

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MINUTES
December 16, 2025
Room 241, 4:00 p.m.**

Directors present: Don Long, Chair; Jeff Morrill (remote), Vice-chair; Andrea Johnson, Secretary Treasurer; David Storm; Steve Hood; Frank Friedman; Bill Mechnick

Directors absent: None

Staff present: Emily Kilroy, Director of Economic Development; Ashley Hernandorena, Business Development Manager; Avery Thompson, Management Analyst III; Lauren Bohdan, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Bea LaPisto-Kirtley, Board of Supervisors Liaison to the EDA, Rivanna District; Trevor Henry, Deputy County Executive

Staff absent: None

1. Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Chair Long called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

Motion to allow Director Morrill to participate in the meeting remotely was made by Chair Long and seconded by Director Johnson.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously. (Mr. Morrill was remote)

Mr. Morrill stated that he was located in Milton, Massachusetts for business reasons.

2. Matters from the Public

Neil Williams, President of the Free Enterprise Forum, thanked the EDA for its service to the County. He highlighted the complexities of Albemarle County's development process and cited the County's own strategic plan as evidence of the need for change. He specifically addressed the County's permitting process, suggesting that it could be streamlined to improve economic development.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Long requested the addition of a list of the Charlottesville EDA members in the minutes.

Motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Director Storm and seconded by Director Hood.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously. (Mr. Morrill was remote)

4. Financial Report

Avery Thompson provided the financial report. He noted the changes from previous month.

5. Unfinished Business

a. Economic Development Strategic Plan Implementation Update

Steven Pedigo, Civic Solutions, provided an update on the strategic plan implementation. He noted that at a later meeting, he would share the short-, medium-, and long-term priorities, as well as whose responsibility those priorities would be. He explained that the discussion will be a two-part conversation, starting with the EDO office to align staff efforts and ensure a smooth flow of work, which will then enable a more strategic approach to working with the EDA.

b. Cville Biohub GO Virginia Second Year Installment

Ms. Kilroy provided an update on the Cville Biohub GO Virginia project, part of the Commonwealth BioAccelerator Project, also referred to as Project VITAL. She said that the BioAccelerator opened in February, and eight companies had officially signed on, out of 43 that expressed interest. She noted that it had secured \$15 million in funding for a permanent space for the project.

Ms. Kilroy said that as part of the GO Virginia grant, the EDA approved a three-year commitment of \$100,000 per year, subject to approval by the EDA each year. She said staff was requesting that the EDA consider authorizing the second-year payment for the project.

Ms. Kilroy said that staff could schedule for Cville Biohub to provide an update on their progress as they reached their one-year operational milestone, potentially in February.

Mr. Long suggested holding a meeting and tour at the North Fork campus.

Motion to authorize \$100,000 to satisfy the Year 2 Cville Biohub grant match payment and to authorize the Authority's Chair and Treasurer to execute all documents necessary to complete this grant was made by Director Mechnick and seconded by Director Hood.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously. (Mr. Morrill was remote)

6. New Business

a. 2026 EDA meeting dates – information for annual meeting vote

Mr. Long noted that the meeting dates would be adopted at the next meeting.

Mr. Thompson clarified that the March 24 meeting date was a typo, and the meeting was actually scheduled for March 17.

b. Staff Report

Ashley Hernandorena, Business Development Manager, reviewed the quarterly BRE visits for agribusiness, food processing, intelligence and national security, and

biotechnology and life sciences. She highlighted the need for more local cold storage and shared co-op workspace, particularly for farms that traveled long distances to market. She emphasized the importance of addressing regulatory issues through education, and preparing customers to take advantage of state-provided support, such as marketing and grant opportunities, to help them better understand the available resources.

Mr. Long suggested that a joint EDA project between the City and the County to address cold storage needs might be a good idea.

Ms. Hernandorena said that in Q1, they would be focusing on biotech and life sciences again. She said that staff could also arrange a tour of the BioAccelerator, if there was interest.

Ms. Kilroy highlighted a recent event where the County hosted the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) real estate team, which maintained a database of available sites and buildings in the Commonwealth. She announced that the County had successfully hosted the Intelligence National Security Alliance's Common Threads event for the second time, where the County was able to showcase the Rivanna Futures property to attendees.

Ms. Kilroy mentioned a project supported by the EDA, led by Cville Biohub, which was a Talent Pathways Initiative and a GO Virginia-funded project that provided grant matching for a \$200 million expansion project by Afton Scientific. She said that she would provide a copy of the final report when it was released.

Ms. Kilroy said that UVA had recently completed a new economic impact study, which revealed that they were at almost \$12 billion of economic output. She said UVA remained the largest employer in the region, which included the health system, the academic functions, and UVA Wise.

7. Other Matters

Mr. Storm discussed a matter he brought up last meeting regarding the Boy Scouts of America and their Christmas tree lots. He noted that with four lots across the County, they required four sign permits and four building permits, and it took about 16 hours to complete the filings. He said that they also had to handle two site inspections. He said that he understood how the process could be difficult for businesses that had to file permits regularly. He said they should consider how to make the permit process easier for small businesses and nonprofits.

8. Adjourn

Chair Long adjourned the meeting at 5:17 p.m. The next meeting is January 20, 2026 in Room 241.

Teste: _____
Donald Long, Chair

Approved: _____
Emily Kilroy, Assistant Secretary