

JOINT INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Minutes of Meeting
May 28, 2026
and reconvened on June 15, 2026

The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat held its regular meeting on Thursday, May 28, 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
Sherrri Case, Treasurer
Aaron Robinson
Bobby Angles
Mark Bloomfield

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dennis Manuel

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.

CITIZENS’ TIME

Chairman Cole welcomed Stephen Bear, County Administrator, Wythe County, Dr. Beth Taylor, Mayor, Town of Wytheville, Chris Slemple, Interim Town Manager, Town of Wytheville, and Patricia Bevel, Virginia Works. No citizens spoke at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – April 23, 2026

Chairman Cole asked if there were any comments or questions about the draft minutes from the April 23, 2026. There were none. Ms. Case made the motion to accept minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lucas and passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL REPORTS AND APPROVAL OF INVOICES

Chairman Cole asked if there were any questions about the financial statements from April 24, 2026, to May 28, 2026. Ms. Case mentioned the financial reports regarding the operating account have been updated due to new invoices that came in after the initial financial documents were emailed to the Board. The reports that have been handed out in the board packet reflect those changes. Mr. Manley answered all questions from the board regarding the new invoices that were related to the golf tournament and Lot 10 site development. With no further discussion, Mr. Lucas made a motion to approve the financial statements as presented, which was seconded by Mr. Robinson. The motion passed unanimously.

**Joint IDA of Wythe County
Check Register
April 24, 2026 - May 28, 2026**

Type	Date	Payee	Amount
EFT	05/28/2026	Verizon	\$77.95
EFT	05/28/2026	Xerox Corporation	\$29.88
EFT	05/28/2026	Appalachian Power Company	\$100.68
EFT	05/28/2026	New Peoples Bank-Wytheville	\$1,253.13
EFT	05/28/2026	Brightspeed	\$155.99
EFT	05/28/2026	Brightspeed	\$128.98
EFT	05/28/2026	Town of Wytheville	\$39.03
EFT	05/28/2026	First Bank-MasterCard	\$4,316.20
8371	05/28/2026	Wytheville Meeting Center	\$190.00
8372	04/27/2026	Beyond Catering SWVA, LLC	\$2,224.30

8373	05/28/2026	AZOR Inc.	\$264.60
8374	05/28/2026	Joshua Neal-Brook Hill Lawncare	\$125.00
8375	05/28/2026	Town of Wytheville	\$31,541.31
8376	05/28/2026	Mt. Rogers Regional Partnership	\$60.00
8377	05/28/2026	Wytheville Meeting Center	\$642.00
8378	05/28/2026	Leo's Pest Control Services, Inc.	\$124.50
8379	05/28/2026	Cowan Perry PC	\$500.00
8380	05/19/2026	CASH (Golf Tournament Prizes)	\$700.00
8381	05/28/2026	Shupe's Heat and Air	\$384.05
8382	05/28/2026	Dewberry Engineers Inc.	\$2,933.50
8383	05/28/2026	Wytheville Convention & Visitors Bureau	\$1,000.00
8384	05/28/2026	Wytheville Golf Club	\$3,900.00
Total			\$50,691.10

STAFF REPORTS

STAFF REPORT- DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Mr. Hankins entered the board meeting at 3:04 PM.

Activity

140 S 1st Street Development Work – Grant application, Grant reporting, Vendor meetings, Grant Remittance, Roof Installation

Business Solutions Unit-Chair

Career Fair: Planning, Production, Follow-up- April 28

Business Success Symposium planning

GENEDGE- Leading for Operational Excellence: Planning, Attendee, In-kind Sponsor- May 5

Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament-April 21

JST Power Open House: Planning assistance, Attendee-May 19

Locus- Billie Roberts, community development projects discussion, what opportunities exist for Locus to partner

Mount Rogers Regional Partnership –

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Outreach

Projects – 3

Projects – Property Owners

Real Estate Database Update

Revolving Loan Fund -

Loan Closing

Small Business Assistance-4

Tobacco Commission- Grant reporting

Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA) Board Member-

ImpactED Webinar-Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) is an innovative financing tool that supports energy efficient upgrades, retrofits, and energy generation across commercial (C-PACE), industrial, and residential (R-PACE) properties.

Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)-

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Outreach
Property Owner Calls with Real Estate Team

Virginia Housing-Workforce housing discussions

Virginia Rural Leadership Institute: Mentor, Project planning-workforce attraction with housing tool

Wytheville Board of Zoning Appeals, Chair-May 28

Mr. Matthews reported that Modern Day Roofing is still working on the roof for the 140 S. 1st Street building and are fabricating the metal capping at this time. He also mentioned that an application submitted last year to the Tobacco Commission had a request for additional information recently and he announced that the Joint IDA was awarded an additional \$390K to reduce the amount of financing needed to complete the project. Mr. Matthews said that staff is excited about the award and are proud of the work that has been done to secure grant funding for the 140 S. 1st Street building making a new total of grant awards at just over \$1.9 million.

Mr. Matthews thanked Ms. DeHart for her efforts in planning the Industry Appreciation Golf Tournament. He mentioned that it was a great tournament with 25 teams despite the storm that rolled through midday causing us to hold the reception early and determine winners based on scoring from the first nine holes.

Mr. Matthews mentioned the Joint IDA staff helped JST Power put together a guest list and agenda for their open house event on May 19 noting that they had an incredible turnout for the event. He said he was excited for them and the opportunities they discussed at the open house.

He reported he had a meeting with Billie Roberts at Locus Bank who wanted to discuss community development opportunities with the Joint IDA. Locus Bank previously participated in the financing for the equipment for STS and assisted with the purchase of the 140 S. 1st Street building. They are proud of the work they have done and want to expand upon it in the community.

Mr. Matthews and Mr. Manley answered all questions from the Board about the activities in the past month and plans concerning the 140 S. 1st Street project.

STAFF REPORT- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Mr. Manley reported that last month he attended the Southern Economic Development Council (SEDC) American South Site Selection Summit held in Arlington, Texas this year, noting that attendance was over 500 with local and regional economic developers, some economic developers on the state level, and dozens of site selection consultants. The site selection consultants work with many of the larger and more impactful project. He said the largest conversations he had were around energy and some data center

discussions. Mr. Manley noted that the availability of actual ready acreage has shrunk drastically and is continuing to do so. This has moved site selection out to less ready properties, but speed-to-market is always the ultimate variable in projects.

He informed the board he also attended the Southern Virginia Regional Alliance's data center educational summit for elected and appointed officials and economic developers held at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville, VA where he learned about how Pittsylvania, Halifax, and other localities wrestled with the realities of this type of economic development. Mr. Manley heard from Mecklenburg County, specifically, on their community investments borne of over 25 years of Microsoft being in their community. The Mecklenburg County Administrator, Alex Gottschalk, commented that in recent years their county has paid cash for every school constructed.

Mr. Manley reported that Mt. Rogers Regional Partnership hosted a regional educational data center event yesterday for their investors and elected and appointed officials throughout our economic development region. The event featured subject matter experts from the public and private sector with genuine experience and perspective on this sector and what it means in various places around Virginia and beyond. He stated there were at least 70 people at the event. Mr. Manley helped coordinate a few of the speakers including Vince Barnett from Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and Chris Lloyd of McGuireWoods consulting. At the last minute, the sponsor asked if Mr. Manley would moderate a panel with two economic developers with 50 years of combined experience featuring Anthony Romanello, the recent former director of the Henrico EDA, and Todd Gillingham, from the Fredericksburg regional EDO. Mr. Romanello discussed the industry's evolution in Henrico, particularly the White Oak Technology park near the airport and the community's \$60M housing trust fund to support additional housing development. That fund has supported the construction of several hundred homes already. Mr. Gillingham spoke about the rural communities and their posture toward data center development. Engineering firm Hurt & Proffitt sponsored the event, and it was the fourth one of these educational events that Mr. Manley said he has been a part of.

Mr. Bloomfield who attended the event felt as though it was very enlightening and noted the variety in sizes and types of data centers. He added that he learned there was more negative and incorrect information out there than the reality of the impacts of a data center, especially one that would be in a confined area like the industrial park. Mr. Angles mentioned he hadn't heard about the fact of there being a national security issue if data centers don't locate inside the United States commenting that it was discovered that some of the protesters in Utah were actually funded by the Chinese to discourage data center growth. Mr. Robinson felt the event was highly informative. He said he understands the complaints about them but also understands where we need to compete in technology. One thing that stuck in his head was the misinformation about water usage: golf courses use 571 billion gallons of water annually where data centers use 17 billion per year. He noted that logistically Wythe County is one of the better areas suited for data centers regarding the infrastructure with electricity and water and no zoning which is why it is so appealing to them. Mr. Robinson said he doesn't like to see farmland go away, but if we were to create a new industrial park, as Progress Park is almost full, farmland would need to be purchased to provide that need. He said he hears both sides and felt like the educational data center event was highly informative and beneficial. Mr. Bloomfield asked if the slides from the presentation could be provided to the board. Mr. Manley said he thought it was the intention of the presenter to make the slides available to all attendees, but that he would follow up to make sure.

