

**Town of Wise Economic Development Authority**  
**Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023**  
**6:00 PM – 501 West Main Street**  
**Wise, Virginia 24293**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jennifer Sturgill-Mullins, Chairman  
Cory Dotson, Vice-Chairman  
Valerie Lawson, Treasurer  
Bill Thompson  
Bonnie Aker  
Brandi Cox  
Rachel Helton

**TOWN STAFF PRESENT:**

Reagan Walsh, Secretary

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**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Reagan Walsh, town planner/zoning administrator, called the meeting to order and called roll.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Walsh called the roll. It was determined that a quorum was present.

**3. NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS:**

3.1. Chairman:

Walsh opened the floor for nominations for Chairman. Director Lawson made a motion to nominate and elect Jennifer Sturgill-Mullins as Chairman to serve until 7/31/24 with a second by Director Dotson. The motion carried 7-0. The oath of office was administered by Walsh, and Chairman Sturgill-Mullins presided over the meeting.

3.2. Vice-Chairman:

Chairman Sturgill-Mullins opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Chairman. Director Lawson made a motion to nominate and elect Cory Dotson as Vice-Chairman to serve until 7/31/24 with a second by Director Cox. The motion carried 7-0. The oath of office was administered by Chairman Sturgill-Mullins.

3.3. Treasurer:

Chairman Sturgill-Mullins opened the floor for nominations for Treasurer. Director Thompson made a motion to nominate and elect Valerie Lawson as Treasurer until 7/31/24 with a second by Director Helton. The motion carried 7-0. The oath of office was administered by Chairman Sturgill-Mullins.

**4. APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY:**

Chairman Sturgill-Mullins opened the floor for suggestions for the appointment of a secretary. Director Thompson made a motion to appoint Reagan Walsh, town planner/zoning administrator, as secretary to serve until 7/31/24 with a second by Director Helton. The motion carried 7-0.

**5. ESTABLISHMENT OF DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS:**

The directors discussed various options for meeting dates, and all agreed on the second Thursday of each month at 6pm in the council chambers at the Wise Municipal Building. Treasurer Lawson made a motion to approve this with a second by Director Helton. The motion carried 7-0.

**6. ADOPTION OF THE BY-LAWS:**

Director Cox made a motion to approve and adopt the by-laws as presented with a second by Director Helton. The motion carried 7-0.

**7. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Director Cox made a motion to approve the August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting minutes with a second by Director Helton. The motion carried 7-0.

**8. PUBLIC EXPRESSION:**

No one from the public was present for public expression.

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

9.1. Community Business Launch Program Update:

Secretary Walsh gave an update on the Town of Wise Community Business Launch. The directors discussed ideas on implementing a Community Business Launch program designed and administered by the TOWEDA in the future as opposed to outsourcing. Director Cox discussed her experience with running a CBL program as well as her recommendations on running a successful program.

9.2. Billboard Discussion:

Secretary Walsh explained that town staff have discussed a community business billboard program as a potential project for the TOWEDA. The purpose would be to provide billboard space where business owners could advertise their business for a share of the cost. Director Aker gave a brief history of the Wise Business Association's efforts on advertising and what they have done in the past with billboards. Secretary Walsh also mentioned that she had been approached by the WBA to see if the TOWEDA would be willing to partner with them on a current billboard project. The WBA requested \$200.00 from the EDA to cover the cost of the header for the billboard. Director Aker made a motion to approve the request for \$200.00 to support the WBA's billboard with a second by Treasurer Lawson. The motion carried 7-0.

9.3. Façade Improvement Program Discussion:

Secretary Walsh explained that town staff have been looking for incentives for new businesses opening in Wise as well as ways to support existing businesses. One of the programs mentioned was a Façade Improvement Program to provide grant funds for aesthetic improvements. Secretary Walsh suggested that a Façade improvement Program be developed that outlines the requirements, terms, and conditions. Director Helton recommended that a committee be formed to develop this program with hopes of having a draft Façade Improvement Program ready to be presented at the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, TOWEDA meeting.

**10. NEW BUSINESS:**

10.1. Tadler Fellowship:

Secretary Walsh explained the Tadler Fellowship and that the two students assigned to the Town of Wise will be reaching out to each director to interview them.

10.2. VEDP Economic Development 101:

Secretary Walsh provided information on two training sessions held by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership that may be of interest to the directors.

**11. MATTERS FROM THE DIRECTORS:**

The directors discussed a variety of topics including questions on the vacant property next to the courthouse, the empty business space in The Inn at Wise, and the Harris Gallery Show.

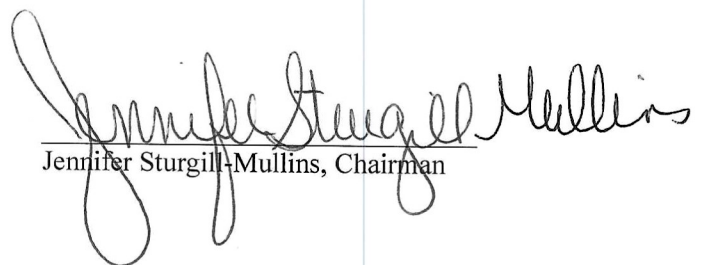
**12. MATTERS FROM STAFF:**

Secretary Walsh stated that if any directors had any questions on the items listed in the Department of Planning and Zoning Monthly Report, to reach out to her. She will be including this report each month to keep the directors informed on projects around town.

**13. ADJOURNMENT:**

After staff comment, no other topics were brought up for discussion and the meeting was adjourned.

  
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Reagan Walsh, Secretary

  
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Jennifer Sturgill-Mullins, Chairman