

**THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 20, 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
William Cawthorn, Treasurer
Celane Roden, Secretary
Gerald Crittenden
Joe Heyman

Absent: Hallie Holmes

Staff: Trenton Funkhouser, Executive Director

CALL TO ORDER

The July 20, 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 Ms. Holmes’ absence as a previously announced medical appointment and stated all other members were present and a quorum was present. He also noted Board of Supervisors Chairman Lud Kimbrough was present and thanked him for attending the meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Director requested deferral of action on the minutes of the June 15, 2023 meeting as they were not completed to-date due to a recording malfunction and busy schedule of Director.

TOURISM/MARKETING REPORT

Ms. Whitney Law reviewed pending reimbursement requests from VTC for business leveraging and destination marketing and presented and reviewed a summary of upcoming VTC grant application rounds for Fall and Spring. She noted the Virginia’s River Realm (VRR) focus ads running for Topping and Saluda through primary internet markets in Richmond and D.C., the work on VRR Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) reports, the continued focus on integrating and better coordinating social media work and advertising and publicity for VRR region events and initial work to build a revised business directory and contact database for tourism and economic development work in support of the EDA and Middlesex County’s interest in VRR.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Funkhouser noted the monthly summary of Savings, CDs and Checking Account information for June and actions to 1) Close Checking (Other) accounts and transfer all funds from the three Checking/Other accounts to the Primary Checking account, 2) Establish one CD at C&F Bank in the amount of \$60,000 with an 11-Month term maturing 05/08/24 and 3) Pay Payroll Expenses to County for FY 22-23.

Mr. Anzivino noted he would like to see more detailed and regular information, provided at least quarterly, on monthly liabilities such as payroll and other accounts payable/receivable items.

Upon motion by Mr. Heyman, seconded by Ms. Roden, the EDA unanimously approved the Treasurer's Report.

OLD BUSINESS

A. None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Part-Time Employee – The Director reviewed the recruitment process to-date for shared full-time position with the Middlesex Water Authority (MWA) referencing a memo in the meeting agenda package. Over 20 applications to-date and interview team (MWA Executive Director, EDA Executive Director and Assistant County Administrator) is reviewing/screening applicants. Following discussion of the Director's memo, on motion by Ms. Roden, seconded by Mr. Reed, the EDA voted unanimously to authorize the Director to proceed with work of interview team to select an appropriate candidate and offer the candidate up to \$35,000 per year.

B. Governor's Blue Catfish Industries Development Fund – Resolution #2023-04. The Chairman referenced Delegate Hodges recent attendance at an Urbanna Town Council meeting where he noted the proposed fund and dedicated funding for interested localities. He noted Delegate Hodge's comments and several articles regarding the invasive nature of blue catfish, their adverse impacts on recreational and commercial fisheries industries and the potential food market for catfish domestically and for export. Future grant fund program will likely provide dedicated funding for the development of "Flash-Freeze" facilities and larger sums on a competitive basis depending on amount of site investment and number of jobs created.

EDA members discussed a proposed resolution thanking Senator Richard Stuart and Delegate Keith Hodges for successful work on legislation to create the Fund and expressing interest in pursuing future applications for funding once a "State Budget" is approved ("new" items in 2nd part of two-year budget). The EDA approved an amended resolution, by unanimous vote following motion of Ms. Roden, seconded by Mr. Crittenden, adding, where appropriate in draft resolution, the statement, "Middlesex County has existing and potential processing businesses available to pursue any needed expansion to handle Blue Catfish processing".

REPORTS/INFORMATION

A. BOS/EDA Steering Committee – Mr. Anzivino reviewed discussions at the July 13 meeting with an emphasis on need to move forward in defining and pursuing possible joint ventures with the Mathews County EDA, determining whether Data Centers are viable development options at Harmony Village or other areas of County and considering whether Habitat for Humanity and similar groups could help with workforce housing demands using a single-family detached housing model rather than pursuing large multi-family projects (e.g. renovate existing dilapidated buildings and build new homes on smaller vacant lots). At the meeting, Mr. Reed also discussed getting “building trades back on track” in schools and positive signs he has seen in this regard and the need to have a program highlighting young professionals to share success stories for students regarding occupational opportunities in Middlesex and the region.

B. Committee Reports – Mr. Anzivino asked for comments from Committee members. Various members cited recent events attended and other activities in the county and ideas for working more with schools on topics such as workforce development. Mr. Crittenden noted the return of the Deltaville Community Association fireworks but also lamented the \$15,000 cost. The Director noted there were several office phone calls and email interest in information on fireworks conducted throughout the region and all events seemed to be well-attended. Several members and the Director noted the successful Juneteenth event. Ms. Law reminded the group she is interested in scheduling meetings with various committees to discuss how she and her team can try to define and establish task and support priorities for the EDA. Mr. Reed reiterated the schools have re-started some building trade classes. Mr. Crittenden agreed the school efforts were a positive sign and indicated the EDA should somehow support efforts to re-establish or improve upon existing activities and relationships in schools such as Future Farmers of America (FAA), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and regular educational visits on occupations and employment options by groups such as the Farm Bureau and VA Cooperative Extension Service.

C. Executive Director – Mr. Funkhouser referenced the June/July Director’s Report in agenda package and provided no additional comments.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS

Mr. Anzivino referenced the Mathews County Board of Supervisor resolution in the meeting agenda package noting the governing body’s support for the Mathews County EDA to participate in possible joint projects.

He also noted the future Career Works presentation by JoAnn Murchison, Business Services Manager for the Virginia Career Works Bay Consortium Region, at the EDA’s August 17th meeting and the need to have 1-2 EDA members participate on a workforce development committee coordinated by Ms. Murchison.

He noted previous meeting discussions and a memo in the meeting agenda package regarding annual evaluation of the Executive Director. He asked for two EDA members to work with him on determining specific process/steps and preparing an initial evaluation for EDA participation and discussion. Mr. Cawthorn stated he would work with Chairman and, in the absence of other

stated interest/ability, the Chairman indicated Ms. Roden would be a good member to assist with task and he would contact her to request participation.

The Chairman asked the Director to add the following item to the August 17th meeting agenda – Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance Issues/Amendment Options.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Roden stated a need for printed information on crops and other agricultural products grown in Middlesex County. She also noted the recent closing of a bakery and the need for more information on closings and, hopefully, grand opening announcements.

Mr. Heyman stated a need for business/employee readiness and assistance with a possible emphasis on workforce housing encouraged by updating multi-family housing densities in County Codes now that water and sewer service is in place or planned for near future in various areas.

Mr. Reed reminded the group the County still has a lot to do to promote better race relations and create an encouraging business climate for minority owners/operators and generally a need to “do better”.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 p.m. by acclimation of members.

John Anzivino, Chairman
Middlesex County Economic Development Authority

Celane Roden, Secretary
Middlesex County Economic Development Authority