



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 4th 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 Aiden Miller
Director Frank Stankiewicz
Director David Gedney

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 Miller moved to approve the minutes of July 7, 2025, regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Director Bass.

Roll Call Vote:

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

The motion passed.

Existing Business

Business Retention Project

Ms. Lewis distributed an outdated "Guide to Starting a Business in Front Royal" brochure. The Board reviewed the brochure and agreed it needs to be updated and completely redesigned. The Board suggested holding a special work session to draft a new flyer. Ms. Lewis encouraged members to submit ideas to help streamline the process.

EDA Web Presence

Ms. Lewis shared the draft Flowpage for the Front Royal Economic Development Board, noting that it is live but not yet publicly shared. The page currently includes the Town website, new business navigator tools, the business owner survey, and development opportunities. The Board expressed support for the Flowpage, agreeing it will be a valuable and regularly updated tool.

Worlds of Work

Ms. Lewis provided details about the upcoming Worlds of Work event scheduled for October 2, 2025. This regional career expo will bring together businesses, educators, and economic development partners from surrounding counties. Exhibitors will feature interactive displays, equipment, and vehicles to give local eighth-grade students hands-on exposure to various career paths. Ms. Lewis shared the list of Front Royal businesses already participating and asked the Board for additional contacts to invite.

New Business

Presentation from Small Business Development Center – Andy Gyurisin

Mr. Gyurisin introduced himself as Director of the Laurel Ridge Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which operates within Laurel Ridge Community College and is funded by federal, state, and local partners. The SBDC is a federally funded grant program established for 25 years, with over 25 centers statewide and more than 400 local clients served annually. The center offers free, confidential one-on-one counseling, classes, and group instruction—primarily for new and existing small business owners—covering business planning, marketing, financial forecasting, succession planning, and emerging tools such as AI. The Board thanked Mr. Gyurisin and expressed enthusiasm for working with him in the future.

Open Discussion

Chairman Novak led a discussion on improving the agenda format to keep the Board focused on its core goals and mission. He proposed using a checklist to track unfinished items and upcoming initiatives. Director Gedney supported the idea and suggested rotating through the Board's five main objectives: New Business, Existing Business, Workforce, Infrastructure, and Asset Development. Director Eshelman agreed that a checklist would be beneficial for tracking progress. Ms. Lewis confirmed that restructuring the agenda would not be an issue.

Chairman Novak also distributed a Northern Virginia Technology Council study, *Impact of Data Centers on Virginia's State and Local Economies* (April 2024), which the Board thanked him for sharing.

Ms. Lewis noted that the Planning Commission will meet on Wednesday, August 6, to discuss the text amendment for data centers and invited Board members to attend.

Next Meetings

- Special Work Session: Monday, August 18, 2025, at 12:00 PM
- Regular Board Meeting: Monday, September 8, 2025, at 12:00 PM

Adjournment

Director Eshelman moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:15 PM. The motion was seconded by Director Miller and passed unanimously.