REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), of Stafford County, Virginia, was held at the George L. Gordon Jr. Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Rd, Stafford, VA 22554 on Friday, January 16, 2026.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
    a. Mr. Rowley, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM, emphasizing the necessity for all members and staff to declare any conflicts of interest with the agenda items. No conflicts were stated.
    b. Mr. Burton was welcomed by Mr. Rowley and introduced to the other EDA members and staff.

A quorum was present and accounted for.

Members

Jack Rowley, Chair
Marlon Wilson, Vice Chair
Jeff Roosa, Secretary
Janette Holland
Frank Porcelli
Daryl Weedeman
Dave Burton

ED/EDA Staff Present

Liz Barber
Linzy Browne
Jonathan Lindsley
Savannah Wimbush
Lauren Micklish
Shelley Kasten [virtual]
Logan Brunette, Esq.

Also Present

Michael Purello (Rivers Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Rowley asked if anyone had any changes, additions or corrections to the December 19, 2025, minutes. Mr. Roosa asked that the meeting minutes be amended to reflect that item 7.b.2., the Cyber Bytes' grant application, was denied. Mr. Roosa made a motion to approve the minutes as amended; Ms. Holland seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 7-0**

3. TREASURERS REPORT

a. December Financials: Ms. Kasten reported that total cash was $178,666 and total investments at Virginia Mint were $967,799. Ms. Kasten highlighted that the EDA's total assets are around $1 million. Mr. Roosa motioned to approve the December Financials; Mr. Weedeman seconded. **APPROVED 7-0**

b. Bridging Virginia Variance: Ms. Kasten explained the Bridging Virginia variance was due to differing amortization schedules and interest payments. She noted that all the variances were to the EDA's advantage. Ms. Kasten shared that she had made the corrections via journal entry and placed them in temporary status. Mr. Roosa noted that the variance was unfortunate but was glad that it had been caught. Mr. Roosa motioned to approve the change in QuickBooks and Mr. Porcelli seconded. **APPROVED 7-0**

c. Detail Use/Restrictions of Bank Accounts: Ms. Barber summarized the purpose of each bank account held by the EDA. She noted that all the interest-bearing accounts are set at money market interest rates. Mr. Rowley and Mr. Roosa agreed that account 0572 is doing well and should stay with Link Bank. Mr. Rowley clarified with Ms. Kasten and Ms. Barber that the Square account was for payments only and the rate reflected in the report is charged to the user, not the EDA.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

a. Rivers Region Entrepreneurial Ecosystem (RREE) Update: Mr. Purello briefed the members on the RREE GO Virginia Implementation Grant, asking for $30,000 over 2 years. He noted that the Implementation Grant process begins in February.

   Mr. Purello discussed the RREE's mission and vision, emphasizing the goal of making Region 6 an area where entrepreneurs can easily start a business through providing resources. He showed a listing of his council and noted that Joel Griffin had acted as Chairman on an EDA board previously. He went on to discuss creating resource hubs focused on high growth industries. Mr. Burton asked Mr. Purello what defines a high growth business, and he explained they are focus industries are those that see widescale growth, such as IT and Defense industries.

Mr. Purello noted that Region 6 has above average populations of veteran and minority groups, yet the number of startups for those groups were below average. Mr. Rowley highlighted the disparity was unfortunate, especially considering this would be the first year without the Veteran's Business Boot Camp. Ms. Browne noted that there was a steady decline in participation in the event and the EDA had chosen to discontinue the event as a result. She was curious about the data that Mr. Purello had provided, and they agreed to get together after the meeting to discuss.

Mr. Purello then explained the difference between a high growth business, one that grows in employees or tax revenue exponentially, and a main street business, which slowly and steadily grows over time. He reiterates that high growth industries are those that are going global. Mr. Roosa and Mr. Purello discussed the pre-established relationship the EDA has with Dahlgren, noting that the RREE would be working with the Potomac Tech Bridge. Mr. Purello discussed the work being done in the Northern Neck subregion in aquaculture, highlighting the potential for it to become a high-growth industry. He reiterated the need for resource hubs for these subregions to include advisory councils, test beds/labs, investment networks, and a good communication strategy. Mr. Purello went on to ask for the EDA's support, highlighting that the effort aligns with Stafford's goals and would be complimentary to the EDA's work.

