



FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 4, 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 Thomas Eshelman
Director David Gedney

ABSENT: Director Robert Elliott

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

Approval of Minutes

Director Eshelman moved to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2026, meeting. Director Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

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

The motion carried.

Retail Strategies

Ms. Lewis reported that there were no new updates at this time. However, a meeting is scheduled for today at 2:00 p.m. with Director Miller and Retail Strategies. An update will be provided to the Board at the next meeting.

New Business

Ms. Lewis shared that the Regional Job Fair will be held on May 13, 2026, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Wilkins Jr. Athletics & Events Center at Shenandoah University. The event will feature hiring managers from more than 70 companies located throughout Winchester City and Clarke, Frederick, Shenandoah, and Warren counties.

The event will also include free professional development workshops, such as mock interviews and best practices for job seekers. The event is free and open to the public and currently includes 58 participating employers.

Existing Business

Ms. Lizi Lewis provided an update on the Front Royal Tourism Summit, which was held on April 7, 2026, at the Warren County Community Center. The summit brought together tourism stakeholders, local businesses, and community partners to discuss current tourism initiatives, collaboration opportunities, and priorities for tourism efforts throughout 2026. Ms. Lewis noted that the event was productive and that the summit is intended to be held on a bi-annual basis.

Workforce

Chairman Novak reported attending the Chamber of Commerce Coffee and Conversation event held at On Cue Sports Bar. During the event, Ms. Jeanian Clark of Laurel Ridge Community College presented information on workforce training opportunities and skilled trades programs. Attendees engaged in a productive discussion highlighting strong community interest in workforce development and career training opportunities.

Chairman Novak requested an update from Mr. Petty regarding the Shenandoah Rail Trail Project. Mr. Petty advised that VDOT is currently soliciting public input on whether the corridor from Strasburg to Timberville, with a potential connection into Front Royal, should be developed as a rail-with-trail configuration or converted into a standalone multi-use trail. He noted that the discussion centers on community feedback and how the selected option may impact future connectivity, recreation, and transportation planning throughout the region. A public survey remains open through May 13.

Infrastructure

Director Eshleman discussed the South Street Project with VDOT and inquired about alternative turning lane configurations. Mr. Petty advised that VDOT is currently coordinating with the adjacent shopping center and is evaluating various design concepts for turning movements.

Director Eshleman also raised questions regarding potential investments in parking garages. Mr. Petty shared that the Planning and Zoning Department is currently conducting a parking study.

Open Discussion

Chairman Novak expressed appreciation to the Town for organizing a significant historic event with the Royal Family.

Chairman Novak also inquired about the Warren County Economic Development Authority. Mr. Petty noted that a joint liaison meeting between the Town and County is scheduled for June to discuss board coordination, as both entities are currently experiencing board vacancies.

Director Gedney requested notification of upcoming events in advance to assist with scheduling. Ms. Lewis stated that the Town's ongoing goal is to ensure businesses are informed and that the Town calendar remains current and accessible.

Next Meeting

The next Regular Meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2026, at 12:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Director Miller moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:39 p.m. Director Gedney seconded the motion. Motion carried.