

JOINT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Minutes of Meeting
February 26, 2026

The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat held its regular meeting on Thursday, February 26, 2026, 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
Sherry Case, Treasurer
Dennis Manuel
Aaron Robinson
Bobby Angles
Mark Bloomfield

MEMBERS ABSENT

None.

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Stephen Bear, County Administrator, Wythe County
Chris Slep, Interim Town Manager, Town of Wytheville

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Jason Childers, Town Manager, Town of Rural Retreat

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.

Mr. Manley introduced Mr. Chris Slemp, the Wytheville Interim Town Manager, to the board.

CITIZENS’ TIME

Chairman Cole welcomed Stephen Bear, County Administrator, Wythe County, Dr. Beth Taylor, Mayor, Town of Wytheville, Chris Slemp, Interim Town Manager, Town of Wytheville, and two citizens to the meeting.

Mr. Tony Floyd signed up for citizens’ time and stated the following, “I didn’t come prepared for anything, I didn’t have the agenda. I just wanted to put on the record that I showed up for here, because I’ve showed up before and I just wanted to be present. I know it’s important for people to show up. I know you don’t get very many people, and so I just wanted you to know I was here, and to just be considerate of all the opinions and thoughts of the citizens of the county making the decisions that you guys make. They should be first over profits, corporations, and business entities. I understand the importance of economic development in this locality, but you have to balance it, and please be considerate of everybody’s opinions and thoughts. Thank you.”

Chairman Cole thanked Mr. Floyd for coming and taking the time to speak. Chairman Cole offered the Joint IDA staff for further questions if needed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 22, 2026

Chairman Cole asked if there were any comments about the draft minutes from the January 22, 2026, meeting. There were none. Mr. Bloomfield made the motion to accept the January 22, 2026, minutes as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Lucas. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES

Chairman Cole asked if there were any questions or comments about the financial statements from January 23, 2026, to February 26, 2026. Ms. Case mentioned she reviewed the financial statements and had a question about the marketing and professional development expenses, mentioning they seemed lower at this time of year. Mr. Manley explained that they often come out in bigger checks with advertising in guides or publications. He mentioned we haven’t had many site visits where that expense would also be used. With no further discussion, Mr. Manuel made a motion to approve the financial statements as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Lucas. The motion passed unanimously.

**Joint IDA of Wythe County
Check Register
January 23, 2026 - February 26, 2026**

Type	Date	Payee	Amount
EFT	02/26/2026	Xerox Corporation	\$22.47

EFT	02/26/2026	Verizon	\$58.01
EFT	02/26/2026	Appalachian Power Company	\$251.21
EFT	02/26/2026	First Bank-Master Card	\$2,505.15
EFT	02/26/2026	Town of Wytheville	\$38.32
EFT	02/26/2026	Brightspeed	\$155.99
EFT	02/26/2026	Brightspeed	\$131.43
EFT	02/26/2026	New Peoples Bank-Wytheville	\$1,253.13
8354	02/26/2026	SVAM	\$50.00
8355	02/26/2026	Town of Wytheville	\$44,152.59
8356	02/26/2026	Robinson Farmer Cox Associates, PLLC	\$9,100.00
8357	02/26/2026	Dewberry Engineers Inc.	\$3,000.00
8358	02/26/2026	Cowan Perry PC	\$850.00
8359	03/02/2026	Duchess Dairy Products	\$25,000.00
Total			\$86,568.30

STAFF REPORTS

STAFF REPORT- DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Mr. Robinson entered the meeting at 3:14 pm.

Activity

140 S 1st Street Development Work – Grant application, Grant reporting, Vendor meetings, Financing Meetings

Business Solutions Unit-Chair

Regular Meeting

Career Fair Planning-April 21

Manufacturer Meetings – Atsumi

Mount Rogers Regional Partnership –

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)

Public Policy Brief at Investor Breakfast

Wythe Manufacturer Roundtable Planning-March 18

Projects – 2

Projects – Property Owners

Real Estate Database Update

Revolving Loan Fund -

1 Applications

Small Business Administration Roundtable, Wytheville Meeting Center

Supply Chain Networking Event Planning

Small Business Assistance

Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA) Board Member

Weekly public policy calls

Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)-Business Retention and Expansion (BRE)

Mr. Matthews reported that Modern Day Roofing has been reaching out weekly confirming that the 140 S. 1st Street building is still on their calendar, and that they are waiting for nicer weather. He mentioned the Joint IDA has received one contractor quote and is waiting on another at this time.

