



Town of Leesburg Economic Development Commission
Virtual Meeting Minutes
February 22, 2021
12:00pm – 1:00pm

Commission Members Present: Eric Byrd; James Choi, Marantha Edwards, Britta Neel, and Brittany Youkers

Commission Members Absent: Curtis Allred and Patrick Williams

Staff Present: Economic Development Director Russell Seymour; Business Development and Retention Manager Melanie Scoggins

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:05p.m. by Chair Byrd.

2. Roll Call

Chair Byrd asked for the Calling of the Roll by Director Seymour; Director Seymour stated a quorum was present.

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Choi to adopt the Agenda; seconded by Commissioner Neel. Motion carried.

4. Discussion

Chair Byrd indicated the intent of this meeting is to discuss the Pandemic Business Assistance and Recovery Grant, and to review possible options which included:

- Fund all current applications with remaining funds (thus depleting possible funding for future ideas).
- Fund the current applications up to \$500,000, but no additional, and continue investigating other options.
- Restructure grant requirements and offer a second round of grants for all or part of the additional \$500,000.

Chair Byrd indicated an overwhelming response was received for the business grant applications.

Director Seymour indicated that the Pandemic Business Assistance and Recovery Grant Application program opened on Friday evening, February 19th and closed on Monday, February 22nd, after surpassing the total amount established for the program.

Chair Byrd indicated he is in favor of immediately providing funds, as most small businesses have fallen through the cracks in federal programs.

Vice Chair Youkers recommended providing funding to the rest of the businesses that applied as that is where the most help is required, and not spending all of the additional \$500,000 but use it later for marketing strategy/additional ideas.

Commissioner Choi recommended providing funding and added that these funds were for support for pandemic relief. Commissioner Choi indicated funds will help a business to hold strong and keep the lights on.

Commissioner Neel recommended providing funding as businesses require immediate assistance.

Commissioner Edwards recommended providing funding, as the most important thing is to help businesses get strong and ready to roll in the spring.

On behalf of Commissioner Allred, Chair Byrd noted recent views of Commissioner Allred of not throwing good money after bad. Commissioner Allred suggested focusing funds into businesses who are innovative and adjust to the new normal given the difficulty to predict whether a business is going to survive or not. Discussions ensued.

Chair Byrd inquired as to whether grant applications are public information. Director Seymour indicated his belief that once an application is made contact information is available. Chair Byrd indicated his desire to reach out to businesses to assist with marketing suggestions. Manager Scoggins suggested a link be included to this effect within the grant email

Chair Byrd moved to recommend that Council fund all of the compliant Pandemic Business Assistance and Recovery Grant applications beyond \$500,000 originally allocated to assist businesses, and that the EDC will continue to provide suggestions to Council. Motion by Vice Chair Youkers; seconded by Commissioner Edwards. Motion carried.

5. Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Edwards to adjourn the meeting at 1:00p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Choi. Motion carried.