The board and staff held a brief conversation about site availability in Progress Park and the need to think ahead for new, available, and ready sites. Mr. Bear mentioned that Mt. Rogers Regional Partnership engaged with Timmons Group out of Richmond, VA, for a study to identify 20 sites in their footprint of Bland, Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Wythe County, and the City of Galax. The study came up with a top 10 list of potential, developable sites for economic development and four were within the county.

The board and staff engaged again in the topic of data centers and what is making Wythe County appealing to this type of development. Chairman Cole said he has always been impressed with the Joint IDA Board, Wythe County, and the Town of Wytheville with how much work they do to consider businesses and organizations that are good for the community. When he first saw the information on data centers, he was impressed on how it could be environmentally friendly and safe. Chairman Cole said these centers will be somewhere, and there is an opportunity to work with the development in a way that coordinates with the needs of the community. He went on to comment that there is significant electrical infrastructure in the park. Mr. Chairman asked about the sound issues. Mr. Manley said that with any business that locates in Progress Park, there are very well established, specific and strict covenants that allow activities with certain limitations including noise at the boundary, lighting, the way the buildings are constructed, types of things that can be located there. The covenants are legally bound to every piece of property within Progress Park, so it is not a matter of policy. Mr. Robinson mentioned that Wythe County is one of a handful of counties in the state without zoning, which is possibly appealing to data center developers.

On May 12, Mr. Manley stated the Tobacco Commission held its spring meeting in Floyd, VA. He attended the Southwest Committee meeting, the reception, and then the full commission meeting the next day. Mr. Manley said he was pleased to report that the Joint IDA was awarded over \$390,000 to complete the required capital stack to proceed with the 140 S. 1st Street project. This was a highly competitive grant round, and he is pleased that the Joint IDA was able to access these funds for the community.

Last week GO Virginia Region One hosted an input session for Governor Spanberger's new economic development plan. Mr. Manley remarked there were between 75 to 100 attendees at the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Center in Abingdon for the session. He stated Commerce and Trade staff and team members from VEDP, DHCD, and Virginia Housing ran quite a few concurrent discussions on Southwest Virginia's assets, strengths, and challenges as the region moves forward in economic development. In the breakout session, Mr. Manley said he leaned on site development as being a positive tool for ongoing resiliency and sustainability. He said one thing he has learned that there are more than a few communities in Virginia that don't have the staff resources or technical expertise to put together grant applications, strategic plans, etc.

Mr. Manley reported he forwarded an email from Wythe County Administrator, Mr. Bear, about a proposed June 15th meeting with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors and the Joint IDA Board. It accompanied the Joint IDA budget allocation from Wythe County for the coming year. He noted he had no more information at this time beyond what he shared. He mentioned that he did bring copies of the email, if the Board did not receive that email.

Mr. Bloomfield asked if the Joint IDA had a budget committee. Mr. Manley said that it is typical that

budgets and drafts are created with the input of the Treasurer and then circulated to the Board afterwards. Mr. Manley said that is at the discretion of the Board if they would like to move forward with one. Mr. Bloomfield mentioned that it might be helpful to have a budget committee going forward to have more input and validate decisions at no offense to the Treasurer, of course. Ms. Case indicated she is happy to have more input and have another board member lay eyes on everything.

Mr. Manley informed the board that he has just completed his twelfth year as executive director of the Joint IDA and wanted to say the following:

“On May 15, 2014, I walked through the door for the first time as executive director. Since then, this community has seen capital investment cross the billion-dollar threshold. We have cultivated productive and meaningful relationships in the public and private sector, not just in Virginia but beyond as well. Every good economic development organization should do that.

I am proud to report that Wythe County’s total economic output has grown from \$1.379 billion to \$1.891 billion during that same period. The number of businesses operating in the county grew from 786 to 923. These are certainly objective measures of what I would call a healthy and growing local economy, and I think they very well reflect the community we work in.