Mr. Matthews said he has been working on the Spring Career Fair that will be on April 21, 2026, at the Wytheville Meeting Center to showcase to students what kind of jobs exist in the community. He noted they are continuing to add more engagement activities to encourage students to talk to the employers and learn more about the jobs. Ms. Becky Fisher from Mount Rogers Regional Partnership is lead on the student component of the job fair, while he is handling more of the administrative work. Lists of the positions and the companies in attendance will be posted on the MadeWythePride.org website. If people aren't able to attend, they can still see what kind of jobs are available and apply to them online with the links that will be provided. Ms. Case asked how many companies there will be in attendance. Mr. Matthews said they will reach out to employers soon, but that the number was down last year in the thirties. He commented that it is typically students that are in attendance but that the career fair is open to the public.

Mr. Matthews stated he and Mount Rogers Regional Partnership are also working on a Manufacturer Roundtable on March 18. He added there will be a speaker this year, and that there are plans to have three roundtables this year for manufacturers to lead the discussion on the topics they would like to discuss.

Mr. Matthews also reported on the Investor Engagement Breakfast and State Legislative Update that took place on February 25, 2026, at the Wytheville Meeting Center at 8:00 AM hosted by Mount Rogers Regional Partnership where he was among panelists including Josh Hess from Congressman Griffith's office. He talked about all of the bills that he is monitoring and their impact on Virginia businesses specifically a few labor bills and the potential costs to the employers. Mr. Matthews said he would send a bill tracker to the board. Mr. Manley added that he was impressed with all of the businesses that were in attendance from all over the Mount Rogers Regional Partnership footprint.

Mr. Matthews said that the Bluefield, West Virginia Economic Development office received one of three federal Small Business Administration grants in the country to support manufacturing. They will be offering different types of training and resources to manufacturers in Southern West Virginia and Southwest Virginia. They are hosting informational and working group sessions to get an idea of what manufacturers feel would best serve them from the grant funding. One of those requests was a supply chain networking event, where Mr. Sam Wolford of GENEDGE has requested Mr. Matthew's assistance in facilitating that event later this year.

STAFF REPORT- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Manley reported the pipeline of new investment projects is very low at the moment, but that doesn't mean that won't change sometime soon. The readiness of Lot 10 and what happens with the Blue Star property will have a lot to do with what that pipeline looks like. The more sites that are ready and available means more discussion with prospects.

Mr. Manley gave an update on the Blue Star project reporting through counsel; a letter was recently sent to the Blue Star management team requesting a conference. He and Stephen Bear, along with the Joint IDA's attorney, Jim Cowan, met with Scott Maier and Victor Galati of Blue Star and their counsel, Anthony Anikeeff. The Blue Star performance period will come to an end in about thirteen months, and there is an expectation to hear from Blue Star as to their plan and the likelihood of what their additional funding might be. Mr. Manley said he anticipates that plan will be returned in the next couple of weeks. He remarked that it's been a very long process since the Joint IDA first engaged with them, and while the project certainly showed a lot of promise early on, the lack of federal funding for the follow-through has been rough on all parties involved. Mr. Manley said he is hopeful this plan will clarify a path forward.

Mr. Manley remarked that it's budget season, and that he has been working on a budget on and off since December. He added that after the Joint IDA treasurer, Ms. Case, had an opportunity to review it, he submitted the funding request to all three localities for the coming FY 2026-27. The budget hearing with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors is in mid-March. The Joint IDA will likely adopt the budget prior to the end of the fiscal year in June.

Mr. Manley said a biennial, mandated FOIA training will be scheduled soon to allow for maximum board participation and attendance. He added that he and Ms. DeHart are looking into guidance from the Freedom of Information Advisory Council on the best way to carry this out.

