



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 5th 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 Nicholas Bass
Director Thomas Eshelman
Director Robert Elliott
Director Frank Stankiewicz
Director David Gedney
Director Aiden Miller

ABSENT:

SUPPORT STAFF PRESENT : Town Manager Joe Petty
Director of Community Development and Tourism Elizabeth Lewis
Executive Administrative Assistant Hillary Wilfong, Secretary

Approval of Minutes

Director Gedney moved to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2025, regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Director Stankiewicz.

Roll Call Vote:

- **Yes:** Novak, Elliott, Eshelman, Stankiewicz, Gedney, Miller
- **No:** None
- **Absent:** None
- **Abstain:** Bass

The motion passed.

Existing Business

Parking Signage Update

Ms. Lewis informed the Board that she met with the Public Works Department, which plans to begin installation of new signage, along with painting and restriping parking spaces on Jackson Street. The goal is to complete the work before the Festival of Leaves.

Retail Strategies - Retail Recruitment Update

Michael Warsaw of Retail Strategies provided a presentation on their efforts to support retail and commercial growth in Front Royal. Retail Strategies partners with local governments, EDOs, and property owners to attract national and regional retailers and restaurants using targeted marketing and data-driven strategies.

Mr. Warsaw highlighted that Front Royal's demographic and market analysis is competitive nationally, and several potential retailers have already shown interest. He noted that Retail Strategies will attend

an industry convention in mid-May and expects to have productive discussions about Front Royal, with updates to follow.

Reports are provided quarterly, but the Town may request data updates at any time. In response to Board questions, Mr. Warsaw explained that most retailers design their own infrastructure and are open to redeveloping existing properties. He also acknowledged that hospitality development is possible, but typically requires larger acreage than what's available in Town.

The Board thanked Mr. Warsaw and looks forward to his follow-up after the Las Vegas convention.

Open Discussion

- Ms. Lewis shared that Blue Ridge Technical Center expressed interest in attending the July meeting to discuss potential partnerships involving GO Virginia and the "Dirty Jobs" Grant.
- Director Miller stated he had reached out to the Dirty Jobs Grant representatives but had not yet received a response.
- Director Eshelman inquired about the Board's budget. Ms. Lewis will follow up, but noted that the FY2026 budget is anticipated to be \$50,000.
- The Board discussed an informational session on data centers, hosted by Director Miller, scheduled for Saturday, May 8th, from 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM at the Warren County Community Center. Chairman Novak encouraged attendance. Director Elliott confirmed he would be attending. The Board was reminded that due to FOIA regulations, the press must be notified of the event.
- Chairman Novak distributed materials for the Garden of Dreams Gala, hosted by Downtown Front Royal, Inc., scheduled for June 21, 2025. The event supports the beautification and revitalization of the downtown area and will include community leaders, local businesses, and residents.

Next Meeting

The next FREDA meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 2, 2025, at 12:00 PM.

Adjournment

Chairman Novak called for a motion to adjourn at 1:13 PM.

Director Eshelman moved to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Director Bass.

The meeting was adjourned.