

**MINUTES  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
OF THE CITY OF NORFOLK  
Wednesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Department of Development  
999 Waterside Drive, Suite 2430  
Norfolk, VA 23510**

Present:

Directors

Robert E. Garris, Jr. - Presiding  
Michael Lee  
B. Wayne Coleman  
Michael Cox  
Richard Ottinger  
Antonio Sisco

Counsel

Barry Hunter – Kaufman & Canoles

Staff

Chuck Rigney – Executive Director  
Sean Washington – Secretary-Treasurer  
Dawn Ryan – Assistant Secretary-Treasurer

Guests

Christine Morris - Chief Resilience Officer

Absent

Jeffrey Brooke  
Kim Brown  
Jaeson Dandalides  
W. Craig Reilly  
Ursula Rhodes  
Christine Garczynski

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Chairman Garris called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. and welcomed the staff and guest to the special meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

The Chairman asked Mr. Coleman and Mr. Lee to address the questionnaire they had given out at the last meeting and asked if anyone had any comments on it.

Mr. Lee then reported that he and Mr. Coleman met with Dr. Boone and Dr. Birdsong (primary liaison with the business community) to determine how the Authority could assist the Norfolk Public Schools. Everyone present at that meeting agreed the businesses in the surrounding school communities needed to be more involved. Dr. Birdsong commented that when businesses adopt schools, it helps both the business community and the schools in several ways. Dr. Birdsong explained that adopting schools is associated with varying costs and responsibilities because the needs of each school are different.

In the discussion that followed the report, one of the directors suggested a business should partner with a school closest to that business. Another director suggested that businesses provide mentors for reading programs and math sessions. Mr. Cox arrived at 4 p.m.

Other suggestions made during the discussion included the following: having presentations from local businesses to demonstrate how certain school subjects translate to jobs and real life opportunities; have programs designed for different grade levels such as reading to elementary kids, math lessons for middle school kids, and robotics and visual presentations for high school students. It was noted that "at risk" children were most in need of outside mentors and sponsors to provide more learning and guidance. It was further reported that there are 45 schools in Norfolk of which 5 are high schools. It was reported that in the meeting with Dr. Boone and Dr. Birdsong, Dr. Birdsong talked about how ADP adopted a

school and contributed backpacks. However, by mid-year most schools are in desperate need of supplies. The general consensus was that there is plenty of opportunity for increasing the communication between businesses and schools but having a central point of contact would help to alleviate any disconnect.

Suggestions were then made to Co-Sponsor an event with Norfolk Works and GNC in what would essentially be a “summit” to bring the School Administration and businesses together. Another suggestion was to implement a PR program, WHRO being mentioned as a potential business partner, to better inform people of the positive things happening in the school system. This could be a catalyst for sharing content and programming with the community. Another suggestion was made to have a brochure readily available with school rating highlights and testing results for new businesses coming to the area.

It was suggested that Norfolk Works and OPP Inc. hold another job fair to help students who are not going to attend college prepare for job interviews. The Chairman asked Mr. Coleman and Mr. Lee to invite Dr. Birdsong to a meeting to give the Authority a better understanding of the job ahead and what it might do to assist in making the Norfolk Public Schools a place where people want to send their children for an education.

### ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the meeting at 4:35 p.m.

Approved by *Robert S. Samu, Jr.*