To sum up: I am proud of our work, and the way we do it ethically. I am proud of our return on investment. But what brings me much more pride than any of those things is the team we have put together here.

Jessica and John have worked hard every single day to bring value to the people that we serve and this organization, and I am grateful to stand beside them.

There are today more people, I believe, in Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat can raise families successfully and meet their goals today than could have without our help this many years.

This work is why we’re here. That hasn’t changed, and for as long as we’re here, that won’t change. So I just wanted to say that in closing. Thank you, all.”

Ms. Case thanked Mr. Manley and said she wanted to take the opportunity to congratulate the team on the Tobacco Commission award. She thanked Mr. Manley for being so responsive to their desires from last year’s comments, so that the Joint IDA could be successful with the grant.

Mr. Angles commented that at the JST Power open house event at the company’s facilities in Fairview industrial park in Wytheville, the company’s executive vice president, Matthew Polk, commented that the company would not be there without the Joint IDA. Mr. Manley remarked that their comments were surprising but certainly welcomed. He added that the JST group leadership came to the office for a conversation which grew into a significant economic opportunity. Mr. Manley expects more good things to come from that project and its investment and job growth.

PROJECT UPDATE

PROGRESS PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT-LOT 10

Mr. Manley reported that the engineering consultants submitted the stormwater permit for the grading project back to Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). There were some administrative changes (as opposed to substantive ones) that needed to be tweaked in the application. Mr. Manley said the two staff from the Office of Permitting Assistance from DEQ came to Wytheville on May 15 to meet with County Administrator, County Engineer, and himself to have a conversation about how the new Office of Permitting Assistance can be helpful in certain types of projects. He commented that it is fortunate that this project is part of the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program because this permitting timeline is compressed as part of their streamlined process. Mr. Manley says he hopes to have a permit in hand soon so that we can officially begin phase two of performance agreement for the Lot 10 site development project. He added that several contractors have expressed serious interest in bidding on the work. He added he is hopeful for competitive proposals.

140 S 1ST STREET

Mr. Matthews and Mr. Manley reported on this project in the staff report above.

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER

None.

RECESS

Chairman Cole entertained a motion to recess the meeting until the combined Joint IDA Board and Wythe County Board of Supervisors meeting on Monday, June 15, 2026, located at 360 South Sixth Street, Wytheville, Virginia, 24382 at 5:00 PM. At 3:56 PM, Mr. Lucas made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Robinson. The motion passed unanimously.

Reconvened Meeting: June 15, 2026

The Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County, Wytheville, and Rural Retreat reconvened its recessed May 28th meeting on Monday, June 15, 2026, at 5:00 PM, in the Board Room of the Wythe County Administration Building at 340 South Sixth Street, Wytheville, Virginia jointly with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors

MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Cole, Chairman
Jeff Lucas, Vice Chairman
Aaron Robinson

Bobby Angles
Mark Bloomfield

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sherrri Case, Treasurer
Dennis Manuel

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Stephen Bear, County Administrator, Wythe County

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Chris Slemph, Interim Town Manager, Town of Wytheville
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.

CALL TO ORDER OF RECONVENED MEETING AND DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Cole called the Joint IDA meeting to order and determined a quorum to be present with five board members present. Joint IDA Counsel Jim Cowan and Joint IDA staff are present. He said both Sherrri Case, the Joint IDA Treasurer, and board member Dennis Manual send their regrets for being unable to attend the meeting, but both are away for a long-planned travel this week. Chairman Cole entertained a motion from the Joint IDA board to amend the agenda to incorporate the items referred to on the county-supplied agenda received Friday afternoon. Mr. Bloomfield made the motion, which was seconded by Vice-Chairman Lucas. The motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION

BLUE STAR PROJECT

Chairman Cole said the Joint IDA worked with VEDP to recruit this project to Progress Park. Announced in October 2021, its \$714 million investment and creation of over 2,400 jobs made it the largest economic development announcement in Southwest Virginia history. Governor Northan attended the groundbreaking on November 22, 2021. The phase one NBR raw material facility was completed May 31, 2023. He stated it never operated, and the failure is at the federal level.

Chairman Cole said that unless any member of the Joint IDA board has anything to add or an objection, he would defer to the Executive Director David Manley for a summary.

