



Front Royal Economic Development Authority Meeting
“Business Development Board”
Monday November 4, 2024 @ 12:00pm
Town Hall – East Conference Room

View meeting online LIVE at <https://www.frontroyalva.com/673/Town-Hall-Live>

New Business • Existing Business • Workforce • Infrastructure • Asset Development

1. Roll Call – *Hillary Wilfong*
2. *Approval of Minutes - *I move that FREDa approve the Regular Meeting minutes of September 9, 2024.*
3. New Business
 - a. Downtown Front Royal, Inc Presentation- *Ellen Aders, President*
 - b. Local Officials FOIA Training on December 2, 2024
4. Old Business
 - a. Existing Business Survey Update- *Lizi Lewis Director of Community Development and Tourism*
 - b. Retail Recruitment Proposal- *Lizi Lewis Director of Community Development and Tourism*
5. Open Discussion – *Rick Novak, Chairman*
6. Next Meeting – Monday, December 2, 2024 @ 12:00pm
7. Adjourn

**Action Item – requires board vote*



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 9, 2024 at 12:00pm

Town Hall Upstairs Conference Room

The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda.

This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com.

ROLL CALL PRESENT: Chairman Richard M. Novak

Vice Chairman Nicolas Bass

Treasurer Thomas Eshelman

Director Robert Elliott

Director Aiden Miller

Director Frank Stankiewicz

Director David Gedney

ABSENT: Director Frank Stankiewicz

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager, Joe Waltz

Director of Community Development and Tourism Elizabeth Lewis

Executive Administrative Assistant Hillary Wilfong, Secretary

Approval of Minutes

Director Gedney motioned to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on August 5, 2024. Director Eshleman seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

- **Yes:** Novak, Bass, Eshleman, Elliott, Gedney
- **No:** N/A
- **Absent:** Stankiewicz
- **Abstain:** Miller

New Business

Retail Recruitment Proposal

Sarah Beth Stewart from Retail Strategies provided a presentation via Zoom, outlining the services her firm offers, including data analysis, real estate analysis, and a retail recruitment plan for Front Royal. She explained that Retail Strategies combines local data, analytics, real estate, and community vision to craft a comprehensive retail recruitment strategy. The cost for these services is \$50,000 for a three-year contract, with the option for the Board to terminate the agreement at any time without penalty.

Ms. Stewart shared data on Front Royal, highlighting a population of 15,000 with a trade area of 74,000+ and a retail leakage of \$335 million. This suggests that a significant portion of the population goes elsewhere for goods and services.

During the Q&A session:

- Chairman Novak noted that many brands mentioned in the presentation already exist in Front Royal. Ms. Stewart clarified that they work with many other companies and are continuously expanding their network.
- Director Eshelman inquired about the presence of grocery stores in the strategy. Ms. Stewart assured that Retail Strategies works with a variety of grocery chains and will assess what fits best for the town.
- Director Miller asked about progress reports, to which Ms. Stewart responded that they will provide reports as requested, along with regular monthly or quarterly updates.
- Director Eshelman also asked if the firm assists struggling local businesses. Ms. Stewart confirmed that they do and explained that they help identify complementary businesses that could support the local retail ecosystem.

The Board thanked Ms. Stewart for her presentation.

Board Discussion:

- Director Eshelman asked about FREDA's funds and questioned how the Board would pay for Retail Strategies. Mr. Waltz confirmed that funds are available and will provide exact figures at a later time.
- Director Gedney expressed concerns that Retail Strategies might attract big-box stores, undermining the town's unique character.
- Director Bass noted that a few years ago, Retail Strategies had a downtown specialist and preferred that approach.
- The Board considered issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to explore other options. They expressed interest in focusing on downtown development.

Motion:

Director Bass moved to engage Retail Strategies for 1-3 years based on their proposal. The motion was seconded by Director Eshelman.

Roll Call Vote:

- **Yes:** Novak, Bass, Eshleman, Elliott
- **No:** Gedney, Miller
- **Absent:** Stankiewicz
- **Abstain:**

The motion passed. Mr. Waltz will present the proposal at the next Town Council Work Session on October 7, 2024, and follow up with Ms. Stewart regarding downtown strategies.

Old Business

Existing Business Survey

Ms. Lewis presented the quantitative results of the ongoing survey, noting a low response rate. The Board discussed additional methods for promoting the survey, including a direct mailer and featuring it in the Town's quarterly newsletter. Ms. Lewis will design a mailer, and the survey will remain open for future review.

Required Training for Local Officials

Mr. Waltz shared a spreadsheet tracking the required Commission on Information and Accountability (COIA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) training for elected officials. Ms. Wilfong will distribute the necessary links to the Board for completion.

Open Discussion

Director Eshelman inquired again about FREDA's available funds. Mr. Waltz confirmed that funds exist from previous years and will provide specific figures.

Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, October 7th, at Noon.

Adjournment

Chairman Novak called for a motion to adjourn at 1:19 PM. Director Miller moved to adjourn, seconded by Director Bass. The meeting was adjourned.