

**THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 18, 2023 MEETING
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY
IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE
SALUDA, VIRGINIA**

Present: John Anzivino, Chairman
James Reed, Vice-Chairman
Celane Roden, Secretary
Gerald Crittenden
Joe Heyman
Hallie Holmes

Absent: William Cawthorn, Treasurer

Staff: Trenton Funkhouser, Executive Director

CALL TO ORDER

The May 18, 2023 meeting of the Economic Development Authority of Middlesex County (the “EDA”) was called to order by Chairman Anzivino at 9:30 a.m. in the Boardroom of the Historic Courthouse, Saluda, Virginia. He noted Mr. Cawthorn’s absence and stated all other members, except Mr. Heyman (who advised he would be late and arrived at 9:40) were present and a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chairman asked for any changes to the Agenda. No changes and agenda approved by acclamation as noted by Chairman.

PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS OF APPRECIATION FOR SERVICE

Gordon White and Janet Riggs were recognized for their extensive service to the EDA and Chairman Anzivino read the respective resolutions citing specific contributions by these long-time Board members. Mr. White thanked the EDA for the recognition and the resolution. Ms. Riggs likewise thanked the EDA and also thanked the members for supporting the Middlesex Water Authority with a loan two years ago.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Chairman asked if there were any additions, changes or other revisions to the minutes. Mr. Funkhouser stated a name change (Reed to Roden) in the Board Member Comments section noted by Ms. Roden would be corrected.

The minutes of the April 20, 2023 meeting were unanimously approved with the noted name change, on motion of Mr. Heyman, seconded by Ms. Roden.

TOURISM/MARKETING REPORT

Ms. Whitney Law reviewed the May 6th job fair and reviewed a comparison of the two travel planning applications – Visit Widget and Waterway Guide - identified to-date as having the desired capabilities, features, information/data and “reasonable budget” (acquisition and maintenance costs) consistent with the VA ARPA funding from VA Tourism Corporation. Following general discussion of the comparisons relative to costs, the Chairman referred this matter to the Tourism Committee for discussion and a recommendation to the Director/EDA stressing the need to answer outstanding procurement questions and spending funds wisely. Ms. Law also noted a need to schedule future meetings with the Tourism Committee and other EDA Committees to help define an on-going work program and task priorities for tourism promotion and general EDA communications strategies.

Ms. Roden noted discussions with the Director about attendance at the weekly phone meetings between the Director and Ms. Law and the bi-weekly Virginia’s River Realm Team meetings. Ms. Roden and Mr. Heyman agreed this was a good idea.

Mr. Anzivino thought job fair was well done. He asked if there were any hires and Ms. Law noted one for Haynesville Correctional Facility. Ms. Law indicated there was good employer feedback despite the relatively light attendance by prospective employees. Ms. Law noted there may be a desire/need for quarterly job fairs at different dates/times of year and perhaps a focus on specific industries.

Mr. Anzivino asked about the apparent lack of Middlesex Instagram posts relative to Lancaster posts in Virginia’s River Realm. Ms. Law noted her similar observations and how VRR Team was working to redirect efforts of its social media consultant to better cover/amplify Middlesex businesses and events. She noted ad campaigns would not typically be seen by people “in Market” (in Middlesex) but are running regularly. There was a general discussion among EDA members, Ms. Law and the Director regarding how to better establish mutual assistance and information sharing so EDA and VRR can promote content provided from Middlesex as interested parties are able to do so and likewise ensure businesses and event organizers know what services can be provided by each.

Board members discussed Short-Term Rental advantages and disadvantages, the County’s recently adopted ordinance requiring registration of these uses and how this type of lodging was important to Middlesex tourism. Mr. Anzivino advised the Director to add this topic to the next BOS/EDA Steering Committee meeting for consideration of press releases or other information/publicity regarding the benefits of Short-Term Rentals, the Transient Occupancy Tax revenue and other information highlighting the importance of this aspect of the Middlesex economy.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Mr. Funkhouser noted the monthly summary of Savings, CDs and Checking Account information for April. Mr. Funkhouser summarized the Treasurer’s recommendations to 1) Transfer all funds

from the three Checking/Other accounts to the Checking account, 2) Establish two CD's in May up to \$60,000 each with terms less than 24 months and 3) Establish one CD in June up to \$60,000 with a term less than 24 months.

