

**ALBEMARLE COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MINUTES
August 18, 2026
Room 241, 4:00 p.m.**

Directors present: Don Long, Chair; Steve Hood, Vice-chair; Andrea Johnson, Secretary
Treasurer; David Storm; Frank Friedman; Bill Mechnick; Andrew Cox

Directors absent: None

Staff present: Emily Kilroy, Director of Economic Development; Ashley Hernandorena, Business Development Manager; Avery Thompson, Management Analyst III; Lauren Bodhan, Senior Assistant County Attorney; Gabriel Boisvert, Senior Assistant County Attorney Bea LaPisto-Kirtley, Board of Supervisors Liaison to the Economic Development Authority (EDA), Rivanna District

Staff absent: None

1. Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Chair Long called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Matters from the Public

Neil Williamson, President of the Free Enterprise Forum, addressed the EDA regarding the development burden of carrying costs, which, for a \$1 million project, could range from \$7,200 to \$9,500 per month in the County. He emphasized that the average time to get on the Board's agenda after staff approval was three months. He requested that the EDA send a letter to the Board asking it to specifically examine the scheduling of public hearings through an economic development lens.

3. Approval of Minutes

July 21 2026

Motion to approve the minutes for the July 21, 2026 meeting was made by Mr. Mechnick and seconded by Mr. Hood.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously.

4. Financial Report

FY27 as of August 12 2026

Avery Thompson, Management Analyst III, provided the financial report.

5. For Action

a. CvilleBioHub Funding Request

Emily Kilroy, Director of Economic Development, introduced the item, which was a request regarding a GO Virginia Talent Pathways Initiative implementation grant

following a previous planning grant. The planning grant, called "BioBridge: Developing Talent to Tomorrow's Breakthroughs", supported a regional analysis aimed at strengthening workforce development in the biotech and life science sector. The implementation grant, called "BioBridge: Talent Infrastructure Alignment", would support work to address the findings of the regional analysis.

Dr. Nikki Hastings, Co-Founder and President of CvilleBioHub, said the request was for a total of \$50,000 over two years to support the \$250,000 grant. She said the City was also supporting the project. She said the project would measure outcomes related to the number of jobs and interns placed, and the number of businesses served.

Mr. Friedman asked how many of the interns currently in the program were placed in local businesses.

Dr. Hastings replied there were a few, but not as many as they would like. She noted that some interns started at local companies, but then later moved elsewhere. She said that with a dedicated effort, they could perform more exit interviews to understand why interns were leaving local businesses.

Ms. Johnson asked where interns were coming from, and if many were coming from University of Virginia (UVA) or Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC).

Dr. Hastings said they mainly attracted third- and fourth-year UVA students, but they also attracted interns who went to school outside the region, but their families lived locally. She said that part of the grant initiative would focus on PVCC, which was an area where they had struggled with outreach.

Motion to adopt the Resolution approving local match support for the CvilleBioHub GO Virginia Talent Pathways Initiative implementation grant was made by Mr. Mechnick and seconded by Mr. Hood.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously.

b. BEACON Kitchen Funding Request

Chair Long recused himself from the discussion, as he represented the Community Investment Collaborative.

Ms. Kilroy said the request was for a line of credit for a renovation project at BEACON Kitchen facilities. She noted an element of the request included the Community Investment Collaborative, and Stephen Davis with the Collaborative was participating in the meeting remotely, and he was available for questions.

Yolunda Harrell, CEO of BEACON Kitchen, highlighted that while their facilities were located in the City, 52% of the people using the facilities resided in the County. She said the line of credit would support the purchase of machinery to help operators scale their production, particularly for packaged products. She said the funding would also help support the development of retail storefronts to sell products directly to the community. The request was for a \$400,000 line of credit to support a reimbursable grant, which had to be spent by the end of the year.

