

AGENDA
Page County Economic Development Authority
Monday, October 23, 2023 – 5:30 pm

Call to Order

Introduction of Members and Guests

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Treasurer's Report

Old Business

1. Farming/Agriculture subcommittee
2. Housing Subcommittee
3. EDA Goals

New Business

Page County ED Dept. Updates

Comments by the Public

Comments by the Members

Adjourn

**PAGE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA) MINUTES
Regular Meeting • 5:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 25, 2023
Government Center • 103 S. Court St. • Luray, VA**

The Economic Development Authority of the County of Page, Virginia conducted its regular monthly meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 25, 2023, in the Board of Supervisors' Room of the Page County Government Center in Luray.

EDA MEMBERS PRESENT

Missie Deibert, Chairperson (District 2)
Jackie Fox Wood (District 1)
Sara Levinson (District 3)
Bart Price (District 4)
Leslie Curre (Town of Luray)

STAFF PRESENT

Nina Fox, Director of Economic Development and Tourism
Rebecca Armstrong, Communications and Marketing Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT

Chris Anderson, Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, Page & Warren County Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Chairwoman Deibert.

INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Deibert welcomed Page County resident and Page and Warren County Coordinator for the Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley Chris Anderson to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

EDA members by consensus adopted the Sept. 25 agenda with an amendment that a discussion about guidelines for the Mixed Use on Main Street program be added to the agenda under "new business."

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

EDA members by consensus approved the meeting minutes of Aug. 28, 2023.

TREASURER'S REPORT

EDA members reviewed September's financial report, prepared by treasurer and District 3 member Levinson. Chairwoman Deibert noted that fiscal 2023 reports would be filed for audit.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Farming/agriculture subcommittee** — Fox reported that Rep. Ben Cline recently visited Page County for a community lunch, attended by EDA members Fleming and Price. She reported that Cline said he'd read the feasibility study for a meat processing facility in Page County and offered his assistance if needed. Fox noted that she and Armstrong in September attended a two-day event by the Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations in Winchester focused on agritourism that included site visits to five farms. Noting a potential government shutdown, she reported that she wrote a letter to Rep. Cline on behalf of the residents of Page County in support of federal workers who reside in Page, as well as Shenandoah National Park/Delaware North employees. The letter, she added, underscored the significance of Transient Occupancy Tax revenue and visitor spending generated by SNP visitors during Page County's peak fall season.
2. **Housing subcommittee** — Fox noted the EDA's decision in August to unlist the EDA-owned property off Good Rich Road and pursue funding through Virginia Housing that, if approved, would provide a feasibility study as well as due diligence and a development plan for the land geared toward workforce housing. She reported that the grant process includes a total of five applications that collectively would contribute \$100,000 for the study. Fox noted that the application timeline is "open-ended" and estimated that the application process, including a request for proposals, would take about six months.
3. **EDA goals** — Chairwoman Deibert noted that draft copies of a list of EDA goals were distributed by Fox during the group's August meeting and reminded members to email Fox any notes or suggested changes before the October meeting. She noted that the EDA does not create an economic development plan for the county and that the goals serve as a broader list of goals and directions for the EDA.

NEW BUSINESS

EDA members reviewed grant guidelines for the Mixed Use on Main Street (MUMS) program. The grants support the activation of vacant or underutilized downtown spaces to create opportunities for commercial development and housing units in state-designated Main Street districts. The one-time allocations are funded through an Industrial Revitalization Fund allocation of American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

District 3 EDA member Levinson reported that she learned about the program through District 1 member and Luray Downtown Initiative Program Manager Jackie Wood before calling to find out more about the program to potentially help fund the renovation/rehabilitation of blighted buildings in Downtown Luray. She added that organizations like EDAs may apply for the grant to fund low-interest loans to borrowers for approved projects. She noted that she was willing to facilitate the application process for a Main Street Luray business through her role with the Small Business

Development Center. She added that a pre-application process requires a one-page submission.

Currle **moved** that the EDA approve the pre-application process required by the MUMS program, seconded by Price. The motion unanimously carried.

PAGE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Fox reported that, in response to recent conversations regarding workforce housing, she is working with the county's community planner to take the lead with the towns of Stanley and Shenandoah to identify future growth tiers. She noted that she is working with Jay Langston of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership to schedule roundtables with various manufacturers in the region. Fox said that she recently attended a housing tour in Augusta County focused on manufactured homes and identified a goal to help educate the community about the differences between workforce housing and affordable housing. Fox reported that tourism marketing efforts continue and that an upcoming tourism industry partner newsletter was delayed until lawmakers reach a decision regarding a potential government shutdown.

COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Anderson told EDA members that she "shared anxiety" about the possibility of Shenandoah National Park shuttering due to a government shutdown. She inquired about work underway in the space next to Virginia Gift Shop on Main Street in Downtown Luray. Wood reported that it is set to be an event space for supper clubs, receptions and other special celebrations and events.

COMMENTS BY THE MEMBERS

Levinson asked Wood for an update regarding business on Main Street. Wood reported that merchants are reporting that they are "doing well" and have observed increased foot traffic. She noted that The Chop House Bistro is slated for an early-October opening.

Wood added that she feels that the EDA is "doing a good job." Chairwoman Deibert said she enjoys being part of the group.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 6:18 p.m.

DRAFT