

**Town of Wise Economic Development Authority**  
**Thursday, January 11, 2024**  
**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

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Jean Jordan, VCEDA  
Charlotte Mullins, VCEDA

**TOWN STAFF PRESENT:**

Reagan Walsh, Secretary

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**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chairman Jennifer Sturgill-Mullins called the meeting to order.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

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

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

Director Dotson made a motion to approve the November 9, 2023, meeting minutes with a second by Director Lawson. The motion carried 7-0.

**4. PUBLIC EXPRESSION:**

No one from the public was present for public expression.

**5. VCEDA PRESENTATION:**

Jean Jordan provided the TOWEDA with an overview presentation on the Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority. After the presentation, Ms. Jordan fielded various questions from the TOWEDA directors. The directors thanked Ms. Jordan for her presentation and for the work she and VCEDA do for our region. Director Aker advised that she had to leave early and thanked Ms. Jordan again for her presentation.

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**6.1. Community Business Launch Program Update:**

Secretary Walsh gave an update on the Town of Wise Community Business Launch. She stated that there are currently eight participants registered for the program. Director Dotson recommended that we continue to push this program to get more participants registered. He requested that Secretary Walsh forward him a copy of a program flyer for him to distribute.

6.2. Façade Improvement Program Discussion:

Secretary Walsh provided an update on the work that she and directors Helton and Cox had completed (see attached memorandum). The directors discussed the town's current branding and wayfinding signage project and the role the TOWEDA should play with a façade improvement program. Director Thompson recommended that the program should be administered by the town's Virginia Main Street Program so that the TOWEDA could focus on other projects.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

7.1. Economic Development Strategic Plan Discussion:

Secretary Walsh gave a brief overview of the efforts the Town of Wise has made over the last year in moving forward with some of the goals and objectives outlined in the Economic Development Strategic Plan. Secretary Walsh then asked the directors to discuss their individual visions for the town and what they feel the priorities should be for the next year. Director Helton brought up the lack of housing in our area and how that is negatively impacting economic growth. Director Dotson agreed and stated that he had attended several meetings on housing in the past and there is currently no known solution. He explained issues that he has observed with housing such as the cost to build compared to how property in Wise County is being appraised. Director Lawson commented on the housing issue that UVA Wise is facing. She stated that housing on campus is full as well as the adjacent property, Walk2Campus. Director Helton mentioned that she met with Thomas Kennedy and that he may be interested in selling Cavalier Housing as well as the adjacent property between Cavalier Housing and Laurel Hills Subdivision in the near future.

8. MATTERS FROM THE DIRECTORS:

The directors discussed a revolving loan fund. Charlotte Mullins with VCEDA recommended that the directors look at funding from USDA's Rural Development program.

9. MATTERS FROM STAFF:

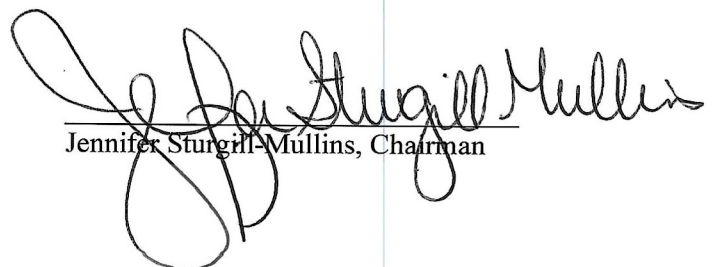
Secretary Walsh reminded that if any directors had any questions on the items listed in the Department of Planning and Zoning Monthly Report, to reach out to her.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

After staff comment, no other topics were brought up for discussion. Director Lawson made a motion to adjourn the meeting with a second by Director Dotson.



Reagan Walsh, Secretary



Jennifer Sturgill-Mullins, Chairman