He noted receipt of 2nd and 3rd Quarter Transient Occupancy Tax revenue check from County and receipt of \$47,000 check from County for its FY 22-23 contribution to the EDA noting, for unknown reasons, such contribution was listed as \$18,000 in the EDA's budget.

Upon motion by Mr. Heyman, seconded by Mr. Reed, the Treasurer was authorized, by unanimous vote, to proceed with the three noted recommendations.

OLD BUSINESS

A. FY 23-24 Budget – Mr. Anzivino noted his appreciation for budget information provided to the EDA and asked the Director to review the final proposal. Mr. Funkhouser reviewed the declining bond revenue and positive trend of the EDA's portion of the Transient Occupancy Tax due to general growth, the County's recent adoption of an ordinance requiring registration of this type of lodging and the potential/planned re-development of the "Boy Scout" camp. He noted FY 24-25 one-time revenue representing loan repayment by the Middlesex Water Authority. He reviewed expenditures, modifications to same relative to FY 22-23 Budget and the addition of budget notes/definitions to help clarify various line-item expenditures. He noted future budget amendments would be necessary once future decisions were made on projects such as the Travel Planning application, grants and other initiatives.

Mr. Anzivino asked for any questions or comments on the "good information" provided to date. He indicated Revenues were basically "a given" and seemed appropriate. Ms. Roden thought information was good and she had no questions. Mr. Anzivino noted part-time position was discussed at the Steering Committee and asked for status on any progress towards filling such position. Mr. Funkhouser stated a need to have some administrative services support and possibly sharing a full-time employee with the Middlesex Water Authority. Mr. Anzivino noted a need to have an administrative support person to handle routine matters such as agendas, minutes, web page updates, minor accounting and similar tasks.

Mr. Anzivino asked about budget request for VRR and Mr. Funkhouser noted need to provide VRR Annual Report at a future EDA meeting and that VRR does not submit a budget request per se but does submit an invoice for annual dues. Ms. Roden reviewed some of the VRR budget history and a need to ensure mutually agreed expectations and services provided by VRR.

Mr. Heyman asked if certain expenditure line items could be "tightened" to reflect actual planned expenditures versus "placeholders" (estimates). He suggested an [operating] "reserve" fund be established within the proposed budget to use as a pre-identified revenue source for any future budget amendments.

Mr. Heyman, Ms. Roden and other members discussed types of expenditures associated with Hospitality versus Programs/Initiatives, or Grants line items.

Mr. Anzivino asked Board members to provide, to the Director, any comments on proposed budget by the end of May and thanked the Director and Board members for their work to-date on this topic.

B. Grant Guidelines/Policy – The Director noted the draft revisions to a proposed application, review guidelines and reporting form for the purposes of an EDA grant program typically focused on sponsorship, in part, for events. Mr. Funkhouser requested this matter be referred to the Tourism Committee to review, revise and recommend next steps to the EDA.

Mr. Heyman noted the documents were a great basis to assist the EDA in making decisions on what to fund or not, at what level and why. Board members generally discussed various aspects of the forms and past, present and possible future sponsorship activities consistent with the EDA's Strategic Plan.

Mr. Anzivino referred this subject to EDA members to consider revisions to the current draft and advise the Director accordingly.

Ms. Roden noted if EDA supports an event it should be recognized through publicity and signage on site at event. Mr. Funkhouser also noted the need to compile a list of proposed expenditures for banners and other publicity/presentation materials for EDA participation as a sponsor or “vendor” (participant).

NEW BUSINESS

A. County Land Parcel Web Resources Review – Mr. Funkhouser reviewed the basic information/capabilities of the County GIS Mapping application and property records of the Commission of the Revenue on the County's web site.

