

JOINT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Minutes of Meeting
January 23, 2025

The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat held its regular January meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 3:00 PM, in the Council Room of the Wytheville Municipal Building at 150 East Monroe Street, Wytheville, Virginia.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Cole, Chairman
Jeff Lucas, Vice Chairman
Sherri Case, Treasurer
Vicki Parks

MEMBERS ABSENT

Matt Clarke
Dennis Manuel
Aaron Robinson

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

None.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Stephen Bear, Wythe County Administrator
Steve Moore, Interim Town of Wytheville Town Manager
Jason Childers, Rural Retreat Town Manager

JOINT IDA STAFF PRESENT

David Manley, Executive Director
John Matthews, Deputy Director
Jessica DeHart, Administrative Assistant

JOINT IDA STAFF ABSENT

None

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Cole called the meeting to order and determined a quorum to be present. He then offered an invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS' TIME

Chairman Cole welcomed Matt Hankins, Assistant County Administrator, Wythe County, Cathy Pattison, Vice Mayor, Town of Wytheville, and Ashlyn Shrewsbury, Mount Rogers Regional Partnership Interim Executive Director. Chairman Cole asked if he would like to address the Board. Mr. Manley introduced Ashlyn Shrewsbury to the board. Ms. Shrewsbury thanked the staff and board for being invited to the meeting. She said she is currently serving as the Interim Executive Director for Mount Rogers Regional Partnership, the regional economic development organization for the area encompassing Smyth, Wythe, Bland, Grayson, Carroll, and the City of Galax. She mentioned her background is in economic development noting she has been with the regional organization for almost two years and was with local government prior to that. She said she looks forward to getting to know everyone and working closely with the Joint IDA.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 3, 2024

Chairman Cole asked if there were any questions or concerns about the minutes from December 3, 2024. Chairman Cole asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Lucas made the motion to accept the minutes as presented, which was seconded by Ms. Case. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES

Chairman Cole entertained a motion to approve the financial statements December 4, 2024, through January 23, 2025. Ms. Case mentioned she did not see anything unusual in the financial statements. She asked about the Vivian Womble loan. Mr. Manley mentioned she has not made a payment since June of 2024, adding the loan had already been written off in the books by the auditor, and that the Joint IDA has a judgement against her that will always exist. Mr. Corbin Stone recommended the IDA to keep her account active in hopes of collecting. Mr. Lucas made a motion to approve the financial statements as presented, which was seconded by Ms. Parks. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Joint IDA of Wythe County Check Register December 4, 2024, through January 23, 2025

Check #	Date	Payee	Amount
8258	12/31/24	Town of Wytheville	\$ 29,158.37
8259	12/18/24	Cowan Perry PC	\$ 200.00
8260	12/20/24	Robert G. Moore-VOID	\$ 0.00
8261	01/06/25	The Jackson Law Group	\$ 5,000.00
EFT	12/31/24	Appalachian Power Company	\$ 168.11
EFT	12/31/24	Verizon	\$ 83.32

EFT	12/31/24	Robert G. Moore	\$	1,100.00
EFT	12/31/24	Xerox Corporation	\$	30.95
EFT	12/31/24	Brightspeed	\$	175.96
EFT	12/31/24	First Bank-Master Card	\$	2,332.76
EFT	12/31/24	Brightspeed	\$	175.96
EFT	01/23/25	Robert G. Moore	\$	1,100.00
EFT	01/23/25	Verizon	\$	98.32
EFT	01/23/25	Appalachian Power Company	\$	279.29
EFT	01/23/25	Xerox Corporation	\$	16.28
EFT	01/23/25	First Bank-Master Card	\$	3,154.47
EFT	01/23/25	Brightspeed	\$	176.16
8262	01/23/25	SVAM	\$	50.00
8263	01/23/25	Town of Wytheville	\$	25,644.45
Total			\$	68,944.40

REVOLVING LOAN FUND REPORT

Revolving loan activity was reported during the approval of the financial statements.

FY 23-24 AUDIT PRESENTATION-CORBIN STONE OF ROBINSON, FARMER, COX ASSOCIATES

Mr. Manley introduced Mr. Corbin Stone of Robinson Farmer Cox Associates, which is the Joint IDA's audit firm, to the board to present the audit for FY 2023-2024. The audit letter and financial report were distributed to the board. Mr. Stone stated the Joint IDA received an unqualified opinion determining the financial statements are materially correct, noting there were some adjusting journal entries that were recommended. He added the audit went very well and Ms. DeHart has done a good job keeping the books in good order continually improving each year. Mr. Stone summarized the report, noting key numbers, and asked if there were any questions. There being none, Chairman Cole thanked Mr. Stone for the presentation. Ms. Case made the motion to accept the audit FY 2023-2024 as presented which was seconded by Mr. Lucas. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Wytheville Mayor Dr. Beth Taylor entered the meeting at 3:10 pm.

