

Waynesboro Economic Development Authority
Minutes of the Emergency Called Meeting
Tuesday, March 31, 2020, 1:30 PM
Zoom Remote Call

Members Present on Zoom: Mr. Perry Fridley
Ms. Mary Sullivan
Mr. Mark Snyder
Ms. Angie Bandy
Mr. George Reed
Ms. Tami Radecke
Mr. Pete Brooks

Others Present on Zoom: Mr. Greg Hitchin- Director of Economic Development & Tourism
Ms. Stephanie Duffy- Administrative Assistant
Ms. Jennifer Callison- Tourism & Marketing Manager
Mr. Jim Shaw- Deputy City Manager
Mr. Mike Hamp- City Manager

Others Who Requested Public Access to Zoom Meeting: Logan Bogert (lbogert@newsvirginian.com); Karl Magenhofer (KMagenhofer@HarrisonburgRadioGroup.com); Jim (jim@doubleatactical.com); (vprrls@protonmail.com)

Welcome

Mr. Fridley called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM and thanked everyone for joining the meeting remotely. Mr. Hitchin then took a roll call vote to confirm attendance:

Mr. Reed	Aye
Mr. Fridley	Aye
Mr. Brooks	Aye
Ms. Bandy	Aye
Ms. Radecke	Aye
Ms. Sullivan	Aye
Mr. Snyder	Aye

Mr. Hitchin reviewed the subject and procedures of the emergency called meeting. This emergency meeting is being held pursuant to VA Code 2.2-3708 Section G to discuss issues surrounding the effect to local business and the EDA/Economic Development Staff response due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Should a motion be made/vote needed, it must deal with the issue at hand and a roll call vote will be taken. The meeting agenda was published on March 27, 2020 using normal meeting announcement methods and posted on the City website calendar section. Instructions for public participation were included within the meeting announcement/agenda.

Discussion of Economic Development Response to COVID 19 State of Emergency

A PowerPoint presentation was shared via Zoom with attendees and a pdf was also sent to EDA members prior to the meeting. Mr. Hitchin gave a brief overview of the \$2T+ CARES Act and highlights of what the funds could be used for. Mr. Hitchin presented the projected economic impact on the city in terms of revenues that will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also gave a breakdown of employment sectors that would be impacted and pointed out that the SAW region scored a 95 on the vulnerability index created by JOBSEQ. This rating puts the MSA slightly under the

U.S. Average of 100 on the scale. Mr. Hitchin and Ms. Callison gave a review of actions the Economic Development & Tourism Office has taken thus far in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Marketing: Most City marketing efforts have been suspended. The City is not actively marketing the Technology Zone, Opportunity Zone or marketing to target industries. In addition, four business investment events that were previously planned have been canceled.
- Tourism: Ms. Callison gave remarks on tourism efforts for the city in response to COVID-19. The Rockfish Gap Information Center was closed on March 13, 2020, one day before the Virginia Tourism Corporation closed down all Virginia Welcome Centers. All paid marketing efforts have been suspended for now and the City is following VTC's lead on social media posts, focusing more on supporting local and asking visitors to keep Waynesboro in mind for later, when it's safe to travel again. Ms. Callison is participating in weekly industry briefing calls with VTC. The Street Arts Trail program and visitors guide reprints have been postponed.
- Recovery: The economic development & tourism office is communicating with businesses about the various tools available including the emergency loan fund and state and federal programs. The department has been actively engaging the business community with newsletters. Since the beginning of the crisis, eleven e-newsletter have gone out giving information on resources. The Visit Waynesboro and Grow Waynesboro social media accounts have been active, providing information to business owners, visitors and citizens. Ms. Callison created a google doc that is updated regularly, showing what restaurants/small businesses are open and what services they provide. A special page on the economic development website is being created to house all of the information about resources available to businesses and a letter is being mailed to every Waynesboro business license holder, detailing where they can find information and asking them to complete a survey set-up for the department to assess the needs of our business community.

Mr. Hitchin continued by express that the future is unclear. Regional tourism has clearly taken a big hit, as well as small businesses. There is potential for another retail twist as businesses adapt and change their business model and there is a shift in the workforce with some sectors seeing decreases and others seeing increases. There is also potential for growth in manufacturing and reshoring of companies and the demand for data centers and broad band has increased. In thinking ahead about recovery efforts, the City will need to balance efforts with the new tax revenue realities.

Mr. Hitchin also gave an update on the Emergency Loan Fund initiated by the EDA. He commended the EDA for their commitment and timely efforts to make this available to Waynesboro businesses so quickly. There are currently eight outstanding regular EDA revolving loan fund (RLF) loans which were offered a deferral for the April payment. To-date, three businesses had taken advantage of the deferral. The beginning balance of the RLF account was \$48,744, eleven emergency loans were approved totaling \$44,000. There are also a few applications on the waiting list to be considered should more funds become available.

There being no other business to discuss, Mr. Fridley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reed and the meeting was adjourned at 2:14 PM.

Respectfully submitted ___/___/____

Certified as approved ___/___/____

Stephanie Duffy
Recording Secretary

Gregory E. Hitchin
Secretary/Treasurer