

**VIRGINIA:**

At the monthly meeting of the Economic Development Board held at the Charles City County Government Administration Building thereof on **Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 6:00 p.m.**

**PRESENT: Michelle Johnson, County Administrator**  
**Rhonda Russell, Assistant County Administrator**  
**Dominique White, EDA Chairman**  
**Johnny Day, EDA Member**  
**Robert Erda, EDA Member**  
**Arnold Brown, EDA Member**  
**Gregory Cotman, EDA Member**

Dominique White, EDA Chairman, welcomed everyone on January 6, 2022, and called the meeting to order.

Ms. Michelle Johnson acknowledges Anthony Romanello coming into the meeting and giving him a minute to get himself together. He is our Presenter and Ms. Rhonda Russell will introduce him momentarily. Just wanted to go over the statement of economic interest and asked that she hoped that everyone had an opportunity to go over them. Give them to Paulette because it is a requirement so that we can get them over to the State. It is a requirement from the State. All of us must do it, Rhonda and I, Board Members who serve in this capacity. We must do it by February 1. Please give them to Paulette tonight. The school did get dinged by the auditors because they did not get one. It is a \$250.00 fine if you don't have it by February 1. We are not going to have that problem. I appreciate you all doing that.

Ms. Russell formerly introduces Mr. Anthony Romanello from Henrico County. He is a true friend to Charles City County and has a connection with the County by supporting at least one child in our community. The State connected with her over the years which really speaks to his commitment to family which I became aware of as a participant in a class that Mr. Romanello taught as a guest lecturer one evening last semester. Mr. Romanello held from Henrico County where he serves as the Executive Director of the Economic Development Authority and has served previously in West Point as the Town Manager and one of the Assistant County Managers in Henrico County. So, he is bringing to us a wealth of knowledge and I can't wait to participate in his discussions. So, I am going to help him by taking these presentations as the teacher in me I am going to keep these until he's done so that we can focus on him, and we can have them as a resource.

Mr. Romanello thanks Michelle and Rhonda for the invitation to be with us. Ms. Johnson states that these are our newest members and our third meeting so just getting them acclimated part of the onboarding process and really want to hit the ground and run.

Mr. Romanello states that one of the things he wanted to stress is that Henrico and Charles City are different communities. So, none of the numbers that he is presenting tonight is

to do it our way. One thing I have learned from the four localities I have worked in Virginia is that we are all different and what's important is that localities know who they are, where they are and want kind of communities they want to be in the future; and your economic development planning strategy needs to be Charles City's, not New Kent's, not Henrico's, not anybody else's. It needs to be Charles City. What we do works for us works because we know who we are as a community and what we want to be as a community. So, what I am telling you sort of what we do and but in no way suggesting that you should do it. Because obviously we are very different communities between Charles City and Henrico. So, this is our team of the EDA. There are nine of us and one position we are currently that we are recruiting for, and we have several new folks and then at the bottom middle is Mr. Tony Hall who has been in the agency for 26 years and with the EDA for about 40 years. I came to the EDA about 2 ½ years ago and a recovering County Administrator. I was County Administrator in Stafford for about nine years before I came back to Henrico, and as Rhonda mentioned from 2000 to 2003, he was in West Point and back then for some of you that have been in the community for a long time may remember the name Ken Chandler. Ken Chandler and I who was one of Michelle's predecessors and Joe Emerson who was the New Kent County Administrator. He is now the Director of Planning in Henrico also a recovering County Administrator. Joe, Ken, and I worked on some EDA efforts for this region nearly 20 years ago. So, that's our team. Our organizational values are something that we worked on together. We took some time to sort of unearth who were and who we are as an organization just among the nine of us and you will see this in the work that we do every day.

See attached hereto presentation titled **“Henrico Economic Development Authority”** provided by Mr. Romanello.

There was a video shown introducing a global journey concerning the business world of today and tomorrow and followed by a general discussion between Ms. Johnson, staff, and Mr. Romanello at the conclusion of his presentation.

