



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, June 16, 2022, at 12:00pm

Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda.

This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com.

ROLL CALL PRESENT: Chairman Richard M. Novak
Vice Mayor Mark A. Tapsak
Director Nicholas C. Bass
Director James W. Crowell, Jr.
Director David B. Gedney
Director Isaac Rushing
Director C. Frank Stankiewicz

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Steven W. Hicks
Interim Town Manager James Cornwell (via phone)
Deputy Town Attorney George Sonnett
Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley
IT Manager Grant Autry

Approval of Minutes – Since minutes were not available from the May 19th meeting, it was agreed to approve them at the next meeting.

Council Work Session (6/13) By-Laws Feedback – Chairman Novak and Vice Chairman Tapsak gave the Directors a brief overview of Town Council's concerns at their work session held on June 13th noting that the Council realized that some issues needed to be worked out. Director Rushing also attended the work session and noted that the Council had valid points and it was just a matter of working through them. Town Manager Hicks explained that the Town Code had different language than the proposed by-laws. He reviewed various areas that Council was concerned about and suggested that the Directors focus on how they see FREDA and how to become self-sufficient. Mr. Hicks continued that Town Council suggested a Joint Work Session to discuss their concerns, noting it had been set for June 22nd at 6:00pm in the Town Hall.

There was much discussion on hiring an attorney and possible an executive director in the future as well as continuing to use Town Staff. Mr. Novak noted the value of using the Town Manger and Finance Director but understands that FREDA needs to work towards becoming a separate entity. Interim Town Attorney Cornwell advised that FREDA should consider an RFP for a Bond Counsel that would review applications and to consider hiring a Financial Advisor (option) to advise them on the ability of the applicant to pay the loan. He explained that this would get FREDA up and running. He noted that EDAs underwrite loans for the applicant to receive a lower interest rate. It was confirmed that FREDA could use the Town's Bond Counsel and Town's Auditor.

There was much discussion pertaining to FREDAs that included: having their own budget, hiring an attorney before they needed one, the fact that EDAs are autonomous, the officers of secretary and treasurer and the ability to justify all their recommendations when proposing revisions to by-laws and Town Code to Town Council. Mr. Cornwell advised that most localities smaller than Front Royal use County Administrators and Town Managers to “head up” EDAs.

Director Crowell moved seconded by Vice Chairman Tapsak that FREDAs nominate Director Bass as Secretary.

Vote: Yes – Directors Novak, Tapsak, Bass, Crowell, Gedney, Rushing, and Stankiewicz

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Director Stankiewicz moved seconded by Director Bass that FREDAs nominate Director Gedney as Treasurer.

Vote: Yes – Directors Novak, Tapsak, Bass, Crowell, Gedney, Rushing, and Stankiewicz

No – N/A

Absent – N/A

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Mr. Cornwell advised that the Secretary and Treasurer would be part of the Board of Directors and Town Support Staff (Finance Director BJ Wilson and Clerk of Council Tina Presley) would continue their roles with the new Secretary (Bass) and Treasurer (Gedney) reviewing their documents before they come before the Board. Mr. Cornwell also reminded FREDAs to use other EDAs across the Commonwealth for resources and to not re-invent the wheel.

Mr. Hicks read through Article X.2. and 3. There was much discussion that included FREDAs not wanting to run everything by Town Council. Mr. Cornwell explained that EDAs have autonomy to make decisions and that there would be no Town involvement unless fronting money. He explained that if this happened it would be usually for smaller loans since EDAs are bound by the budget. Mr. Sonnet noted that some localities that provided staff support will add their salaries to an EDA budget.

Mr. Hicks concluded that the by-laws and Town Code will be discussed on June 22nd with the Town Code being proposed to be approved first.

Mr. Novak suggested to the Board to add into the by-laws the liability insurance coverage for the Directors. Mr. Cornwell advised that the Virginia Risk Sharing Association (VRSA) can send each Director a letter stating their coverage. It was agreed to receive this letter. Mr. Novak also asked about the term limits for each Director. Clerk of Council Presley advised that Council passed a resolution years ago about the term limits for all Committee and Board members and it was that after three consecutive full year terms (12 years) the member could not be reappointed.

~~WEDA Property in Town of Front Royal~~ – Removed

Update on Retail Strategies – Mr. Hicks reminded FREDAs of the retail consultant they were introduced to at the retreat. He was asking if they wanted to pursue a contract with them. After some discussion on costs and the language of the contract, Mr. Hicks recommended that they attend a meeting with the actual proposal.

Next Meeting, July 14th at 12:00pm in Town Hall Conference Room

Open Discussion – Mr. Hicks suggested that a Virginia State Tourism representative attend a meeting for a presentation on what they have to offer as well as a market report from the Joint Tourism Committee. Blue Ridge Arts Council’s Gazebo Gatherings starts tonight downtown. He noted that the Town would be having fireworks on July 3rd for the community.

Mr. Novak advised that the Festival of Leaves will be celebrated on October 14 and 15 and if there was any interest to assist the committee, they meet every two weeks. He noted that there would be a block party downtown on October 14th from 7:00pm – 10:00pm.

Mr. Bass was advised that the Comprehensive Plan notes were due last week to Planning.

Mr. Stankiewicz invited everyone to “Little League Night” at the Bing Crosby Stadium on Saturday, June 18th at 5:30pm.

Adjourn: *Director Stankiewicz moved seconded by Director Crowell to adjourn ---- Vote: unanimous*

Approved by the Front Royal Economic Development Authority Directors

Date: July 14, 2022