Front Royal Economic Development Authority Meeting
"Business Development Board"

Monday, August 4th @ 12:00pm

Town Hall – East Conference Room

View meeting online LIVE at https://www.frontroyalva.com/673/Town-Hall-Live

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

1. Roll Call – *Hillary Wilfong*

2. *Approval of Minutes - *I move that FREDA approves the Regular Meeting minutes of July 7, 2025.*

3. Existing Business
    a. Business Retention Project discussion- *Lizi Lewis, Director of Community Development and Tourism*
    b. EDA Web presence discussion - *Lizi Lewis, Director of Community Development and Tourism*
    c. Worlds of Work update- *Lizi Lewis, Director of Community Development and Tourism*

4. New Business
    a. Presentation from Small Business Development Center- *Andy Gyurisin, Director of Laurel Ridge Small Business Development Center (SBDC)*

5. Open Discussion – *Rick Novak, Chairman*

6. Next Meeting – Monday, September 1st @ 12:00pm – **needs to be changed due to Labor Day Holiday**

7. Adjourn

**Action Item – requires board vote*

FRONT ROYAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (FREDA) MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 7th 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

ABSENT: Director Frank Stankiewicz
Director David Gedney

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 Bass moved to approve the minutes of May 5, 2025, regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Director Elliott.
Roll Call Vote:

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

The motion passed.

Existing Business
Retail Strategies – Retail Recruitment Update
Ms. Lewis updated the Board on her recent discussion with Mr. Warsaw from Retail Strategies. Mr. Warsaw provided a slideshow report from the previous meeting and shared that he conducted six meetings on behalf of Front Royal at the Las Vegas Expo; three with hotel representatives and three with restaurant representatives.

Currently, Mr. Warsaw is focusing primarily on hotel recruitment to support local tourism, with restaurants as a secondary focus. He also noted interest from grocery retailers, though they are not yet prepared to enter the Front Royal market.

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Ms. Lewis informed Mr. Warsaw about new available real estate since his last site visit and will continue to provide updates to the Board. She also reported that he inquired about potential business incentives offered by the Town. Although no formal incentives are currently in place, Ms. Lewis discussed possible options with him, and the Board agreed to explore this further.

Initiatives and Goals Updates
Ms. Lewis revisited a prior Board goal of supporting new businesses in Front Royal and asked if members were familiar with the process. Chairman Novak noted that many begin by visiting the Planning and Zoning Department or the Chamber of Commerce. The Board agreed it would be helpful to develop a simple one-page flow chart outlining the steps to start a business in Front Royal.

On the topic of business retention, Ms. Lewis emphasized the importance of supporting existing businesses. The Board discussed conducting in-person visits to engage business owners directly and gather feedback. Ms. Lewis will compile and share a business contact list and a set of survey questions. Members were encouraged to contribute additional questions and note which businesses they plan to visit. Director Eshelman suggested speaking with shopping center property managers for added insight. Ms. Lewis agreed and asked members to send updates to either her or Ms. Wilfong.

Ms. Lewis also mentioned 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. Businesses will showcase interactive displays, equipment, and vehicles to give students hands-on exposure to various career paths for local eight grade students. Ms. Lewis will distribute the event link and encouraged Board members to share it with potential participants or volunteers.

Lastly, Ms. Lewis asked the Board for suggestions on guest speakers for upcoming meetings. Recommendations included:

- Robbie Boyer, Director of Public Works
- Andy Gyurisin, Small Business Development Center
- Anna Walton, Blue Ridge Technical Center
- Rob McDougall, Warren County EDA

Ms. Lewis will reach out to schedule speakers.

Open Discussion

- Chairman Novak requested that Ms. Lewis share the *FlowCode* used in Front Royal Tourism advertisements. Ms. Lewis explained that QR codes are commonly used in promotional materials to direct users to Front Royal tourism information and track which materials were scanned. The Board discussed the potential of creating a similar QR code for new business resources.
- Director Elliott asked about the recent Data Center Presentation attended by Director Miller. Director Miller shared that it was informative with good attendance. The Board discussed both potential benefits—such as tax revenue—and concerns related to data centers. Ms. Lewis noted that no data centers have approached Front Royal to date, but she will explore inviting a neutral expert to present to the Board.
- Director Eshelman asked for the offical number for the Board's budget. Ms. Lewis reported that the current budget is $131,041, with an annual allocation of $50,000.

Next Meeting
The next FREDA Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 4, 2025, at 12:00 PM.

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Adjournment
Chairman Novak called for a motion to adjourn at 1:00 PM.

Director Miller moved to adjourn; the motion was seconded by Director Bass.
The meeting was adjourned.

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