

Town of Wise Economic Development Authority
Thursday, November 9th, 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

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. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the Authority's regular meeting held on Thursday, September 28th, 2023, were reviewed by the directors. Treasurer Lawson pointed out a few discrepancies regarding formatting and the recording of votes in the minutes. Secretary Walsh explained that the audio recording had failed and that she did not have any other documentation to record the votes accurately. The directors worked together to recall the votes to amend the meeting minutes to accurately reflect what took place at the previous meeting. Director Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes with the added amendments, with a second by Director Lawson. The motion carried 7-0.

4. PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

No one was present for public expression. Chairman Sturgill-Mullins dispensed with public expression.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.1. Community Business Launch Program Update:

Secretary Walsh provided the Authority with an update on the Town of Wise Community Business Launch (see attached memorandum). Director Dotson stated that we need to get a lot of people involved and really promote this program. After much discussion on the details of the Community Business Launch and methods of advertising, Secretary Walsh stated that she would provide the directors more detailed information via email and asked that the directors help share social media posts about the program.

5.2. Billboard Discussion:

Director Aker led a discussion on how the EDA could use billboards to assist businesses in Wise with advertising costs. She provided two handouts to the directors with a breakdown of the costs and an example billboard created

by the Wise Business Association. Director Dotson stated that he felt that this is a good idea. Director Helton pointed out that during her previous work with using billboards for advertisement, that US-58 had some of the highest traffic counts in Wise County and that we should consider locating a billboard in that area to collect views from those traveling from Abingdon and the Tri-Cities area. Secretary Walsh suggested that she and Director Aker work together to create a program for the use of billboards for joint advertising to be implemented next year.

5.3. Façade Improvement Program Discussion:

Secretary Walsh gave an update on the drafting of a Façade Improvement Program. She explained that Directors Helton and Cox had reviewed programs from other localities in Virginia and discussed what they thought would work for the businesses in the Town of Wise. Director Helton put together a draft and submitted it to Secretary Walsh and the Town Manager, Laura Roberts, for review. Secretary Walsh explained that in the meeting packets was a copy that compiled her and Mrs. Roberts' comments. She also explained that there were a few more things to change but would like the directors to review the document and submit to her any changes they felt were necessary. Director Helton explained that the biggest blank is figuring out the financing. The directors discussed what amount the grant should be as well as the total amount that should be set aside for the whole program. It was recommended to consider having grants be between \$5,000 to \$10,000 due to the increasing costs for supplies and labor. Secretary Walsh advised the directors that she would finalize comments from town staff and send them a copy via email to review. Chairman Sturgill-Mullins recommended that the directors review the document once it is sent and to provide their comments to Secretary Walsh by December 1st, 2023, so that a final draft could be prepared to be presented to the Authority by the December meeting.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1. Community Outreach – EDA Facebook Page, Constant Contact:

Secretary Walsh stated that during the Façade Improvement Program meeting with Directors Helton and Cox, it was brought up that the Authority should consider what kind of presence would be warranted on social media. The directors discussed the pros and cons of having social media accounts. Director Lawson recommended that the Authority wait on establishing any kind of social media accounts until the Authority has been in existence for some time. Secretary Walsh agreed and moved on to discuss using Constant Contact as a method of distributing information to the public. The directors agreed that this method would be far more manageable than social media. Secretary Walsh stated that she had intended to use this platform for a Planning and Zoning Newsletter and that the subscription to Constant Contact would allow her to have multiple accounts, so she could establish one for the Authority without incurring additional costs.

6.2. Social Media Archiving:

Secretary Walsh stated that with the recommendation that the Authority wait on establishing social media accounts, discussion of this item on the agenda was not necessary.

6.3. “Meet the Directors” Information for Website:

Secretary Walsh explained that she would like to include a short biography and a headshot photo of each director on the Town's website under the Authority's page. The directors agreed that this is a good idea. Secretary Walsh stated that she would send a follow-up email to the directors with instructions.

7. MATTERS FROM THE DIRECTORS

Director Helton invited the directors to the grand opening of the new Family Crisis Center to be located off Industrial Park Road in Norton, just outside of Town limits. She requested that Secretary Walsh forward the formal invitation to the directors. She advised that this would be a great program to show support for as well as an opportunity to network with members of the local and regional communities.

8. MATTERS FROM STAFF

8.1. Department of Planning and Zoning Monthly Report:

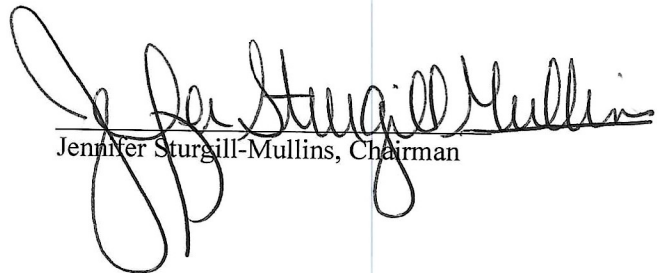
Secretary Walsh provided the directors with a copy of her monthly report and explained that it was for informational purposes and to keep the directors informed on various projects around town. She stated that if any of the directors had any questions about the report to reach out to her to discuss them.

9. ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Chairman Sturgill-Mullins asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Treasurer Lawson made the motion, seconded by Director Dotson. The motion carried 7-0.



Reagan Walsh, Secretary



Jennifer Sturgill-Mullins, Chairman