Mr. Manley thanked the Chairman and continued with the Blue Star summary reporting that the Joint IDA worked with VEDP to recruit this project, and Progress Park was an ideal fit with its infrastructure, utilities, and acreage. When VEDP brought Project Glove to the Joint IDA in May 2021, Wythe County was the third site they considered and the first that could meet all the project needs.

He continued that the announcement in October 2021 represented \$714 million in planned investment and approximately 2,500 jobs. The groundbreaking was November 22, 2021, and phase one was completed in May of 2023. Mr. Manley reported it has never operated, and the failure is for lack of funding follow-through at the federal level. The federal financing the project was counting on never materialized. He said the Development Financing Corporation's Defense Production Act loan program, which Blue Star was relying on, proved ineffective and issued zero loans for PPE manufacturing. He continued that the domestic PPE manufacturing marketplace is more competitive now than at the time of the announcement. Mr. Manley reported that Chinese manufacturing has gone from 5-7% of the US glove market to over 45%. Blue Star and the broader domestic glove manufacturing sector face significant headwinds that no local advocacy effort could overcome.

Mr. Manley mentioned the effort has been exhaustive, and said the company, the public and private sector partners including industry groups and lobbyists, congressional offices, and the Governor's office all have engaged over the last few years. He said earlier this year, at the county's request, we wrote to Blue Star through counsel, and the company responded. While no additional action has taken place, and the performance period runs through March 2027.

Finally, He shared that Blue Star has invested significantly in the facility, building on roughly a third of Lot 24, to include significant rail and natural gas infrastructure. They have continued to engage on a path forward. Mr. Manley remarked that property like this would be in high demand.

Wythe County Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked Mr. Manley when the deadline for the Blue Star performance agreement is. Mr. Manley answered that it is the end of March 2027. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked if Blue Star has constructed the rail and the building's tanks, etc. on Lot 24B? Mr. Manley confirmed. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith stated that over the past year the Wythe County and the Board of Supervisors have had conversations with the Joint IDA Executive Director Mr. Manley about the need to be more aggressive with the letter sent to Blue Star. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked the Joint IDA board about what their understanding is of the project and the recommendation that was provided by the Joint IDA staff for the Blue Star project. Mr. Manley said they have been deferring to the county's judgement on that as the ultimate owner of the property. He continued that the letter was forwarded to County Administrator Stephen Bear, and that no additional action had occurred. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked the Joint

IDA board and staff what is the opinion or stand of the Joint IDA about getting 24A back from Blue Star and into the county's possession. Mr. Manley said he is not prepared to comment on that without input from Joint IDA counsel because the project is subject to performance agreements, various land transfer agreements, security interests, and deeds of trust.

Mr. Bear said that he wanted to follow up about when the letter was sent to the Blue Star company, he said the executives of the company expressed exasperation for having the letter sent. Mr. Bear asked what the weekly meetings with the company consist of and if the meetings are still ongoing. Mr. Manley said that the weekly meetings are still happening and that he would characterize them as updates from the company about all the work they've been doing with industry and federal government partners to secure funding. Mr. Manley said there have been multiple visits by federal officials to Wythe County over the last year, and he commented that he believes that Blue Star is trying everything they can to follow through on promises made, but that financing was promised and then not delivered. He added he would not blame the Blue Star team as they have executed what they have agreed to with the funding that was provided.

Mr. Bear iterated that there is no way at this time that they will meet the performance date of April 1, 2027, so this joint meeting gives everyone the opportunity to discuss a plan forward. Mr. Bear stated he is under the opinion and that his recommendation to the Wythe County Board of Supervisors is to start taking action to get 24A back to the county where there is no construction. He said that in section 4(c) of the performance agreement states "Should the Companies not substantially begin undertaking construction on the Facilities by January of 2023, the County may require that all the Land be reconveyed to the County, unencumbered by any third-party liens. Grading and site preparation shall not constitute construction for the purposes of this provision." Mr. Bear reiterated that 24A has not had anything on it other than a road at this time, so he stated that it will meet the April 1, 2027, timeframe. He said he just wanted to mention that because it's land that has been tied for many years now, and the answer has been the same for many years now that the company has been waiting on federal funding, adding that presidencies and congressional members have changed and nothing seems to be moving forward with financing. Mr. Bear believes it would be better for Wythe County to control the future of that land rather than the company who might have the ability to resell it and then pay the county back for what they would owe.