Mr. Weedeman asked if the RREE's efforts would support Stafford directly or if the plan just needed their support. Mr. Michael explained that he wanted to spread awareness of the program and get the EDA's support. Mr. Rowley emphasized that he would like to see benefits for Stafford if they provided support. Ms. Barber asked about other funding sources and Mr. Purello listed several counties and organizations to which they are seeking funding.

b. Stafford EDA Marketing & Events Report

   i. Ms. Browne began by reminding the members of the Beer & Business event on January 26th at Barley Naked. She noted that she would send an invite to Mr. Burton.

   ii. Business Appreciation Reception 2026 Update: Ms. Browne emphasized the difficulty she had finding a venue in South Stafford for the Business Appreciation Reception. She reported that she found an opening at University of Mary Washington (UMW) Stafford Campus, but availability was very tight. The only availability in the appropriate time frame was May 14th from 5:00pm – 7:00pm, which is also Germanna's Commencement Day. She explained that the fee of $11,000 would cover the cost of the space and a required security guard. She has proposals for food and beverages, but she did not want to share those yet as they are still being reviewed and she does not yet have formal recommendations for the EDA to consider. Mr. Rowley noted he would not be able to attend on the proposed date and time. He asked if Ms. Browne had checked with Holiday Inn; Ms. Browne confirmed and noted she had called over 10 venues, and this was the best option without recycling venues previously used for this event. Ms. Barber and Mr. Wilson noted the contract's verbiage seemed beneficial to UMW in that the room secured wasn't guaranteed and could be swapped for another space if needed; however, it was confirmed that there is only one room that could be utilized due to the large number of attendees. Ms. Browne brought the paperwork for the Chairman to sign if approved. Mr. Roosa motioned to approve the venue contract with UMW Stafford campus for the Business Appreciation Reception, and Mr. Burton seconded. **APPROVED 7-0**

c. Stafford County Economic Development Report

   i. Strategic Plan: Ms. Barber discussed the official kickoff meeting with her staff, going over the implementation of the Strategic Plan that includes 40 implementation strategies. She noted that her original plan was to bring it to the EDA today, but her staff would like to provide input before finalizing and presenting the document to the EDA. Mr. Roosa asked how the document was set up. Ms. Barber explained that the document breaks down who oversees each item, the item's timeline, budget, etc.

   ii. Org Chart for Department: Ms. Barber discussed the new departmental organization chart introducing Ms. Micklish as the new Administrative Specialist. She goes on to list Morgan Lynch as the new Project Manager overseeing the Marketing Specialist, Project Specialist, a vacant Data Specialist, and the Marketing & Events Contractor. Ms. Barber noted that her hope is for the vacant Tourism Program Manager position to be filled in March. Mr. Roosa asked for clarification on Ms. Lynch's role and Ms. Barber explained that she would be managing both Economic Development and Tourism projects. Ms. Barber also noted that this organizational change was an implementation step suggested in the Strategic Plan.

   iii. Ms. Barber noted that she would not be present at the EDA's February meeting and would have her staff, depending on expertise, speak on certain topics. Ms. Holland commended Ms. Wimbush for stepping in for Ms. Barber at the last EDA meeting.

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Roosa asked if the Business Resource Committee could add a member since Mr. Price Jett's resignation. Mr. Rowley asked Mr. Burton if he would be a member and he confirmed his interest. Mr. Roosa asked about the Treasurer seat and Mr. Rowley stated that election for that position would be coming soon.

6. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

a. 2026 Virginia Statement of Economic Interest Report, Due 2/1: Mr. Rowley discussed the importance of each member submitting their Economic Interest Report by the due date. He noted if the members missed the deadline, there would be a $200 fine. The form was sent to each member by Candace Gallion, the county administrator's executive assistant, and can be turned in to her through email or given to Economic Development Department staff to bring to her in person.

b. Mr. Rowley noted that GO Virginia's Economic Development Summit would be on April 20th and 21st. He asked Ms. Barber to send the invitation information to all the members, and she agreed to do so.

7. COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUP REPORTS

a. Loan Committee (Jack R., Janette H. Staff support- Liz)
   i. Loan Statements
      1. Next Level Mosaic Update: Ms. Barber reported that Next Level Mosaic was still behind on the payments for both September and October, but they have paid for November, December, and January. She explained that since the new payments have been made and they have begun to get caught up, Bridging Virginia suggested deferring the old payments to the end of the loan. Mr. Rowley and Mr. Weedeman agreed, noting that the EDA does not need to collect penalties. Ms. Barber noted that she would update Ms. Kasten and the loan servicing company on the change. Mr. Roosa motioned to accept Bridging Virginia's recommendation and extend Next Level Mosaic's loan by two months. Mr. Porcelli seconded. **APPROVED 7-0**

      2. Embrey Mill Update: Ms. Barber explained that Embrey Mill is up to date on their payments but are paying right after the cut-off for the monthly statement. Mr. Roosa asked if there could be a disclaimer added to the statements. Ms. Barber expressed that she did not feel comfortable changing the statements as provided by Bridging Virginia since those

statements are provided directly by the loan servicing company, but she would give a verbal report of Embrey Mill's standing each month.

b. Business Resources Committee (Daryl W., Staff support- Savannah)
    i. Community-Based Organization (CBO) Grant Applications: There was no new applications or new business discussed.

c. Research Committee (Marlon W., Jack R.)
    i. SCPS Career Pathways Tour, February 5, 8:00am-1:00pm, 31 Stafford Ave.: Mr. Rowley asked that Mr. Burton attend the SCPS Career Pathways Tour; Mr. Burton agreed to join. Mr. Rowley asked Ms. Barber to send out an invitation and she agreed to do so.

