He highlighted the need to clearly differentiate the EDA's role from the BOS' responsibilities to avoid any perceptions of overstepping or interfering with the elected officials' duties. Mr. Graff responded that, legally, there is no issue with the EDA's authority.

Mr. Graff suggested that if there were concerns about the process, they could wait until the work session to gauge the situation. If things went well, they could consider holding a special EDA meeting after the work session but before the April 15 BOS meeting, allowing enough time to address any concerns. Mr. Roosa asked if the EDA would need to advertise every time they hold a meeting. Ms. Barber confirmed that public notice is required for each meeting. Mr. Roosa acknowledged that the timeline they are working with seems very aggressive and suggested drafting a plan to ensure all requirements are met.



Mr. Graff noted that public hearings are usually low-attended and suggested a work session before March 25, though Ms. Barber said there isn't an earlier session but would speak with County Administration about adjusting the schedule. She emphasized that the County Administrator is aware of the project. Mr. Roosa highlighted the importance of aligning with the BOS and their 2040 Strategic Plan, requesting help from attorneys to anticipate potential questions.

Ms. Barber would follow up with administration to determine next steps. She will share updates once she has more information. Mr. Graff asked about a second BOS meeting in April, and Ms. Barber explained the BOS's agenda system with "A," "B," and "C" days for different types of business. Mr. Graff emphasized the need to meet the critical end-of-April deadline but mentioned scheduling the action later in April if needed. Ms. Barber agreed to work on scheduling the meeting sooner for flexibility.

Mr. Roosa asked how the project benefits the county beyond renovations, such as potential tax revenue or alignment with the Strategic Plan. Ms. Barber explained that EDA funding aligns with both the county's and EDA's Strategic Plans, offering flexibility for incentives and programs the BOS has shown interest in. Without this funding, these programs wouldn't be feasible. Mr. Roosa suggested linking the funding benefits directly to the BOS' Strategic Plan. Ms. Barber confirmed this would be highlighted in the report, emphasizing that maintaining affordable housing supports economic development and aligns with the county's goals. Mr. Jett highlighted the potential negative impact if no action is taken, especially with the LURA expiring in 2033, which could harm seniors' affordable housing.

Ms. Barber mentioned that April Housing has limited options for bond issuance. Mr. Graff pointed out that Virginia Housing is the only alternative, but it wouldn't require consent from the EDA or the county. While rents will increase slightly post-renovation, tenants will benefit from significantly improved apartments. He stressed that without action, rents could rise to market levels after the LURA expires.

Mr. Roosa inquired about how the opportunity for the project arose. Mr. Baclit explained that the opportunity came from Blackstone's acquisition of a large affordable housing portfolio from AIG, which included properties eligible for bonds and tax credits as they aged. This is part of the LIHTC program, which supports the preservation of affordable housing.

Mr. Rowley emphasized the difficulty of scheduling a special EDA meeting due to the need for a quorum and public notice. Mr. Graff suggested checking potential dates



early to avoid the need for a special meeting. Ms. Barber planned to meet with Ms. Krauss and Mr. Ashton to discuss the calendar and estimate the number of meetings needed, aiming to have this conversation by Monday. Mr. Graff proposed waiting for the regular April EDA meeting to take official action, after informal discussions with the BOS, to avoid logistical challenges. Ms. Barber suggested the April 11 EDA meeting as a good option to allow time for BOS discussions. Mr. Roosa requested that milestones be mapped, and Ms. Barber confirmed that staff would address this next.

Mr. Roosa inquired about resident feedback on the project. Mr. Baclit shared that residents are supportive of the planned improvements, as they are happy living there and expressed support during walkthroughs. While no opposition is anticipated, town hall meetings will be held before the closing to gather further input. Ms. Barber requested that Mr. Baclit notify County Administration of any upcoming town hall meetings so they can keep supervisors informed, highlighting the importance of open communication and resident input.