In conclusion of his staff report, Mr. Manley commented that he'd like to speak on confidentiality in economic development stating, "I bring this up because at the grocery store or at a ballgame, you might be asked about why we do our work the way we do. Recent conversations regarding the recently announced Solis Arx project in Progress Park have highlighted a fundamental part of our work, and that is the expectation of confidentiality.

Whether we are assisting a local business expansion or recruiting a global firm, confidentiality is a professional standard. Just as we wouldn't share sensitive details about your neighbor's business or their company's internal plans, we do not share the proprietary information for any prospect.

In the competition for jobs and investment, this is the global rule of engagement. Confidentiality isn't about a "climate of secrecy"-it's about protecting a company's competitive advantage. We all must always balance the public's right to know with the private sector's need to compete. However, simultaneously we must be honest about the stakes: Transparency means very little if our citizens are unemployed or we lack the tax base to fund core services.

Another way to think about it is this way: If Wythe County cannot guarantee a secure environment for a company's business data, they won't change their plans; they will simply move those jobs and that investment to a community that will.

Our local economy has grown and jobs have been created by projects with codenames. A \$40 million-plus expansion at Klockner was known as Project KP 2020. A major expansion at Musser Lumber was known as Project Groove. The recent addition of equipment and jobs at Duchess Dairy was called Project Jersey.

Going further back, one of the first projects I worked on was named Project Copper. That became the expansion of the company in Fairview, then known as Schaffner MTC but now known as AQ Transformers. None of these projects would have materialized unless professional standards were followed.

This was all true when I started in 2014 and it is true today. Our team is made up of earnest professionals dedicated to ensuring Wythe County citizens have the opportunities they deserve to work, raise families, and build a future here at home. If we don't participate by these industry standards, we don't just lose projects-we give away our future prosperity to the communities ready to compete."

PROJECT UPDATE

PROGRESS PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT-LOT 10

Mr. Manley stated that the weather over the last few weeks has put off the geotechnical, boring work that our third-party review determined was needed. He said he is under the impression that it is being done imminently and should be the last step before the environmental permits for the grading project with DEQ are reviewed and hopefully approved. He added that he believes the site development project is relatively on track within a few weeks.

He said he did receive a proposal from Dewberry on the bid and construction management that will be discussed later in closed session.

Mr. Manley reported that the project engineers are engaged with engineers from Appalachian Power on the relocation of some power poles that are on the northern fringe of the site, and he is hoping for a quick resolution.

He anticipates this will go out to bid next month noting the project is only a few weeks behind on the current timeline, but he believes it can be made up based on the construction management proposal from Dewberry. Several companies have reached out in the past few months to express interest in submitting proposals for the work, so he is hopeful we get compelling bids, so the project can move forward.

Mr. Manley and Ms. DeHart will be working on the Joint IDA's reimbursement request to both the Commonwealth and to Wythe County to help replenish the operating fund for monies expended in Phase I. He added the project is well within budget on Phase I, and that any surplus can be carried into the next phase of construction.

Ms. Case asked when VDOT is to complete the connector road and work on Lover's Lane. Mr. Bear said he thought it was to be completed in 2027. Mr. Manley added he had seen recently it could even be the end of 2026.

140 S 1ST STREET

Mr. Manley said he has been working with Mr. Matthews to develop a new pro forma for the 140 S. 1st Street project to help potential financial partners get an idea of what the project is attempting to do with the property

and why. He mentioned he has received some new information on possible financing that will better inform the Joint IDA on how to proceed. There are a couple of financing proposals to review in closed session.

Mr. Matthews added that the community is aware of the project, and he has already had businesses reach out asking about the commercial space. Mr. Manley said there currently is a demand for commercial and residential space. A conversation ensued about the parking lot.