Chairman Cole said he would like to consult with JIDA counsel for advice on how to move forward. He said he agrees with Mr. Bear's point and says the performance agreement should be reviewed to provide next steps.

Mr. Bear said that it is the county's decision but since the agreement is with both the Joint Industrial Development Authority and Wythe County, he wanted to make sure that both parties are in agreement about next steps. He commented that he would love for Wythe County to have the original investment and the jobs found in the performance agreement, but it seems that that will not come to fruition. Mr. Bear remarked that there doesn't need to be action by either board right now, but that it should be considered for the future with advice from Wythe County and Joint IDA counsel.

Supervisor Morgan asked about what happens with the existing building. Mr. Bear emphasized that there are two parts, one being 24A which is empty and 24B has nearly \$120 million worth of investment on it. He added that that property will be a bit harder to unwind, remarking that those discussions should probably start as well. Supervisor Morgan asked about what is currently happening in the building. Mr. Bear said he believes they are just maintaining the building. It is sitting ready to make product according to the federal government, but has never been connected to water or sewer. The storage tanks on the outside of the building also have never been

connected. Supervisor Morgan asked if the performance agreement laid out when the company would start producing NBR. Mr. Bear said that it reads they would perform by April 1, 2027, including capital investment and 50% of the jobs that was announced. There was no further discussion about the Blue Star project.

SOLIS ARX PROJECT

Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith declared this item was originally on the agenda when this meeting was initially proposed to discuss concerns on the delays of the project, however since the drafting of the agenda, the project has been sold to Fluidstack. He added that Fluidstack presented information to the last Board of Supervisors meeting on June 9, 2026, addressing their purchase of the project and their plans to move forward. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith said there are no items to discuss at this time unless either board has any comments.

Supervisor Terry expressed concern about the breakdown about the project announcement stating that the company started cutting down trees in Progress Park on Lot 35, and there was an abundant amount of calls from the citizens about what was happening. He felt it was a terrible look for the Board of Supervisors who is ultimately accountable to the taxpayer to not have a project announced after being told what a project was. Supervisor Terry asked where the breakdown come down for the announcement of this project because there shouldn't have been anything being down on the lot until the announcement was made.

Mr. Manley commented that the announcement didn't happen as planned. A communication strategy was developed over several months, and the announcement played out otherwise. Mr. Manley said this announcement didn't require state level coordination like usual projects as there were no discretionary incentives with this project. It then becomes a discussion with the company about how the announcement should roll out.

Supervisor Terry commented that the late announcement broke trust with Board of Supervisors and the public, and that repercussions are still occurring. He remarked that that is unacceptable.

There was no further discussion about the Solix Arx project.

BUILDING ACQUISITION/DEVELOPMENT PROPERTIES UPDATE

JIDA OFFICE BUILDING

Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked if the Joint IDA used existing, operational funds or is there a loan for this property.

Chairman Cole stated the Joint IDA acquired two neighboring properties in downtown Wytheville in recent years to advance economic development goals. Both were approved by the Joint IDA board at open meetings and are consistent with the strategic direction established in our 2022 plan and the 2014 Joint Resolution adopted by all three governing bodies. He asked if any other Joint IDA board member has nothing to add or an objection, he would defer to Executive Director David Manley for a summary on both properties including current status, grant funds leveraged, and plans.

Mr. Manley said that the closing date for the 190 S. 1st Street Joint IDA office building was March 28, 2025, and the building has been the long-term home of the Joint Industrial Development Authority of Wythe County. He stated the Joint IDA has been pursuing acquisition of the property for several years with board support, so rent payments could be turned into equity with mortgage payments. The board approved the purchase, which included monthly loan payments of approximately \$1,250, or substantially below what the market price would be for comparable office space.

140 SOUTH 1ST STREET

Mr. Manley shared that the 140 S. 1st Street building was purchased on June 15, 2023, with board approval. The property was a blighted, uninhabitable mixed-use building. The Joint IDA had the building emptied as well as engineering and environmental evaluations completed. He stated \$1.913 million in grant funding has been secured across eight awards from six funding sources, the most recent of which was awarded last month, a \$390,657 award from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission. He continued that the capital stack has been completed with the most recent award, and the Joint IDA has successfully built a strong pro forma around it. Mr. Manley reported the first visible phase of progress is nearing completion as metal coping is being installed on the new roof as of today. The project will deliver ten housing units and two commercial spaces to the local economy and is adjacent to downtown Wytheville's revitalized Main Street. He said the project has always had built-in off ramps should it turn out to be better pursued by the private sector. He noted that walking away from this project at this time would mean returning most of the nearly \$2 million awarded from outside, non-local sources.