### **3. PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS**

#### **a. Stafford EDA Marketing & Events Report:**

- iii. **Beer and Business:** Ms. Browne provided updates on upcoming events, noting that 78 people had registered for the February 26th Beer and Business event, with Ms. Holland as the moderator. The next Beer and Business event will be on May 14 at the new Laudenbach Brewery in Stafford. She is still seeking a sponsor for the event but expects sponsorships to come through after the February event. Mr. Rowley asked if the May 14 Beer and Business event was too close to the Business Appreciation event on May 7. Ms. Browne confirmed that the dates being close together would not be an issue.
- i. **Business Appreciation Reception:** Ms. Browne provided updates on the Business Appreciation Reception, noting 45 registrations received so far. Two out of six sponsorships have been sold, including two welcome sponsors, and a tentative title sponsor has been approached. She is also seeking a refreshment sponsor at the \$4,000 level and has secured Germanna as the entertainment sponsor. Ms. Browne requested help identifying potential leads for the refreshment sponsorship.

Ms. Browne announced that award nominations are open until March 3, with seven businesses nominated so far. She then noted that the venue for the





Business Appreciation Reception, Potomac Point Winery, will exceed the \$5,000 spending limit, and the contract for the venue was included in the packet. She requested a vote on the contract. Mr. Roosa asked for clarification on the total cost, and Ms. Browne stated it would depend on attendance but would exceed \$5,000. Ms. Barber confirmed that sponsorships will offset the event cost for the EDA. Mr. Rowley called for a motion to approve the contract with Potomac Point Winery. Mr. Roosa made the motion, seconded by Mr. Weedeman. The motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVED 6-0**

Mr. Roosa inquired about when he and Ms. Holland would be needed to evaluate award submissions. Ms. Browne confirmed she had sent out calendar invites and would verify the details. Mr. Rowley suggested that EDA members should be informed about the award winners before the event, but stressed the importance of maintaining confidentiality. Ms. Barber confirmed that EDA members would receive an email with the winners' names in advance, marked confidential. Ms. Browne added that she informs all nominees once selected, encouraging their attendance to boost participation.

- ii. **Business Cards:** Ms. Browne directed EDA members to their box of business cards and explained that the QR code on the back of the business cards directs individuals to the EDA website, where they can access information about financial programs and other relevant resources.

b. Stafford County Economic Development Report:

**Legacy Business Campaign:** Ms. Barber explained the rollout of the new Legacy Business Campaign (LBC), which was developed in response to feedback from the BOS. Initially, the program aimed to recognize businesses based on their years of operation, while also focusing on veterans, minority-owned, women-owned, and LGBTQIA businesses in line with SBA guidelines. However, recent federal changes and debates around the BOS's diversity program prompted adjustments to make the LBC more neutral. The QR code now directs to a landing page highlighting businesses' years in operation, with plans to reintroduce more specific recognitions once clearer guidelines are in place. Mr. Roosa asked for clarification, noting that the changes appeared to be influenced by federal guidelines rather than state or local ones. Ms. Barber explained that the adjustments were made due to federal pressures, particularly regarding eligibility for future federal grants. Originally designed to be inclusive, the program shifted to a more neutral stance in response to these federal discussions. The materials





(stickers and digital badges) were already prepared, but the landing page was modified to focus solely on years in business to avoid potential conflicts.

**Marketing Summit:** Ms. Barber shared the success of a Marketing Summit organized in partnership with the Tourism Department. The event, aimed at helping businesses with marketing, had 189 registrations and 134 attendees. It covered topics such as social media, branding, and data analytics, with over 100 Stafford businesses participating.

Mr. Roosa asked if there had been any follow-up or collaboration between Stafford businesses and the local marketing service providers featured in the summit. He emphasized the importance of tracking outcomes, such as businesses hiring speakers, to measure the event's success. Ms. Barber stated she encouraged attendees to connect with the speakers for future contracts, but the outcome of specific follow-ups wasn't immediately known.