STAFF REPORTS

STAFF REPORT- DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Activity

140 S 1st Street Development Work – Grant reporting, Remittance requests

Business Solutions Unit- Chair

2025 planning

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) –

Enterprise Zone boundary amendment - approved

Duchess Dairy Expansion Announcement

Holiday Open House

Performance Agreements (existing)- Compliance and Reporting: Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Tobacco Commission

Projects - 2

Properties - Property Owners
Property Research

Small Business Assistance & Revolving Loan Fund

Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Michele Bridges, Mark Bass

Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA)-

VEDA Board Meeting – Virtual

Winter Membership Meeting – Richmond

ImpactED webinar – General Assembly/Legislative Update, VEDP Update

VEDA Day/Public Policy Network (Co-Chair) – legislator engagement planning

Weekly Public Policy Call

Virginia Housing – Workforce Housing Investment Program

UVA Wise – Regional business startup program with Hatch and Co-Starters

Wythe County Technology Center Perkins Advisory Council

STAFF REPORT – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Manley reported he attended VEDA Legislative Day in Richmond on January 22. He circulated two documents to the board created by Virginia Economic Developers Association, one on the impact of economic development and the other the VEDA 2025 public policy platform. He added that he got to speak to three elected officials from southwest Virginia- Delegate Kilgore, Delegate Arnold, and Senator Pillion.

Mr. Manley also mentioned that Wythe County was awarded incentive support to build out infrastructure a few years ago around the same time as the Blue Star project. He noted that Wythe County undertook that work and expended the funds as agreed to, but due to a legislative drafting error, that \$3.5 million in state funding reverted to the general fund instead of being carried over to the next year, complicating reimbursement to Wythe County. Wythe County and the Joint IDA have been advocating for that reimbursement vigorously for the last two years. Mr. Manley said that this reimbursement has made it into the Governor’s budget and will now have to go through both House and Senate money committees and then the entire General Assembly. Mr. Manley added the Joint IDA hired support through Two Capitols Consulting through the end of April to monitor and advocate for that infrastructure reimbursement.

PROJECT BRIEFINGS

Mr. Manley stated all three agreements for the site development project have been finalized and signed which is the GO Virginia grant for \$425,000, the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program grant for \$5.8 million, and the agreement with the engineering firm.

Mr. Manley said there has been a renewed push in the Blue Star project with the presidential election.

Mr. Manley also said the Joint IDA received grant reimbursement from Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission for \$20,000 for the 140 South 1st Street project as was also approved for \$750,000 reimbursement for Wythe County’s rail project that extended rail up to the Blue Star project has been approved by the TRRC as well.

He also mentioned to the board that both Mr. Matthews and Ms. DeHart had their anniversaries of being hired at the Joint IDA yesterday with Ms. DeHart working for the IDA for 4 years and Mr. Matthews having his 10th year work anniversary. Mr. Manley thanked Mr. Matthews for all his hard work for the Joint IDA and Wythe County over the past ten years. The board members also shared appreciation for Ms. DeHart's and Mr. Matthew's diligence and service to the organization.

OLD OR ONGOING BUSINESS

Mr. Lucas asked for an update on the 140 South 1st Street project. Mr. Matthews explained he has been in communication with the Department of Historic Resources trying to get answers on what can or can't be done with the roof to tackle the Stabilization Grant which would include roof, windows, and doors. Department of Historic Resources has asked the Joint IDA to survey all potential properties in downtown to see if other properties would qualify as a historic building. Each additional property on the application costs money. Mr. Matthews mentioned the quote for the survey to look at the 140 South 1st Street building alone is \$4,000 which does not include all the other additional properties that could be included on the application. Mr. Matthews said the Joint IDA is going to move forward with the roof and the windows and look at ways to cashflow the project without having to use Historic Resources as it is not guaranteed, and unknown that even after paying for the survey and applying that the building would qualify. Mr. Matthews mentioned a new grant through Virginia Housing designed to bring housing units back online which the Joint IDA could go after.

NEW BUSINESS

2025 STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS FILING DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 3, 2025

Mr. Manley reminded the board the Statements of Economic Interests are due on February 3, 2025, and are required annually by law. He added to let the staff know if any help was needed in any way to get those turned into Ms. Sherry Corvin with the Town of Wytheville by the deadline. Mr. Lucas recommended turning it in by hand as it can be corrected and approved as it is turned in.

INDUSTRY APPRECIATION GOLF TOURNAMENT – MAY 15, 2025

Ms. DeHart reported the Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament has been scheduled for May 15, 2025, at the Wytheville Golf Club and added that sponsorship letters and registration forms have been sent out. Ms. DeHart also mentioned the tournament already has an Eagle Sponsorship of \$1,000 from JA Street General Contractors with a few other sponsorships pledged as well as a few teams that have already paid for their registration. Chairman Cole mentioned the staff needed to reach out to the Wytheville Golf Club as he noted there have been some changes in the way tournaments are conducted emphasizing that the Joint IDA may be responsible for its own alcohol license. Ms. DeHart said she would reach out to Mr. Goode and ask.