Mr. Manley asked if there were any questions about the project. He then asked if he could report on the Progress Park Lot 10 site development project. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked Mr. Manley to continue about Lot 10.

Mr. Manley stated Lot 10 is a \$7.158 million project that will turn an ungraded 62-acre site just north of the under-construction connector road in Progress Park into a Tier V, build-ready pad of 50 acres. He said this is funded approximately 78% through state grants from VEDP's Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (\$5.1 million) and GO Virginia (\$425,000), with Wythe County's local share at approximately \$1.6 million. He reported that environmental, geotechnical, design, and engineering work are complete. He continued that the stormwater permit is subject to streamlined review at Virginia DEQ and is now administratively complete as of 10 days ago. Upon DEQ plan approval, the Joint IDA will work with the contracted engineer to solicit proposals from qualified contractors with plans to move earth this summer. Mr. Manley reiterated that the funds were competitively pursued and won to minimize the burden on the locality and its people. Mr. Manley asked if either board had any questions or comments. There were none.

PLANS & FUNDING

Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked for the total cost on the office building locations including renovations. Mr. Manley said that for renovation and acquisition for the 140 S. 1st Street building will be just over \$3 million with \$2 million of that raised in grant funds from various parties. He added that the 190 S. 1st Street building cost around a quarter of a million dollars with monthly payments of approximately \$1,250.00. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked if there were any other questions from the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Terry asked what the long-term goal was for the 140 S. 1st Street building. Mr. Manley said there will be 8 apartments upstairs and 2 accessible units on the main floor with 2 sizeable commercial spaces that would ideally be built as white boxes. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked about the current commercial tenant in the building. Mr. Manley stated that there is likely not a long-term way for that tenant to continue in the spot based on current plans. He said there have been conversations, but he did not see a benefit in asking someone to cease doing business there until absolutely necessary.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked when they should start seeing grade work on Lot 10. Mr. Manley said that the permitting with DEQ has been marked as administratively complete. With a streamlined review, he feels though it is a matter of weeks instead of months, but he did not want to speak on behalf of DEQ.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith emphasized that the work on Lot 10 is only to make the lot ready to entice businesses to come to Wythe County. Mr. Manley confirmed stating that the lot is arguably one of the most marketable pieces of property in the park as it will be adjacent to the new connector road that will go out to I-77 Exit 41. Mr. Manley added that it's roughly 62 acres in its ungraded state, with a pad planned that is above 50 acres to meet the requirements for the Virginia Business Ready Sites program. He commented that he believed the project should be completed within a year of commencement if all goes to plan. Mr. Bear added that to maximize the pad size to get to 50 acres, the electrical line between Lot 10 & Lot 1 that currently services Somic America will need to be relocated. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith commented about the marketability of Lot 10 and Lot 24A.

Mr. Manley emphasized the 3:1 match for the funding for the Lot 10 site development, stating that 75% of the cost will be covered by someone else.

BUDGET DOCUMENTS, SALARY INCREASES, TRANSPARENCY

Chairman Cole said the Joint IDA board adopts the budget early June incorporating appropriations from three participating localities. For FY 26-27, Wythe County has appropriated \$200,000, the Town of Wytheville \$126,573, and the Town of Rural Retreat \$21,833. He continued that the budget is currently in development and will be considered at Joint IDA June board meeting. Aside, any discussion of personnel, compensation, and related matters is appropriate in closed session, and, on the advice of counsel, the Joint IDA will not engage on any of those topics in open session. Chairman Cole said that independent audits by Robinson, Farmer, Cox have been clean and unqualified every year characterized by the auditor "as good as it gets" for an organization of this type. The Joint IDA operates appropriately, both legally and ethically. He continued that unless any member of the Joint IDA board has anything to add or an objection, he would ask Executive Director David Manley if he would like to share any other details about the budget process.

Mr. Manley explained that the budget process is straightforward and has been consistent in the way its created for some years. A budget request is sent to the participating localities in February. He said that this year, as in years past, he presented the budget request and a summary of recent activities to the Board of Supervisors in March. Mr. Manley stated that he typically learns of the projected appropriations in the last few weeks of the fiscal year, with this year as no exception. From those numbers provided by the localities in June, the Joint IDA develops its budget and adopts it at the last board meeting of the fiscal year so that a budget is in place by July 1. He remarked that this is a customary practice and not unusual in any respect.