Ms. Barber explained that many businesses prefer handling social media tasks themselves rather than hiring outside help. The Summit provided valuable insights on modern marketing techniques and best practices. She noted a key challenge for future events would be securing enough venue space, as demand for such events is growing. The event was free for participants and attendees remained engaged throughout. Tourism covering many expenses and Ms. Browne, who helped organize the event.

Mr. Rowley praised Ms. Barber for her excellent interview with Bill Freehling of the Fredericksburg Free Press, where she discussed important topics such as quality of life in Stafford, the factors critical to growing business, and the legacy campaign.

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

Mr. Jett requested to postpone this month's financial review due to issues with a new 36-page report format. Both he and Mr. Rowley discovered errors in the report, likely due to changes in the report generation process and a shift in accounting methods. Ms. Kasten mentioned that the format would be corrected going forward, and Mr. Jett suggested covering the review in March once the report is properly formatted.

Mr. Jett recommended consolidating the EDA's funds, which are currently spread across various accounts and CDs, into a single entity like Wells Fargo. He projected that this consolidation could generate approximately \$43,000 or more annually and notified the EDA that two CDs would mature in early March, with consolidation likely happening soon after. Mr. Rowley clarified that there is an established sign-off procedure for all financial transactions involving the movement of funds which requires joint signatures for authorization. He explained that this



ensures accountability and oversight, with signatures from him and another authorized person, either Mr. Jett or Mr. Roosa, to complete the transactions.

Mr. Roosa expressed confidence that Mr. Jett had already analyzed the numbers and determined that consolidating the funds would yield better interest than keeping them spread across multiple accounts. Mr. Jett explained that two older accounts earning 5.1% interest were maturing, and the new rates offered by Stifel ranged from 4.05% to 4.2%, while Wells Fargo offered 4.33%, slightly higher. Consolidating into one account would simplify transfers to the checking account, keeping about \$30,000 there while earning higher interest on the rest. Ms. Barber asked if Wells Fargo was the final choice for consolidation, and Mr. Jett confirmed that it was, due to their higher interest rate and convenience.

Ms. Barber suggested that it would be a good idea to have the board formally document its consensus, giving Mr. Jett the authority to proceed with the plan. Mr. Jett made a motion to consolidate EDA funds into a Wells Fargo account to manage funds out of one location for greater returns over time; Mr. Roosa seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 6-0**

## **5. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Nothing to report.

## **6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Ms. Barber explained that the BOS had approved funding for a new CRM system to manage leads and relationships more effectively. After evaluating several companies, Bludot was chosen, but it proved inefficient. Ms. Wimbush suggested switching to HubSpot, which could address the inefficiencies. Since September, the department has been working with procurement to move forward, but negotiations with HubSpot have been delayed due to legal and terms issues. Ms. Barber requested the EDA's assistance in funding the CRM, as procurement challenges have prevented finalizing the contract.

Mr. Weedeman inquired about the percentage of the cost the EDA is being asked to cover. Ms. Barber explained that the department cannot enter into an agreement with HubSpot, but the EDA has the authority to do so separately. She added that HubSpot had received all necessary county approvals except from the procurement department. Mr. Porcelli asked if Salesforce had been considered; Ms. Barber said it would be significantly more expensive.

Mr. Rowley explained that the cost of the CRM system is \$49,998 for a 36-month period, with payments made in three installments annually, each installment amounting to just over \$16,000. Mr. Roosa noted that there is an auto-renewal clause present for a cost for \$18,000 per year. Mr. Rowley expressed strong support for Liz, emphasizing that she has done everything within her power to move the project forward.