d. Technology Committee (Jeff R., Frank P.): Mr. Porcelli suggested doing a study on AI and business growth in Stafford County. Mr. Roosa agreed that a study would be a good idea. Ms. Barber and Mr. Roosa discussed Mr. Purello's proposal to take on the Testbed that seems to be losing traction. Ms. Barber noted that the Testbed building has been occupied by Utilities personnel, but the EDA's equipment was inventoried for the record. Mr. Roosa said he thought the equipment had been donated to the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance (FRA). Ms. Barber reiterated that the donation of furniture has not occurred to date since the formal agreement has not yet happened. Ms. Barber explained the department's partnership with the FRA to Mr. Burton, noting that as the regional economic development organization, they filter business leads from the state to the department and work closely with Mr. Lindsley. Mr. Roosa brought up that the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation (VIPC) and RiOT had used to previously programming to the Testbed but have not in recent years. Ms. Barber emphasized that she hopes to rebuild some of these relationships, seeing that it is a priority in the Strategic Plan.

8. <u>OLD BUSINESS</u>

a. Incentive Agreement Expense Agreement with County: Ms. Barber introduced the topic of exploring ways the EDA could capitalize on fees in incentive/passthrough agreements to cover the EDA's operating expenses. She explained that the EDA could collect fees when acting as a passthrough agent for Stafford County, as other county EDAs often do. Ms. Barber confirmed that there is a Joint EDA and Board of Supervisors meeting set for May 12th to formalize the proposal. Mr. Roosa asked that Ms. Brunette look over the documentation; she agreed to do so. He also asked her to investigate what other EDAs are charging and Mr. Rowley asked that the search be expanded to other states as well. Ms. Brunette stated she would come back with her findings next meeting. Ms. Barber noted that the report was based on the EDAs in Loudoun and Spotsylvania Counties. She explained that the Department would like to work with the EDA to offer tax bonds and advertising those bonds would be key. Mr. Roosa asked how the fees would be incorporated through the county. Ms. Barber noted that the Board is unaware that the EDA would like to collect fees at this time. Mr. Rowley noted that he liked the idea of collecting fees and would like to get it formalized as soon as possible so the EDA can begin collecting. Mr. Roosa suggested creating a committee for the agreement. Ms. Barber agreed a committee would be a good idea and Mr. Rowley noted they may need more than one, depending on the amount of work needed to implement all the moving parts of the strategic plan.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Rowley circled back to Mr. Purello's presentation and confirmed that he was asking for $30,000 over a two-year period. He noted that he'd like to support the effort since it would support GO Virginia. Mr. Porcelli mentioned tracking the return on investment when new businesses utilize the program's resources. Mr. Roosa and Mr. Weedeman asked about the benefit for Stafford County. Ms. Barber explained that the RREE does not directly recruit businesses but instead provide and promote resources for entrepreneurs to be successful. Mr. Porcelli offered that the effort may be duplicative. Mr. Roosa suggested the possibility that the EDA offers a smaller portion of funds to support the RREE. Mr. Rowley noted that it was unclear what the funds would go toward. Ms. Browne noted that the EDA had pledged $25,000 to the RREE's first grant and that this effort was the second grant for the same effort. Ms. Barber highlighted that the Strategic Plan mentions missing incubators in the area. She noted that the only existing incubator in the area is the Virginia Black Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Wimbush noted that the Apex Accelerators are also active, but there is a need for more incubators in the area. It was also mentioned that RIoT, who has since left the area, had moderate success. A task force between the Economic Development Department and the EDA was suggested to better understand what resource hubs in the area can do to be successful. Mr. Rowley mentioned working with GO Virginia on a $200,000 grant. Ms. Barber clarified that Mr. Purello is not with Go Virginia, noting that the RREE is a grant recipient. Mr. Rowley asked when the decision was needed, noting he did not want to wait a long period. Mr. Porcelli noted he is unsure what the funds would be used for. Ms. Barber said she would reach out to Mr. Purello and ask what the funds would be used for, implementation steps, and what counties have supported this effort so far and send the information to the EDA.

10. ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Ms. Brunette did not have anything to report.

11. <u>CLOSED SESSION</u>

Mr. Roosa made a motion to enter closed session, Ms. Holland seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 7-0**

Ms. Brunette, representing EDA legal counsel, read into executive session, pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A), subsection 5, as amended. All members who were present at the meeting were present at the executive session. As the Board came out of executive session, each member certified that no votes were taken while in executive session. Mr. Roosa made a motion to come out of closed session; Mr. Wilson seconded. Motion passed unanimously. **APPROVED 7-0**

12. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

Mr. Roosa made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Holland seconded. The motion passed unanimously **APPROVED 7-0**

Meeting adjourned at 11:14 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Roosa,

EDA Secretary