

**Campbell County
Economic Development Commission/CEDS Committee**

June 20, 2019

The regular meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission was held on Thursday, June 20, 2019, in the Campbell County Citizen Services Building Conference Room, Rustburg, Virginia.

Members Present:

Willie Jones	Frank Davis	Richard Metz
George Rosser	Hugh Bragg	Scott Blankinship
William Anderson		

Members Absent:

Richard Carroll
Eric Fletcher
Scott Tweedy
Kathy Carson

Also Present:

Mike Davidson, Director of Economic Development
Sarah Johnson, Program Manager, Economic Development
Kim Stewart, Administrative Assistant, Economic Development

// Chairman Willie Jones called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m.

// A motion was made by Mr. Richard Metz to approve the minutes of March 21, 2019, and seconded by Mr. Frank Davis. With all in favor and none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

// Mrs. Sarah Johnson reviewed the Project Updates. These updates were provided to the members in their emailed meeting packets.

// Chairman Jones asked if the Wards Road Strip Shopping Center will go on Wards Rd. where the old buildings are being cleared away, and Mr. Davidson and Mrs. Johnson stated that he was correct.

// Mr. Davidson elaborated on Mrs. Johnson's Broadband TRRC Grant project update, informing the members that it would be through SCS Broadband/AcelaNet, which will be through a licensed frequency to use a few existing structures, possibly around the William Campbell High School area, the Brookneal Campbell County Airport, in the Gladys area, and up to an existing tower on Long Mountain. These will allow for rebroadcasting signal out to the peripheries. This will be the first leg of broadband expansion into Campbell County.

// Mr. Metz asked if this would take care of the unserved areas, and Mr. Davidson said no, that it would help the *underserved* areas. The type of frequency is more a "line-of-sight" frequency, so obstructions will prevent signal for some areas, although affixing some sort of long antenna to the outside of the house may help. Mr. Blankinship asked if it would be microwave frequency, and it is not. It may be in the 800-900 megahertz frequencies.

// Mrs. Johnson then briefly summarized the 52-in-52 Program, the new small business visitation program that kicked off at the Business Appreciation Luncheon in May. Mr. Davidson elaborated, letting the EDC members know that there will be multiple public forums coming in the next several months related to this, including one at Timbrook Library and Hyland Heights Baptist Church.

// For the next item of business, Mrs. Johnson turned the members' attention to the CEDS Goals and Objectives and briefly reviewed the information that was covered in depth at the last meeting.

// Through doing business visitations, Economic Development has repeatedly heard that businesses are struggling to find qualified workers. Mr. Metz commented that with the unemployment rate so low, no one is looking for work. Mr. George Rosser added that those who are unemployed don't want to work, and even those who are working these days in a lot of cases have no work ethic. Mr. Davidson reminded the group that only those actively job-searching through the VEC are being tracked, and if someone gets a part-time job *not* through VEC, he or she is no longer eligible to receive assistance and will not be tracked. "Underemployment" is not tracked at a micro level.

// Regarding Infrastructure, Mr. Metz offered that the county is in a position now to start developing infrastructure to get economic development and stated that the county would need to invest in order to get a return. He believes the Economic Development Commission needs to draft a resolution/letter to the Board of Supervisors and recommended requesting that at least one third of the revenue to be gained from the newly passed meals tax be dedicated to future economic infrastructure. Mr. Davidson responded that he would start working on a document that would be relatively holistic in nature and incorporate more than just infrastructure, and he would bring it back to the September EDC meeting for the members to possibly adopt a resolution to send to the Board of Supervisors.

// Mr. Scott Blankinship felt that the construction VDOT is getting ready to do on Lynbrook Road, widening it and moving utilities, will provide a perfect opportunity for development on that road. It has sewer on either end to accommodate development.

// Mr. Davidson stated that there are other needs that will come before economic development infrastructure, such as millions of dollars of needed renovations to schools, as well as an upcoming multimillion dollar emergency services radio system update, and a much-needed software system upgrade for the county to replace programs that are no longer being supported. These needs will come first.

// Related to infrastructure, Mrs. Johnson mentioned the Broadband grant that recently was approved. Mr. Hugh Bragg asked how much the grant would be for and Mr. Davidson answered that it will be in the \$165,000 range.

// As transportation was discussed, Chairman Jones gave an example of seeing a log truck on Rt. 501 weaving due to dips in the road and how dangerous the route can be. The members all agreed that Route 501 needs improvement for safety. VDOT has been studying the road for at least 50 years.

// Mr. Blankinship wondered if there was a timeline for receiving comments from Community Development regarding housing construction and Mr. Davidson indicated that residential construction was handled by Community Development and not Economic Development, and that he would check with them on this to get Mr. Blankinship an answer.

// The next item on the agenda was to review the Implementation Strategies for Goals and Objectives for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies Update, which Mr. Davidson then reviewed for the members. This information was supplied to the members in their meeting packet. This information is what was determined from public forums and meetings with the EDC during the data collection process of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies Update. As mentioned earlier, business visitations across the board have highlighted a lack of skilled workers as a continually growing problem.

// Related to the Education Goal, Mr. Metz mentioned a special segment he saw on ABC13 of high school seniors being showcased with the employers they will work for upon completion of their high school curricula and their technical education training. He compared this to spotlighting high school sports signings with the colleges that athletes will play for. He praised these new segments for highlighting workforce training. Mr. Davidson agreed and stated that Yellow Branch has always had a good interning program and that he would add to the Performance Measures list to determine a way to track and promote internships.

// Mr. Davidson reviewed Business Development, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Tourism with no additional comments from the group. Due to time constraint, Mr. Davidson then requested to Chairman Jones to stop at Tourism for this meeting and to pick up with Housing at the next Economic Development Commission meeting.

// At this juncture, Mr. Davidson turned the members' attention to the next agenda item, the meeting date for September. Due to a conflict, he requested members' input regarding moving the September meeting to September 26, and the all were in agreement that the suggested new date should be fine.

// Mr. Davidson then turned the meeting back over to Chairman Jones, who called for matters from the committee members. With no matters presented, Chairman Jones called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Metz motioned and Mr. William Anderson seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m. The next meeting of the Campbell County Economic Development Commission will take place on Thursday, September 26, at 12:00 noon.