Mr. Roosa asked if the EDA would be reimbursed since the department already had funds appropriated for the CRM. Ms. Barber explained that if the CRM system cannot proceed due to procurement issues, she has the flexibility to reallocate the funds within her department's budget. However, the procurement process has stalled as HubSpot is unwilling to negotiate terms. Mr. Roosa then inquired if the EDA could recoup the money if it covered the CRM cost and suggested adding a condition to ensure reimbursement. Ms. Barber expressed uncertainty about the process but considered the possibility of requesting reimbursement from the county if the EDA covers the CRM software cost. She asked Ms. Wimbush for input, but Ms. Wimbush deferred to Vicki Sowers for clarity, suggesting the request be documented in the meeting minutes for potential reimbursement pursuit.

Mr. Rowley supported the suggestion to have the EDA cover the CRM cost but expressed concern about the purchasing department's firm stance on the matter. He cautioned that stepping in might create tension, but still believed the EDA should support the request.

Mr. Roosa was concerned about the optics of using taxpayer dollars for the CRM software, especially with the procurement process being halted. Ms. Barber expressed frustration, explaining that the issue was not with the product but with HubSpot's unwillingness to adjust its terms to meet the county's requirements. She highlighted that many Economic Development Departments across the country use HubSpot.

Mr. Porcelli asked for clarification on the specific terms and conditions causing issues to better understand the potential risks. Mr. Rowley noted that large companies, like Microsoft and Google, likely don't alter their terms, implying that HubSpot's situation was not unique. However, Mr. Roosa disagreed, stating that terms can be negotiated and amended, and emphasized the need to understand procurement's issues with HubSpot's terms.

Ms. Barber explained that the core issue with HubSpot's terms was that they are linked to other pages, which made it difficult for the legal and procurement teams to process, as they require a Word document that can be redlined. Although HubSpot provided a Word document, they still referred to the links. Procurement and legal insisted they couldn't accept it in that format. The problem arose because HubSpot regularly updates its terms and structured their document to accommodate changes. Mr. Roosa asked if the issue had been escalated, and Ms. Barber confirmed that it had been sent to HubSpot's legal team, with discussions ongoing for four months.

Mr. Porcelli suggested adding a clause to the contract stating that the terms are agreed upon as published on a specific date, to create a clear audit trail. Ms. Barber explained that this idea had been discussed, but it would only work if the product was never updated. Opting for this would mean the department would have to forgo all future updates. She emphasized that these issues



with HubSpot's terms were the only reason she was requesting assistance from the EDA. Ms. Holland proposed that IT provide alternative options, but Ms. Barber clarified that the process requires the department to identify potential programs and present them to IT for vetting. She clarified that the issue wasn't related to compatibility or security but rather the contracting challenges with HubSpot.

Ms. Barber clarified that if the answer is no, that's fine, and she doesn't want to put any pressure on anyone. She emphasized that the EDA has the authority to move forward with the decision and that it's designed to offer flexibility in purchasing processes. Mr. Rowley expressed his support for Liz and acknowledged that sometimes, despite challenges, it's necessary to move forward. Mr. Roosa recognized Ms. Barber's value and contributions but raised concerns about the precedent set by having the EDA intervene in stalled county processes. He questioned whether funding the CRM would necessitate future budget adjustments and stressed the need to understand if the EDA could be reimbursed if the county later approves the expense. Mr. Jett proposed speaking about this off the record and then returning for discussion later.

Mr. Roosa asked about the timeline for the CRM purchase. Ms. Barber explained that the department's contract with Bludot expires on April 24th but requires time to download data and transition systems. Ms. Wimbush added that Virginia's procurement laws allow rider contracts to bypass standard reviews if terms are pre-negotiated, but no rider contract exists for CRM services, making this a unique case. Mr. Rowley suggested offline discussions and revisiting the matter in April. Ms. Barber reminded the group that any discussions should be held in small groups to comply with public meeting regulations. Mr. Rowley then asked Ms. Brunette if the EDA could go into closed session.

