



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 1st 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 Aiden Miller
Director Frank Stankiewicz
Director David Gedney
Director Robert Elliott
Director Thomas Eshelman

ABSENT:

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

Approval of Minutes

Director Miller moved to approve the minutes of November 3rd regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Director Stankiewicz.

Roll Call Vote:

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

The motion passed.

Reports

Retail Strategies – Michael Warsaw

Michael Warsaw and Jimmy Pritchett of Retail Strategies presented an update to the Board regarding the Town's retail recruitment partnership. They reviewed the purpose of the partnership, noting that Retail Strategies serves as an extension of the Town's economic development efforts by providing retail real estate expertise and targeted recruitment.

The presenters outlined the three-year recruitment framework. Year one focused on creating and implementing a recruitment strategy, including immersing themselves in the community, gaining an understanding of the Front Royal market, identifying key opportunities, and initiating outreach to targeted

retailers. As the partnership approaches year two, and if renewed, Retail Strategies plans to continue outreach with identified prospects, re-engage existing contacts, deepen relationships with property owners, and update the retail strategy as needed. Looking ahead to year three, they explained that this phase is intended to provide maximum exposure for Front Royal, continue recruitment efforts, and build momentum toward securing new retailers in the Town.

Retail Strategies also presented market data and recruitment performance information, including customized trade area analysis utilizing mobile data, demographic highlights, and retailer feedback. They identified Front Royal's top recruitment categories as full-service restaurants, quick-service restaurants, soft goods retail, and hospitality. Market feedback indicated strong national brand interest, the importance of tourism traffic, and opportunities related to redevelopment of existing sites. Challenges discussed included franchisee shortages, limited ready-to-develop sites, and competitive pressure from nearby markets.

Board members expressed enthusiasm regarding the update and shared that hospitality is the Board's top priority for retail recruitment. The Board thanked Mr. Warsaw and Mr. Pritchett for their presentation and expressed support for continuing the partnership.

New Business

Chairman Novak shared that he had seen Downtown Front Royal, Inc.'s new tourism app being promoted during the holiday season. Ms. Lewis provided additional information, noting that the app, titled "Let's Rallie," is an initiative designed to promote local downtown events, shopping, and activities. Features include QR code check-ins for giveaways, access to holiday activities, and promotion of community events such as markets, small business crawls, fundraisers, and recreational opportunities. Ms. Lewis advised that she would share the app link with the Board.

Existing Business

Director Miller inquired whether Ms. Lewis had received his edits to the Business Blueprint flyer. Ms. Lewis confirmed receipt and thanked him for his input.

Workforce

Chairman Novak shared that he attended the Virginia Regional Chamber Economic Summit in Winchester on November 18. He noted that the summit featured several speakers who discussed national and regional economic trends, inflation, and workforce challenges.

Infrastructure

Board members inquired about any updates regarding the former BB&T bank property. No updates were available at this time.

New Business

The Board recognized Vice Chairman Nick Bass at his final meeting serving on the Board. Members expressed appreciation for his contributions and long-standing support, noting that he served on the Board when it was initially established by Town Council.

Open Discussion

The Board discussed its desire to continue the partnership with Retail Strategies and expressed enthusiasm for renewing the contract. Director Eshleman made a motion to continue the relationship and renew the contract with Retail Strategies. Director Stankiewicz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Next Meeting

- **Regular Board Meeting:** Monday, January 5, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Vice Chairman Bass moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:38 p.m. The motion was seconded by Director Stankiewicz and carried unanimously.