



Front Royal Economic Development Authority Regular Meeting “Business Development Board”

Town Hall – East Conference Room

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

Monday, March 2, 2026

12:00 PM

1. Roll Call– *Hillary Wilfong*
2. *Approval of Minutes - *I move that FREDa approves the Regular Meeting minutes February 2, 2026.*
3. Retail Strategies- *Lizi Lewis*
4. Ongoing Business-
 - New Business
 - Existing Business
 - Workforce
 - Infrastructure
 - Asset Development
5. Open Discussion
6. Adjourn

Next Regular Meeting – Monday, April 6, 2026 @ 12:00pm



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 2, 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
Director Aiden Miller
Director Robert Elliott
Director Thomas Eshelman
Director David Gedney

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 the January 5, 2026, meeting. Director Eshleman seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

- **Yes:** Novak, Miller, Elliot, Eshelman
- **No:** None
- **Absent:** None
- **Abstain:** Gedney

The motion carried.

Retail Strategies

Ms. Lewis reported that the Board is entering Year 2 of its partnership with Retail Strategies. She shared that she, Director Miller, and Vice Mayor Veienthal are scheduled to participate in a call with a Retail Strategies representative tomorrow and will provide an update to the Board at the next meeting.

Ms. Lewis noted there are no additional updates at this time but will forward the most recent data received from Retail Strategies, along with information from a Retail Trends webinar she recently attended.

Ongoing Business

Blueprint for New Business Flyer

Ms. Lewis shared that the Blueprint for New Business flyer was distributed to the Chamber of Commerce with the edits and has been published on the Town's website. She will print hard copies for distribution to

Planning and Zoning, the Chamber of Commerce, Warren County, and other locations as recommended by the Board.

Director Miller inquired whether the Board would like to conduct a case study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Blueprint flyer, noting that he has an associate interested in starting a business. The Board agreed to move forward with the case study. Director Miller will share the flyer with his associate and report feedback to the Board.

Existing Business, Workforce, Asset Development

No updates were provided.

Infrastructure

Director Eshleman referenced the VDOT Smart Scale South Street Project meeting, noting that he was unable to attend and inquired whether any other Board members were present.

Chairman Novak confirmed his attendance, and Mr. Petty provided a recap of the meeting. VDOT is moving forward with the project, which includes new crosswalks, upgraded traffic signals, and raised medians designed to improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow along the commercial corridor. Public comments are currently under review as the project advances through final design. Right-of-way acquisition and construction are anticipated in future phases.

Open Discussion

Director Elliott inquired about filling the two current Board vacancies. Ms. Lewis stated she is unsure of Town Council's timeline but will follow up. Mr. Petty shared that Town Council is currently reviewing the budget and conducting an overall evaluation of the Board, and the matter will likely be discussed further during the upcoming Town Council Retreat.

Director Eshleman expressed frustration regarding the Board's limited funding and its inability to make independent decisions.

Mr. Petty announced that the Chamber of Commerce Coffee & Conversation event will be held on February 6 at On Cue, featuring Ryan Hall, Director of Shenandoah Valley Capital Funds. Mr. Hall provides microloans and financial support to entrepreneurs and small business owners seeking to start, grow, or stabilize their businesses.

Director Miller revisited the topic of Board funding and asked members to consider their "dream quest" or priority funding initiatives. Director Eshleman suggested potential focus areas including support for Blue Ridge Tech Center, strategic property investments, commuter initiatives, parking improvements, façade grant programs, and partnerships to assist start-up businesses. The Board agreed these were worthwhile ideas and acknowledged that future direction will depend on Town Council's decisions.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 2, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Director Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:27 p.m. Director Gedney seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.