Mr. Roosa inquired about the support included with the HubSpot subscription, as he did not see that information in the documentation. Ms. Barber explained that Convergence would handle ongoing support. They would be contracted for an initial setup fee of \$10,000 and an annual \$1,500 fee for ongoing support. Mr. Roosa expressed concerns about relying on Convergence for customizations.

Mr. Jett agreed with the concerns raised, acknowledging the positive aspects of the proposal but suggested discussion in an executive session. Mr. Rowley indicated the EDA would continue with the agenda and enter Closed Session if Ms. Brunette found it applicable. Ms. Brunette mentioned she was still researching but had not found any grounds for a Closed Session yet. Ms. Barber expressed that there was no urgency and that discussing the matter in March was acceptable; she thanked everyone for their time and consideration.



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

- a. Loan Committee: Ms. Barber provided an update from Hirschler regarding Santana Holdings, noting that the documents needed to domesticate the Virginia judgment against Santana and Juanita Bovain in Maryland had been completed. Once domesticated, they would share the case number and next steps. Ms. Brunette confirmed this was the latest update. Ms. Barber also mentioned that all other accounts were current, except for one involving Embrey Mill Urgent Care.

Mr. Rowley provided an update on a meeting with Dr. Palan of Embrey Mill Urgent Care regarding his repeated failure to meet payment deadlines on a loan. Mr. Rowley stated that Dr. Palan expressed surprise about the penalties on his loan and claimed he was never informed of these terms. Mr. Rowley advised him to either read contracts or consult an attorney when entering into agreements in the future. Mr. Rowley added that Dr. Palan committed to making the required payments for February, March, and April.

Mr. Rowley stated that if these payments were made on time, he would recommend to the EDA in May that they forgive the penalty fees, though the final decision would be up to the EDA. Ms. Barber reported that Dr. Palan hadn't made his February payment due to wire transfer issues on behalf of the lender and would owe about \$3,000 if not paid by mid-week. Ms. Holland made a motion to give Ms. Barber permission to have Hirschler send a letter of default to Embrey Mill Urgent Care if payment was not received by Wednesday; Mr. Roosa seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **APPROVED 6-0**

- b. Research Committee: Mr. Rowley shared that he and Mr. Wilson met with Denise Harrover, Chair of the Manassas EDA, on January 31. to discuss the roles of their respective EDAs. He added that Manassas' EDA manages a shopping center purchased by the city, potentially receiving a stipend from the eventual sale; the EDA controls the property but does not own it.

Mr. Rowley noted that over the years, Stafford County has transferred properties taken through tax failures to the EDA, which manages the rents and puts them on the market. He added that Ms. Harrover discussed their past use of industrial revenue bonds, including a major one for the local hospital. She expressed interest in workforce housing and promised to send more information. Mr. Rowley mentioned he had been approached by a community group about sponsoring a housing project for Stafford High School students, suggesting workforce housing might be an area for the Stafford EDA to consider. Mr. Rowley stated the meeting



with Ms. Harrover was useful in terms of relationship building and added he wanted to meet with Fredericksburg.

- c. Technology Committee: Mr. Porcelli discussed a recent meeting with Curry Roberts, of the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance, and Michael Purello, of the Rivers Regional Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, about the tech center. Mr. Porcelli stated that the center needs structure, formalization, and metrics to be effective. He added that two key outcomes from the meeting were the creation of an advisory board with Mr. Roosa and Mr. Porcelli invited to help develop a vision, and Mr. Roberts' plan to engage the Fredericksburg EDA and his board to refine the next steps for visioning and execution.

Mr. Roosa asked Ms. Barber about the pending grant and Ms. Barber shared that it was on hold and a major milestone for moving forward. She added that Mr. Roberts mentioned that they are expecting more clarity in spring, but they also have a backup plan. Ms. Barber stated that if the grant does not go through, they are considering applying for a GO Virginia grant to cover activities, with plans to apply in August.