Mr. Manley continued that every budget becomes part of the organization's public record, is part of the regular financial reporting, and is part of the annual audit by Robinson, Farmer, Cox.

Stephen Bear provided a handout to board members in attendance and discussed Joint IDA staff salaries and the budget process by which they were adopted last year. He relayed concerns about that. He further noted that complete board packets are now being provided to all ex officio board members as well as the appointed board members.

He mentioned meeting with Mr. Manley along with the Wytheville Town Manager and the Rural Retreat Town Manager at the request of the Wythe County Board of Supervisors. Mr. Bear noted that the Joint IDA is an independent body, its own Authority, but 100% of its funding comes from the three governing bodies without other sources of revenue.

Chairman Cole apologized for any lack of transparency. He has always thought of the Joint IDA board as being available to the Board of Supervisors at any point in time, and if there was any question that the Joint IDA Board couldn't answer, the Joint IDA staff could. Chairman Cole said he agreed that there should be a salary review regardless of the budget process. He said that the Wythe County Board of Supervisors would be supplied with any requested information that is needed.

Chairman Smith said he was appreciative for the opportunity to meet with the Wythe County appointed Joint IDA board members to have those discussions and address the concerns outlined above. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith expressed that he is representing the County's taxpayers and the burden is on him and the Board of Supervisors to make sure that money is being spent the right way without surprises. He commented that he must make hard decisions. Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith said it is the Board of Supervisors' obligation to make sure that money is spent the right way on the necessary projects and to not be reckless with spending, adding that when changes are made, the Board of Supervisors should be notified.

Supervisor Terry said that the lack of transparency and finding out about changes after the fact is again a bad look and is extremely frustrating. He says he expects honesty, integrity, and accountability. He said the two items of the data center announcement and the lack of transparency are inexcusable commenting, "and that's all I'll say at this point."

Supervisor Cook added that as a board, they struggle to give Wythe County employees an increase, and he added he has not seen a whole lot of results as far as new companies coming in the last six years.

Chairman Smith added that Wythe County department managers presented budgets to the Board of Supervisors, and there were some harsh conversations about raises because they need to be good stewards of money that comes into the county.

Supervisor Burnett added that there is a trust with the citizens of Wythe County and it is a responsibility of each Board of Supervisors member to keep that trust especially now with some of the recent projects.

SPECIAL PROJECT FUND

None.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Board of Supervisors Chairman Smith asked the Joint IDA and staff about goals and objectives over the next five years. Chairman Cole stated that one of his goals for the organization and board is to make sure the Joint IDA is not guilty of lack of transparency in all matters as well as a review in the budgetary process. Chairman Cole said he appreciated the time and opportunity to speak with the Wythe County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Bear shared some of the things he felt he and the Board of Supervisors have had concern or frustration over and that need to be addressed in the process. He said that he does not feel like the Joint IDA has as strong a business and retention effort as there should be. He added that with the number of industries in the area, he would like to frequent regular visits by Joint IDA staff as well as reporting back to county. He affirmed that is important for the Joint IDA staff to be aware of managerial changes at the industries to be able to relay pertinent information to the localities if needed. Rumors of businesses closing whether true or false should be of top concern to the Joint IDA staff to address. Mr. Bear thinks there should be improvement in BRE whether it be with reports coming back monthly during the county's economic development committee meetings or other ways.

Supervisor Cook said he'd like to see a relationship between staff and the industries as supervisors should not find out a company is leaving at the last minute. The Board of Supervisors should be aware before it happens. He added that the Joint IDA staff should know who the HR Director or someone at the company at a higher level who would tell staff what is going on or if there are any needs from the company.

Mr. Bear wanted to address another item. After marketing to a company and working through agreements, he would like to see the Joint IDA have more of an active stance on behalf of Wythe County instead of the companies.

Chairman Smith suggested regular joint meetings with the Joint IDA Board and staff and the Wythe County Board of Supervisors on a quarterly basis. He feels like that would go a long way in the interest of transparency.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Cole asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Lucas made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Robinson. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:56 PM.

Michael Cole, Chairman

Attest:

Jessica E. DeHart, Secretary