

Town of Wise Economic Development Authority
Thursday, June 13, 2024
6:00 PM – 501 West Main Street
Wise, Virginia 24293
Meeting Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Valerie Lawson, Treasurer
Brandi Cox
Bonnie Aker
Rachel Helton

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jennifer Sturgill-Mullins, Chairman
Cory Dotson, Vice-Chairman
Bill Thompson

TOWN STAFF PRESENT:

Reagan Walsh, Secretary

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Treasurer Lawson called the meeting to order.

2. ROLL CALL:

Secretary Walsh called the roll. It was determined that a quorum was present.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Director Helton made a motion to approve the January 11, 2024, meeting minutes with a second by Director Cox. The motion carried 4-0.

4. PUBLIC EXPRESSION:

No one from the public was present for public expression.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.1. Community Business Launch Program Update:

Secretary Walsh gave an update on the Town of Wise Community Business Launch. She explained that the competition portion of the program has been completed. The Town of Wise had two businesses in the top 5 for the entire Gauntlet program. Jan Thompson – Gather @ 411 East Main placed 2nd, and Misti Ramey – Charc Board placed 4th. For the Town of Wise grant money, Jan Thompson placed 1st and Misti Ramey placed 2nd. Walsh also stated that she had received a lot of good feedback from the participants and recommended that the TOWEDA continue the partnership with the Advancement Foundation for the business training portion of a future community business launch program. Treasurer Lawson asked if the TOWEDA could reapply for another award from DHCD. Secretary Walsh stated that she was unsure but can reach out to DHCD to inquire. Treasurer Lawson asked how the businesses intend

to use the prize money. Secretary Walsh stated that Misti Ramey intends to purchase a mobile food unit for catering and events. Jan Thompson intends to purchase lighting and sound equipment. Walsh explained that the money can be used for anything business-related. Directors all agreed that the program was successful and were happy with the outcome.

5.2. Community Business Billboard Program

Director Aker gave an update on the Community Business Billboard Program. She touched on the development of the program and how this program will require an application process. Secretary Walsh added that they discussed how this program could benefit the Wise Business Association as well as the projected timeline for the rollout of the program. She stated that this will be a unique program. Director Cox also described some of the key requirements for the program and how the scoring criteria has been designed. She explained that this program was designed to be fair and very transparent and clear so that there is no question as to how businesses were selected to participate. Secretary Walsh added that she had spoken with The Gap Partnership who gave her advice on what worked well for them and what they would improve if they were to do this again.

5.3. TOWEDA Legal/Financial Status

Secretary Walsh gave an update on the adoption of the FY24-25 Town of Wise Budget and explained that there is a line item for the TOWEDA for \$180,000.00 which includes the left over monies from this previous year and an additional \$100,000.00 for operating expenses. Secretary Walsh explained that Council had no concerns or questions and that the budget is scheduled to be adopted at the end of the month. Secretary Walsh also stated that she has been working with Larry Sturgill on the paperwork for the federal ID number. This will allow the TOWEDA to be able to apply for and receive state and federal grants. She also stated that she spoke with Rural Development about a microloan program that the TOWEDA could pursue once the legal status is in order.

Secretary Walsh brought up that there are numerous businesses looking to leave the shopping center due to increases in rent. The directors discussed this in depth.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

6.1. Tadler Fellowship Final Reports and Program Update

Secretary Walsh gave an update on the two Tadler Fellowship students that had been assigned to the Town of Wise. She explained that they have completed their public policy projects and that copies were included in the email with the packets. Treasurer Lawson requested a hard copy of the reports and Secretary Walsh stated she would provide hard copies for all of the directors. She stated that the Town of Wise will be working with the Tadler Fellowship program again this next school year. Treasurer Lawson gave the directors background information on the program.

7. MATTERS FROM THE DIRECTORS:

Treasurer Lawson gave an update on the projects and initiatives currently active at UVA Wise.

Director Aker asked if the new town logo is available for use. Secretary Walsh stated she would ask and report back to the TOWEDA when that logo is available.

The directors commented on the new improvements downtown to include the hanging flower baskets, speed

signs, and the freshly painted power Vs on the roadway.

8. MATTERS FROM STAFF:

Secretary Walsh provided a copy of the book, "Your City is Sick", by Jeff Siegler. She stated that she and Town Manager Laura Roberts had read the book, and it was very insightful. She also stated that if there are any questions concerning the Planning Department Monthly Report, she would be happy to answer them.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

After staff comment, no other topics were brought up for discussion. Director Helton made a motion to adjourn the meeting with a second by Director Cox. The motion carried 4-0.



Reagan Walsh, Secretary



Valerie Lawson, Treasurer