Ms. DeHart said the Industry Appreciation Tenure Awards have been scheduled for April 24, 2025, at the Wytheville Meeting Center at 12:00 pm before the regular monthly board meeting. Mr. Manley added the awards luncheon has lost its usual lunch sponsor, so if anyone has any ideas on another sponsor to reach out to the staff. Ms. DeHart said awardees for this year include Clarke Precision Machine, Southwest Specialty Heat Treat, Camrett Logistics, AQ Transformer Solutions, Coperion, and Rural Retreat Mills. Ms. DeHart noted Rural Retreat Mills was purchased in 2022 and was not sure how they would like to move forward with their start-up

date. Mr. Manley and Mr. Lucas expressed how nice it is to attend this event and join in celebrating existing industries in Wythe County.

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION SUPPORTING DATA CENTER RECRUITMENT

Mr. Manley read a resolution to the board to consider adopting based on a conversation with Senator Pillion and other members of the Southwest Virginia legislative delegation recently. He added that data center recruitment was a significant topic of conversation during this General Assembly session. In the discussion, the topic of local elected boards and IDA/EDA boards going on the record articulating their support of data center recruitment. Mr. Manley mentioned data center recruitment has been something the Joint IDA has pursued for over 15 years and that Progress Park was certified as a data center site. Mr. Manley mentioned that while data centers don't create lots of jobs, but they do create a lot of revenue for the locality. Mr. Lucas made the motion to adopt the following resolution as read by Mr. Manley. Ms. Case seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea – Michael Cole, Chairman
Jeff Lucas, Vice-Chairman
Sherri Case, Treasurer
Vicki Parks

Nay – None

Absent during vote: Matt Clarke
Dennis Manuel
Aaron Robinson

The resolution read:

**A Resolution Affirming Data Center Recruitment
for Economic Development in Wythe County**

WHEREAS, the people of Wythe County benefit from a vibrant and growing local economy, and

WHEREAS, the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat, works to increase economic opportunity for the people of the three localities it serves, and

WHEREAS, Wythe County's economy is stronger because of its diversified nature, and

WHEREAS, supporting increased economic opportunity, prosperity, and the quality of life afforded to Wythe Countians represented is a valid purpose and represents a desirable use of resources by the Authority, and

WHEREAS, data center recruitment has been a key component of the articulated sector strategy of the Joint IDA of Wythe County for more than a decade, and

WHEREAS, the significant capital investment represented by the location of a data center and the wages paid to those employed by the enterprise support the long-term economic strength and health of the area, and

WHEREAS, a strong local tax base supported by a robust business community keeps the overall tax burden on local citizens lower, then therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, by the duly appointed Board of Directors of the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat, that the recruitment of data center facilities is affirmed as an economic development strategy and that the location of an appropriate data center project in Wythe County is a desirable outcome that would benefit Wythe County's economy.

Adopted this the 23rd day of January 2025.

Michael D. Cole
Board Chair

Jessica E. DeHart
Secretary to Board

OTHER

None.

Closed Session as permitted by Code of Virginia sections: §2.2-3711 (A)(1) [Personnel], §2.2-3711 (A)(3) [Discussion of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose], §2.2-3711 (A)(5) [Discussion of prospective or expanding business or industry (Project Gradient, Project Element, and unnamed project)], and §2.2-3711 (A)(29) [Discussion of contracting with public funds].

Mr. Lucas moved that the Board of Directors of the Joint IDA of Wythe County enter closed session pursuant to Code of Virginia sections: §2.2-3711 (A)(1): Personnel, §2.2-3711 (A)(3): Discussion of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, §2.2-3711 (A)(5): Discussion of prospective or expanding business or industry (Project Gradient, Project Element, and unnamed project), and §2.2-3711 (A)(29): Discussion of contracting with public funds.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Case.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea – Michael Cole, Chairman
Jeff Lucas, Vice-Chairman
Sherri Case, Treasurer
Vicki Parks

Nay – None

Absent during vote: Matt Clarke

Dennis Manuel
Aaron Robinson

The board entered a closed session discussion at 3:57 PM.

At 4:33 PM, Mr. Lucas then moved the Board of Directors of the Joint IDA of Wythe County re-enter open session pursuant to the previously announced expectations of Virginia's open meeting law and further would certify that only named matters were discussed in closed session.

The motion was seconded by Ms. Case.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea – Michael Cole, Chairman
Jeff Lucas, Vice-Chairman
Sherri Case, Treasurer
Vicki Parks

Nay – None

Absent during vote: Matt Clarke
Dennis Manuel
Aaron Robinson

Mr. Lucas made the motion to authorize the executive director to pursue a financing package with New Peoples Bank to secure the purchase of 190 South 1st Street and authorize him to execute the necessary documents to formalize that arrangement. Ms. Case seconded the motion, which was passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chairman Cole adjourned the meeting at 4:34 PM.

Michael Cole, Chairman

Attest:

Jessica E. DeHart, Secretary