Ms. Kilroy explained that the EDA would provide the funds to the Community Investment Collaborative, which in turn would fully administer the line of credit and eventually return the funds to the EDA. She said that the Community Investment Collaborative had proposed an administrative fee of \$4,000, so the full cost to the EDA would be \$404,000, which should be returned less \$4,000 by spring 2027.

Ms. Johnson asked if the loan was secured.

Mr. Davis said he expected that the loan agreement with New Hill Development would include the grant as security, but he did not think there would be any beyond that. He said that the only risk was that New Hill would be unable to execute and bill for the grant, but they had already started billing and shown success.

Motion to adopt the Resolution approving a loan to the Community Investment Collaborative to New Hill Development Corporation was made by Mr. Storm and seconded by Mr. Cox.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously.

6. For Information

a. Catalytic Project Ideas Discussion (cont.)

Ms. Kilroy said that this was a review and confirmation of the ideas that had gained consensus from the EDA at the last meeting. She said six ideas had been presented. Under agribusiness and food processing equipment and infrastructure, the Economic Development Office (EDO) would facilitate a stakeholder round-table to discuss sector needs. In terms of no-/low-interest loan funds, staff had already performed initial outreach with local organizations, and there was interest in supporting the loan program.

Ms. Kilroy said that under site identification and characterization, staff was working with Timmons Engineering to conduct a site identification study, and they expected results by the end of the calendar year. She said that they would expect EDA feedback on the results to help determine the top two or three sites. Next steps would include seeking Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) grant funding for site characterization. She said that following the identification study, a

site could be chosen as a fill site, but in the meantime, a presentation from the Rivanna Solid Waste Authority could be scheduled to discuss its current fill site project.

Ms. Kilroy said that in terms of business attraction, the EDO should remain the lead on business attraction work and a partner with the EDA in closing deals. She said the final item was related to storytelling, which should be a long term project, and branding should only be prioritized after progress had been made on site identification.

b. Staff Report

Ms. Kilroy provided the staff report. She said that several business retention and expansion meetings had occurred in the short time since the last meeting. She reported that the Chamber had convened its first annual economic forum event. She, Stephen Hartke, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Helen Cauthen, President of the Central Virginia Partnership for Economic Development, Pace Lochte, UVA Economic Development, Chris Engel, the City of Charlottesville, and held a panel discussion to close out the event.

Ashley Hernandorena, Business Development Manager, said she attended the i.Lab Incubator at UVA's Rotunda, where young entrepreneurs pitched ideas and met with investors. She and Mr. Thompson attended an open house at the Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center, and they met with the new executive director, Becky Gildersleeve.

Ms. Hernandorena said that CvilleBioHub was hosting the fifth annual BioDiscovery Summit on September 17. She said that Venture Central food and beverage accelerator applications were closing on August 24.

Ms. Kilroy reported that the Central Virginia National Security Alliance had been rebranding with a new name and host organization, and it was hosting its first public event under this brand, called the Critical Infrastructure Protection Forum. The forum would focus on physical and cybersecurity. She said that if any directors wanted to attend, then staff could register them for the event.

Ms. Hernandorena announced that the Charlottesville Business Innovation Council was hosting a tech tour on November 12. She said that the Minority Business Alliance was hosting its annual gala on October 9.

7. Closed Session

Motion to go into closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act § 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia under subsection 8 to consult with legal counsel regarding specific legal matters (including possible agreements with AstraZeneca LP)

requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel was made by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Hood.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously.

Motion to certify by a recorded vote that to the best of each director's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion authorizing the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting was made by Mr. Hood and seconded by Mr. Storm.

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously.

8. **Other Matters**

Motion to amend the agenda to reflect that the next meeting would be held at City Space was made by Mr. Long and seconded by Mr. Friedman

MOTION: The motion carried unanimously.

9. **Adjourn**

Chair Long adjourned the meeting at 6:13 p.m. The next meeting is September 15, 2026 at City Space.

Teste: _____
Don Long, Chair

Approved: _____
Emily Kilroy, Assistant Secretary