NEW BUSINESS

RLF – LINE OF CREDIT INCREASE

Mr. Manley mentioned there was a letter in the board packet from Mr. Johnny O’Dell of O’Dell’s Landscape and Lawn Care requesting a line of credit increase from \$15,000 to \$25,000 with the same interest rate of 4.0%. Mr. Manley asked Ms. DeHart to comment on O’Dell’s payment history in previous years. Ms. DeHart mentioned that they always pay on time and pay well above what is due each month, recommending them for the line of credit increase. Joint IDA staff answered all questions from the board and a brief conversation ensued among the board about the request. Mr. Manuel made a comment about how impressed he was by Mr. O’Dell, his payments, his equipment, and his work reputation. Mr. Bloomfield made the motion to increase O’Dell’s Landscape and Lawn Care’s line of credit to \$25,000 at the interest rate of 3.5%. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Lucas abstained from the vote.

MARCH MEETING CONFLICT

Mr. Manley mentioned there is a scheduling conflict with the March meeting and the Virginia Economic Developers Association spring conference. He asked the board if they’d like to reschedule. The board decided to reschedule the March meeting to Monday, March 30, 2026, at 3:00 PM in the Town of Wytheville council chambers.

CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Lucas moved that the Joint IDA Board of Directors enter closed session as permitted by Code of Virginia sections:

- §2.2-3711(A)(5): Discussion of prospective or expanding business or industry (Project Arlo, Project Titan, Project Transmission)
- §2.2-3711(A)(29): Negotiation of public contracts for the Lot 10 site development project and for the 140 S 1st Street project

The motion was seconded by Mr. Manuel.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea – Dennis Manuel
Aaron Robinson
Jeff Lucas

Sherri Case
Michael Cole
Bobby Angles
Mark Bloomfield

Nay – None

Absent during vote: None

The board entered a closed session discussion at 3:40 PM.

At 4:47 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 exceptions of Virginia’s open meeting law and further would certify that only identified matters were discussed in closed session.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bloomfield.

Roll Call Vote:

Yea – Dennis Manuel
Aaron Robinson
Jeff Lucas
Sherri Case
Michael Cole
Bobby Angles
Mark Bloomfield

Nay – None

Absent during vote: None

OTHER

Mr. Manuel made the motion that the Joint IDA Board of Directors, animated by a valid economic development purpose, authorizes the Executive Director and staff to continue engagement on Project Transmission, including the negotiation and execution of any agreements or documents necessary to advance the project, in consultation with Joint IDA counsel as needed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bloomfield and passed unanimously.

Mr. Robinson then made the motion that the Joint IDA Board of Directors, animated by a valid economic development purpose, authorizes the Executive Director and staff to continue engagement on Project Arlo, including the negotiation and execution of any agreements or documents necessary to advance the project, in consultation with Joint IDA counsel as needed, which was seconded by Mr. Bloomfield. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Lucas made a motion that the Joint IDA Board of Directors, animated by a valid economic development purpose, authorizes the Executive Director to engage Dewberry for construction and bid management services for the Lot 10 site development project, in consultation with Joint IDA counsel as needed. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bloomfield and passed unanimously.

Ms. Case motioned that the Joint IDA Board of Directors, animated by a valid economic development purpose, authorizes the Executive Director and staff to negotiate and execute any agreements or documents with partners, contractors, or other necessary parties to advance the Progress Park Lot 10 site development project, in consultation with Joint IDA counsel as need. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bloomfield and passed unanimously.

Mr. Angles then motioned that the Joint IDA Board of Directors, animated by a valid economic development purpose, authorizes the Executive Director and staff to negotiate and execute any agreements, loan or other financial agreements, or documents with partners, contractors, or other necessary parties to advance the 140 South 1st Street redevelopment project, in consultation with Joint IDA counsel as needed, which was seconded by Mr. Bloomfield. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Manley shared the team registration form with the board for the Joint IDA Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament scheduled for May 21, 2026. Lunch will be at 11:00 AM, with a shotgun start at 12:00 PM, with a reception following the tournament in the clubhouse. He also pointed out the invitation in the board packet for the Industry Tenure Awards luncheon scheduled for April 23, 2026, at the Wytheville Meeting Center at 12:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, Chairman Cole adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:52 PM.

Michael Cole, Chairman

Attest:

Jessica E. DeHart, Secretary