Mr. Anzivino asked about progress on a river beach access site and Marine I-Park site(s). Mr. Funkhouser noted a recent site visit scheduled by the County Administrator to review a potential beach site. He reviewed points of a conversation with owner of a privately-owned Marina site and owners stated preference of a possible lease of the site to an existing business in County rather than a sale. Mr. Anzivino expressed significant concern with the lack of progress on pursuing an option or purchase of a suitable site. The Director noted he would follow up with owner regarding status of availability of property. Mr. Anzivino asked if the County should be taking more of lead on this project as it has been discussed for over a year. The Director noted he would have County Administrator contact the Chair to discuss next steps/options to move forward or move in a different direction on an alternative site or project.

REPORTS/INFORMATION

A. BOS/EDA Steering Committee – Mr. Anzivino reviewed discussions at the May 4th meeting – general implementation of Strategic Plan, reviewed meeting with the Executive Director and Mathews EDA Chairman in Mathews to continue discussions of possible partnership to develop a regional Marine Industrial/Commerce Park and/or using a portion (30+/- acres) of County-owned property adjacent to Hummel Field for joint venture to support aviation or non-

aviation industries site development. He noted certain grant/loan advantages for regional parks/partnerships. He summarized job fair and tourism promotion and other work of the committees.

B. Committee Reports – Mr. Anzivino asked for comments from Committee members. Mr. Funkhouser noted some initial meetings and work with most committee members and the need to follow up to ensure initial information is provided for considering various work priorities.

Ms. Roden noted attendance at the May 1st MSX VA250 committee meeting and encouraging involvement of the arts community as part of historic exhibits, programs and otherwise using the skills and talents of people to support local VA250 committee work. She noted conversations with Director regarding tourism and workforce programs and her initial notes on both committee topics.

Mr. Reed noted a need to identify right (target) industries to better recruit employees and businesses.

Mr. Crittenden noted some general conversations with some farm/property owners regarding, perhaps, a reluctance to request assistance or identify specific efforts the EDA could assist with other than employees generally as well as specific trades needed. He also indicated he believed such owners would reach out to the EDA if they needed specific assistance. Ms. Roden expressed a need for information on farms and products. Mr. Crittenden noted a need to work with the local Cooperative Extension Service agent (as able to do). There was general discussion of various efforts to work on publicizing these industries and their contribution to the County's economy and determining if there are opportunities to work with local schools on workforce development for these industries through clubs, internships and other work experience exposure.

Mr. Anzivino noted his review of the County Business License list, initial draft of a Business Visitation form and a list of initial businesses to schedule visits.

He also noted new VEDP liaison, Stephen Versen, is invited to June 15th EDA meeting for general introduction and discussion.

The Director indicated no specific updates for Sites/Prospects but did note the need to have much better information on existing and proposed water and sewer lines as well as any fiber/wireless facilities and electrical service.

C. Executive Director – Mr. Funkhouser noted he had no additional comments.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

The Chairman recognized Mr. Greg Grichtmeier, web consultant for Middlesex Museum and Museums of Middlesex. He reviewed some efforts to promote community event publicity and other interaction on a Discord platform and the need to better coordinate business and event publicity to amplify and social media promoting the County.

Mr. Anzivino noted GO Virginia grants regarding climate change/sea level rise citing an alternative sewage treatment system entrepreneur a business intending to use dredge spoils to make concrete blocks, an aquatic business intending to accelerate growth of “living shoreline” plants and a cooperative effort with Stafford and Westmoreland County to conduct several local entrepreneurial workshops.

He noted the VEDA Cardinal Program and other relatively low-cost efforts to promote economic development programs. He would like to pursue participation as an “action item” at the EDA’s June 15th meeting.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Anzivino expressed his appreciation to Board members for work performed on committees, agenda items and the general transition of the EDA to more of a “working” Board.

Mr. Reed noted the need to avoid “silos” and work more with students and youth to promote certain career options and encourage business development and employment in Middlesex as much as possible.

Mr. Crittenden noted the immigrant population is larger than county “natives”, the benefits of this change and how it presents good opportunities for the future.

Ms. Holmes noted her attendance at the May Job Fair and how the prospective employers were very interesting and she wished she had some of those opportunities. She expressed hope for future job fairs and success in helping folks find jobs in County.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m. upon unanimous vote following motion by Mr. Reed, seconded by Ms. Holmes.

John Anzivino, Chairman
Middlesex County Economic Development Authority

Celane Roden, Secretary
Middlesex County Economic Development Authority