

**PAGE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (EDA) MINUTES
Special Meeting • 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023
Government Center • 103 S. Court St. • Luray, VA**

The Economic Development Authority of the County of Page, Virginia met for a special meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023 in the Supervisors' Room of the Page County Government Center in Luray.

EDA MEMBERS PRESENT

Missie Deibert, Chairperson (District 2)
Sara Levinson (District 3)
Bart Price (District 4)
Dennis Fleming (At-Large)
Meredith Dees (Town of Luray)
Jonathan Comer (Town of Shenandoah)

STAFF PRESENT

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

OTHERS PRESENT

Jeff Noland, Equatorial Equity Capital Partners, LLC
Jared Burner, Page County Agriculture Subcommittee member
Taylor Alger and Amanda Presgraves, AFID grant consultants
Page County Supervisor Mark Stroupe (District 3)
Page County Supervisor Jeff Vaughan (District 5)
J.D. Cave, Page County Tourism Council (At-Large)
Courtney Nelson, Daughter of the Stars Farmers Market
Chris Anderson, Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, Page and Warren Coordinator
Linzy Cumbia, L.M. Lawler Farm

Page County GIS Coordinator Josh Hahn and Page County Agriculture Subcommittee member Reyn Archer joined the meeting virtually via Zoom. The special meeting was also attended by several community members.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Missie Deibert, who noted that the special called meeting was for the sole purpose of the presentation of a feasibility study and that no other business was on the agenda. Deibert welcomed guests and gave special thanks to the Page County Agriculture Subcommittee, which includes EDA members Dennis Fleming and Bart Price as well as community members Jared Burner and Reyn Archer, with support from Page County Director of Economic Development and Tourism Nina Fox and Page County GIS Coordinator Josh Hahn.

Deibert noted that a need for a feasibility study was identified after Page was one of three counties selected to receive the Governor's Agriculture and Forest Industries Development (AFID) Fund Planning Grant program in February 2021 to support local agriculture initiatives. Deibert told meeting attendees that the grant was secured by former Page County Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator Liz Lewis, with support from current EDA member Sara Levinson of the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center.

The \$12,000 AFID Planning Grant was awarded to support Page County's Fresh Food Project to connect local farmers with consumers and tourists with the goal of strengthening the region's food system. The project was funded with the specific goal of building on the GO Virginia-funded Agriculture Enterprise Center Feasibility Study in Region 8 by identifying ways to establish a supply chain for locally-grown foods.

During community discussions as a result of the grant, said Deibert, the EDA formed an ag subcommittee and identified and prioritized a need for a meat processing feasibility study. The study, continued Deibert, was funded by the EDA and supported by the work of the Page County Agriculture Subcommittee of the EDA.

PRESENTATION OF FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR PAGE VALLEY FOODS PROJECT

Jeff Noland of Equatorial Equity Capital Partners, LLC led a meat processing facility feasibility presentation via PowerPoint. The presentation served as an overview of the EDA-commissioned Feasibility Study for the Page Valley Foods Project. The final draft of the study was completed by Equatorial Equity Capital Partners, LLC in early February 2023. The nearly hour-long presentation was followed by a roundtable-style discussion between community, EDA and ag subcommittee members and county staff.

The final draft of the Feasibility Study for the Page Valley Foods Project is available on the county's website at: <http://www.pagecounty.virginia.gov/DocumentCenter/View/3195/Feasibility-Study---Page-Valley-Foods-Project>.

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