

**Bath County EDA
PO Box 13 (Special Meeting Minutes)
Report from May 20th, 2020 meeting
Warm Springs, VA 24484**

**May 20, 2020
Special Meeting Minutes
(to be approved at the June Meeting)**

Chair Joe Wood opened this special meeting at the Bath County Courthouse, Wednesday, May 20, 2020 at 10:00 AM.

Members in attendance: Tommy Black, Ramona Garcia, Pat Haynes, Tom Richardson, Joe Wood, Shawn Puller, and David Hahn

Staff: County Administrator Ashton Harrison and his assistant, Janet O'Brien

Guests: Mike Bollinger (The Recorder)

Agenda – This was a special meeting (a continuation of the May 13th regular meeting) and was focused on establishing a process whereby local county businesses could apply for assistance part of the \$361,000 money now available to the county via the Federal CARES Act. As such, many of the components of a regular EDA meeting were not performed (Public Comment, Legal Council Report, Treasurer's Report, Old Business, etc) and the focus of the meeting was to establish an application process.

The group got right down to the business of trying to establish a grant application process. As a straw man, the group is using \$10,000 as a maximum grant award number (which would provide funds for at least 36 businesses if they were awarded the maximum award value). Also the group decided to use a grant application and scoring process that was developed by the city of Thornton, Colorado as a template for our Bath County application form. The Thornton (CO) application was intriguing in that very small businesses that were SEVERELY impacted by the corona virus pandemic could be 'fast tracked' in their approval process (by the County Administrator), but still be reviewed by the grant committee and 'finally' approved by the EDA board at the end of the process. This ensures that all grant recipients are 'final approved' by the EDA board. It was further noted that all funds are to be dispersed by December 31, 2020.

Using the Thornton application document, the vast majority of the meeting time was spent reviewing this and making the changes that would be important for making this a "Bath County" document. Advertisement of this grant will be done via The Recorder Newspaper, Chamber of Commerce web & FaceBook sites, and the County Administrator's office.

Changes to the Thornton straw man application & scoring document included (but were not limited to):

1) If Ashton received an application that is incomplete, he may immediately return it to the business for modification/correction so that they may continue in the process.

- 2) specific dates were modified to coincide with the EDA board desire to get money into the hands of local businesses by early July 2020.
- 3) the three (3) person EDA review committee would consist of Dave Hahn, Pat Haynes, and Ramona Garcia, with Joe Wood filling in for a member who may have to recuse themselves due to conflict of interest
- 4) several revisions were made to the strawman application; not just in this meeting, but in subsequent email conversation over the next 3-5 days after this special meeting. A version was finalized on or about May 27th, 2020 via email consensus.
- 5) Businesses with a brick & mortar storefront deserve higher consideration, and this is reflected in the scoring rubric; the scoring rubric is set up to favor smaller businesses with a greater demonstrated need
- 6) the deadline for grant application would be June 19th, 2020
- 7) It is anticipated that (if approved in the 'full' June EDA meeting), our July EDA meeting would be held on July 1st, and would focus on approving the applications brought forth by the three person screening committee. This would get the money into the hands of local businesses much sooner than waiting for our 'regular' July meeting.
- 8) If, for some reason, there are not enough applicants to allocate all \$361,000 of funding to, there would be a '2nd round' of applications accepted until all funds are dispersed, which must be completed by December 31, 2020.
- 9) These applications will be locked away & the financial information kept confidential

We were reminded that if more than three (3) EDA members meet, it must have been previously announced as a public meeting, which presents a dilemma if the financial situation of area businesses are being discussed as part of this grant approval process. A potential solution is for these meetings to be announced publicly; but if anyone other than EDA members attend, the meeting goes into closed session due to the sensitive nature of the financial information being discussed.

A motion to approve the changes to the Thornton (Colorado) template (Pat Haynes/2nd by Ramona Garcia) was made and passed, with recognition that further refinement to the document would be made in email conversations over the next few days.

As a footnote, Ashton Harrison noted that the county had applied for an additional \$250,000 of funding from a different (Commonwealth of Virginia) agency, the Department of Housing and Community Development; current status is unknown.

A motion to adjourn (Tommy Black/2nd by Dave Hahn) was made and passed at 11:10am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Richardson



Joe Wood, Chairman