Mr. Roosa noted that the tech center building will remain unused for now as they wait for the advisory board to be formed to contribute to its direction. Mr. Porcelli emphasized that joining the advisory board would strengthen ties with the Fredericksburg EDA and aid the Strategic Plan's development. He asked if a vote was needed to join the board, and Ms. Barber suggested waiting until formal agreements are made before deciding.

- b. Business Resource Committee: Mr. Weedeman stated that he would review the Fredericksburg EDA's Disaster Relief Resource Program, compare it with Stafford's needs, and create a proposal for the next meeting. He also highlighted that the Strategic Plan would influence this, with the Disaster Relief Plan potentially being integrated into it.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

- c. MOU: Ms. Barber provided an update on her presentation to the BOS regarding the MOU. The conversation was positive, with several members expressing excitement about the draft reaching this stage. However, the BOS requested three updates: First, they asked for a provision stating that the EDA will create incentives and programs to promote economic development as funding allows, which Ms. Barber felt solidified the EDA's role. Second, concerns were raised about potential conflicts of interest involving Mr. Payne, who represents both the EDA and land-use matters





before the BOS. While a proposed amendment to address this didn't pass, a compromise was reached that would require formal conflict-of-interest disclosures at the beginning of each EDA meeting, a practice Mr. Payne already follows informally. Finally, the BOS requested that the MOU term be shortened from five years to three. Legal counsel is currently revising the MOU to incorporate these changes, and the updated version will be reviewed by the EDA before moving forward.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS**

- a. EDA Board Training Proposal, Hickey Global: Ms. Barber presented a proposal from Hickey Global, an economic development consulting firm, to provide specialized training for the EDA. Mr. Rowley and Mr. Wilson later had a web call with the representative to explore the potential benefits of this training. Instead of holding a traditional retreat this year, the proposal suggests a one-day intensive session that would cover a range of. The aim is to give EDA members a thorough overview of economic development to enhance their knowledge and effectiveness in their roles.

Mr. Rowley explained that the proposed training from Hickey Global would cost \$9,600, which includes travel expenses. He emphasized that this would be a valuable investment for the EDA, particularly since there are four new members, ultimately enhancing the EDA's effectiveness.

Mr. Roosa inquired whether BOS members receive similar economic development training during their retreats to help them in their roles. Ms. Barber explained that the BOS hires an economist annually who provides an outlook that is broader in scope, covering national, global, and state-level trends rather than focusing specifically on Stafford. Mr. Roosa emphasized the importance of ensuring alignment and not getting ahead of the BOS.

Ms. Barber clarified that the proposed training would focus on the EDA's specific needs, including economic development, roles, protocols, and best practices. It would also help EDA members understand the difference between the EDA and an Economic Development Organization (EDO) and, while a valuable resource, not a requirement.

Mr. Rowley noted that, to his knowledge, the EDA had never done a training like this before but believes this program would be particularly valuable. He emphasized that it would provide an opportunity to ask questions and gain insights from experts with experience working with EDAs across the country. Mr. Rowley requested a motion to contract Hickey Global to conduct the training on a mutually agreeable date for a





cost of \$9,650. Mr. Jett made the motion; Mr. Roosa seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 6-0**

Mr. Jett inquired if EDA members could forward any lingering questions about their roles to Ms. Barber. This would allow the trainers to tailor the session to address specific concerns and provide more targeted guidance for the EDA members. Ms. Barber agreed with Mr. Jett's suggestion, saying it was a great idea. She states that she would follow up after the meeting with a reminder. Mr. Roosa asked about the timeline for this training; Mr. Rowley stated sometime in the Spring.

#### **10. CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Rowley asked Ms. Brunette if there was any change in the EDA's ability to go into closed session; she stated her recommendation was not to unless there were very specific legal matters to discuss with her.

#### **11. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Roosa made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Jett seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 6-0**

Meeting adjourned at 11:26 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Roosa". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "J" and "R".

Jeff Roosa,

EDA Secretary