### **STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTEREST**

Ms. Johnson informed the membership of the EDA about the statement of economic interest and that it is due February 1, 2022.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STAFF FUNDING**

Ms. Johnson states that we need an economic development staff person that's dedicated to EDA. Think about hiring a person that's dedicated to the Group and Charles City County. A new committee with fresh ideas. What do we want Charles City County to become? In my opinion we need a staff member that's dedicated to the EDA. With the money we may need to start looking at hiring a person as we are moving forward. We need to get results as the EDA. What do we want Charles City to become and who can take us to where we want to go? Ms. Johnson's vision for Charles City County is to formalize a new committee that has the energy to solve problems as to what we want Charles City to become and who can take us to where we want to go. We are not going to become a Henrico County. I want us to stay Charles City County. This is a new organization.

Mr. Day: This is a new organization and the third time we have gotten together. We also need to know what the county's strategic plan is. We need to discuss this through. How do you define success? I think the answer for that is in Charles City is a lot different than in Henrico County for so many reasons. I don't think we need Walmart or another Short Pump in Charles City. Just the way that things have changed.

Ms. Johnson gets the Power Point to work by calling in her IT Department to take care of it for Mr. Romanello. So, Mr. Romanello proceeds with the Power Point presentation, which is less than three minutes. Everyone watches it. This is the business world of today.

Ms. Johnson recommends that the EDA have a Saturday retreat to go offsite to really sit and have some time to look at the 2015 Strategic Plan in your book and now your wheels are turning as to what it looks like and then spend 4 or 8 hours just really grinding it out and have it set in the agenda to guide the conversation. The Board of Supervisors we do one normally every January, all day Saturday. They hate it. You must drive them to it, but out of that we get a lot of great work. We get the foundation. We don't have one this January, probably when you come back in March.

The County does not have a strategic plan in place, has never had one. New Kent just got theirs last year. We are not so far behind. We have not been successful in convincing the Board of the value of having a strategic plan yet. We have one new Board member that when he came in the door your representative said we need a strategic plan. He came into the gate knowing what he wanted. We are going back to this Retreat that we've just mentioned until we have two consultants that presented at our Retreat. He said no we don't need that right now. Our county strategic plan has goals for operations, goals for our comprehensive plan and then it ties the economic development plan into it. So, you have the economic development strategic plan. This is the blueprint that you should be using for this group that you have in your packets. Then you have the strategic plan that outlines everything for the county from recreation to zoning and that sort of thing that ties into our comprehensive plan and you mirror the three documents together, and therefore, the community will see this is what we are doing. So, Hanover, Henrico and Chesterfield have done a great job at having those plans, really advertising them, getting the community to buy into them so that they don't have to go back and say this is what we are doing, therefore we are bringing a public shopping center because it is already in the comprehensive plan.

Ms. White: Do we have a comprehensive plan?

Ms. Johnson: We must have one by law. Rhonda is responsible for, and we are in the process now getting ready to do an overall. The comprehensive plan is led by the planning commission. So that's where you have all your zoning, industrial centers, fire stations, schools, and future growth. Your strategic plan talks about just strategies of mission and vision of the county and what we want to do as a county from recreation to tourism to all the things that people need for quality of life. The economic development plan says this is how we are going to bring businesses here to fund the other two. It's a process, we're getting there.

The Economic Development Authority will spend a few hours as a group to discuss ideas/questions concerning their upcoming projects. Ms. Johnson will support them with whatever they may need. Whatever they need she will support them with the location, materials, or whatever they may need.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

January 11, 2022, Budget Meeting - Government Administration Building in the Auditorium all day event

January 19, 2022, State of the County - Government Administration Building in the Auditorium at 6:00 p.m.

January 25, 2022, Regularly Monthly Board of Supervisors Meeting - Government Administration Building at 6:00 p.m. Meeting can be streamed virtually or in person.

Chairman: Motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned