

Approved 07-21-2021

Clarke County Economic Development Advisory Committee  
May 19, 2021 Minutes

A meeting of the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) held in the Berryville-Clarke County Government Center, Berryville, Virginia, on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, at 1:00 pm.

<i>Board:</i>	Christina Kraybill, Bev McKay, John Milleson, Betsy Pritchard, Lee Sheaffer
<i>Absent:</i>	Chris Bates, Christy Dunkle
<i>Staff:</i>	Chris Boies, Felicia Hart, Tiffany Kemp
<i>Press:</i>	None
<i>Also Present:</i>	Sally Michaels, Allison Dongoski, Cathy Seal, Shaine Coleman, Bill Waite, Reid Dodson, and various others

1. *Call to Order*

At 1:00 pm, Chairman John Milleson called the meeting to order.

2. *Adoption of Agenda*

**Bev McKay, seconded by Lee Sheaffer, moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote**

Chris Bates	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Absent
Christina Kraybill	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye
Betsy Pritchard	-	Aye
Lee Sheaffer	-	Aye

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3. *Approval of Minutes*

**Bev McKay, seconded by Betsy Pritchard, moved to approve the March 17, 2021, minutes as presented. The motion carried as follows:**

Chris Bates	-	Absent
Christy Dunkle	-	Absent
Christina Kraybill	-	Aye
Beverly B. McKay	-	Aye
John Milleson	-	Aye
Betsy Pritchard	-	Aye
Lee Sheaffer	-	Aye

4. *Presentation by Sally Michaels | Business Retention Manager | Frederick County EDA*

Highlights by Sally Michaels Include:

## THE WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

WINCHESTER • FREDERICK • CLARKE • WARREN • SHENANDOAH

- Sally Michaels introduced herself, stating she had been with the Frederick County EDA for eight (8) years. Previously held the position of Business Coordinator.
- Sally Michaels introduced the newest member of the Frederick County EDA, Allison Dongoski, Project Specialist.
- Before The Workforce Initiative was born, there were a few "labor pains." Came up with a Business and Education Summit.



- Previously was Winchester and Frederick County then separated; still one community.
- Reached out to Clarke County to bring all the businesses together.
- At the first year of the summit, there were 120 attendees and topics that included:
  - o how to collaborate, get the word out, what barriers need to be broken down, etc.
- Went through this process a few times, which provided a game plan, then started to do events.



- The Industry Tours included 300-400 students who would visit two (2) industries in a day.
- Reached out to Clarke, Warren, and Shenandoah to fill gaps.
- Videos are the way to spread the word.
- The marching orders to make these more successful are referred to as "Red Dots."
- It was decided it was needed to keep in-person tours, but they need to be open to the public.
- Added educator tours so counselors, teachers, etc., can go to the industries, learn, and answer students' questions.
- In addition to the tours and creating videos, it was decided to tie this into National Manufacturing Day and have the manufacturing partners present.
- Clarke businesses who have participated:
  - Berryville Graphics, Historic Rosemont Manor, Grafton, Cochrans Lumber



- Turned into a week-long event to talk about manufacturing.
- Goes over jobs available, current technology, what training is needed, etc.
- Both attitude and aptitude necessary for success.



- The Employer Expo is one big event to help K-12 students get face-to-face time with hiring managers.
- Has been well attended over the last few years, excluding 2020.



- In addition to the opportunity to meet face-to-face with hiring managers, classes are offered:
  - o Professional etiquette, mock interviews, resume writing, online etiquette (working from home etiquette), etc.
- Also offered are six (6) \$500 scholarship opportunities.
- Open to the public but ensures K12 students can be included.
- Businesses that have participated in the Employer Expo:
  - o C2 Management, Cladwell and Santmeyer, Blandy Experimental Farm, Berryville Family Chiropractic, Farm Bureau
- The Workforce Initiative "WI" includes Clarke County, Frederick County, Winchester, and added Warren and Shenandoah Counties in February 2021.
- Focuses on the mentality of "one community" and makes the events all-inclusive.



- Noted, it cannot be just the EDA working on these events, it has to be the businesses and the educators to get involved and provide feedback.
- The Board of Directors consists of one and two-year terms.
- The Mission is a skilled workforce.
- Workforce Models consist of construction, manufacturing, and IT has been based on a Valley Health model, which is ten years in the making.

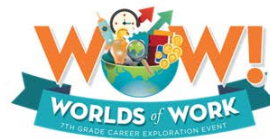
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- Through CTE courses at the Public Schools, what classes are already offered, where do kids need to be bused to meet up.
- A marketing campaign is the next biggest hurdle. Branding and consistent messaging are vital.
- Not all about K-12 students, but also employers and parents having the awareness that all pathways are different.

## The Widget Cup<sup>®</sup> Est. 2015



- The Widget Cup is a design-build competition which the Clarke County team has won twice and currently has the cup.
- Shows the community the skills (CTE), not just focusing on academics/athletics.



- World of Work "WOW" Program
- 14,325 student have passed through this program and is a massive event.
- 75+ unique businesses (closer to 100)

#### Questions/Comments

##### Chair Milleson

- Do you work with the jails?
  - o Sally Michaels confirmed they do, noting two years previously, there is a breakfast during manufacturing week where the work release coordinator and probation office spoke. Also commenting not nearly enough businesses taking advantage of this program. Rigorous process to go through work release, etc.
  - o Felicia Hart included those work release clients who love to come out and are proud of what they are doing.

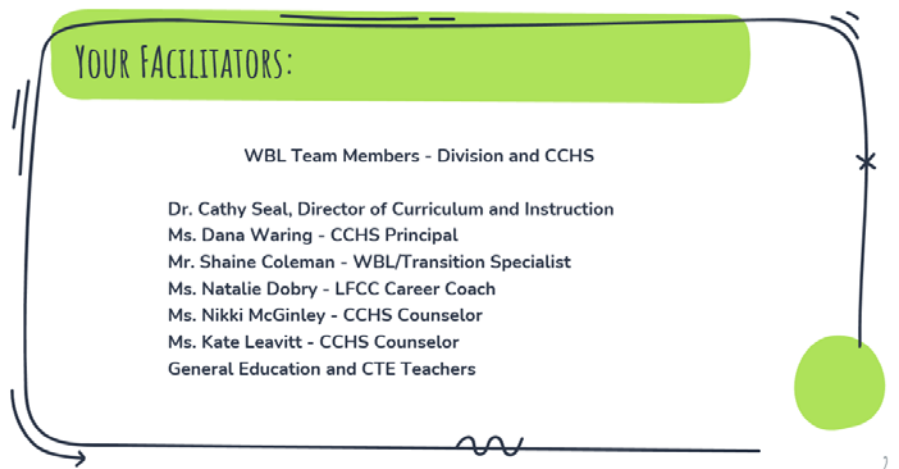
#### 5. *Presentation by Cathy Seal | Director of Curriculum and Instruction | Clarke County Public Schools*

Highlights by Cathy Seal Include:





- Cathy Seal introduced herself and noted Shaine Coleman was back to assist in presenting.
- Cathy Seal believes it is an exciting time to be in education because of the options available to students.
- Recognizing the past year has been a challenge.
- Passed out an Academic Career Plan - *Attachment 1*, Brochure – *Attachment 2*, and a paper copy of slides.



- Cathy Seal is the initial point of contact for the projects previously mentioned by Sally Michaels and reaches out to the educators at the school to make them aware of what is available.
- Shaine Coleman is responsible for securing a placement with a business or organization based on student interest.
- Works with helping students develop a resume, interview prep, and making sure students are prepared for entering the career world.

**What is Work-Based Learning?**

- School coordinated workplace experience
- Related to students' career goals and interests
- Integrated into their instruction
- Partnership with local businesses/organizations
- Apply classroom instruction in the authentic field

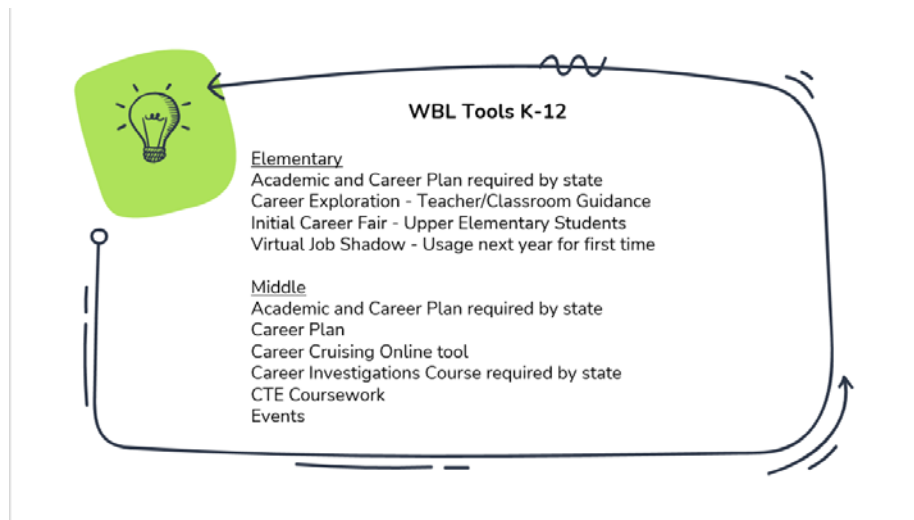
- State requirements for Work-Based Learning.
- Wants to be sure it is a school coordinated workplace experience
- Shaine Coleman is responsible for ensuring the business is an appropriate fit and how to pair students with a business.
- The majority of the time, these programs correspond with coursework but can expand on student's interests.
- Before COVID-19, mainly stuck with regional partnerships but have expanded to virtual partners.
- Also want to apply to classroom instruction if it is related to their current coursework.

**WBL METHODS-**

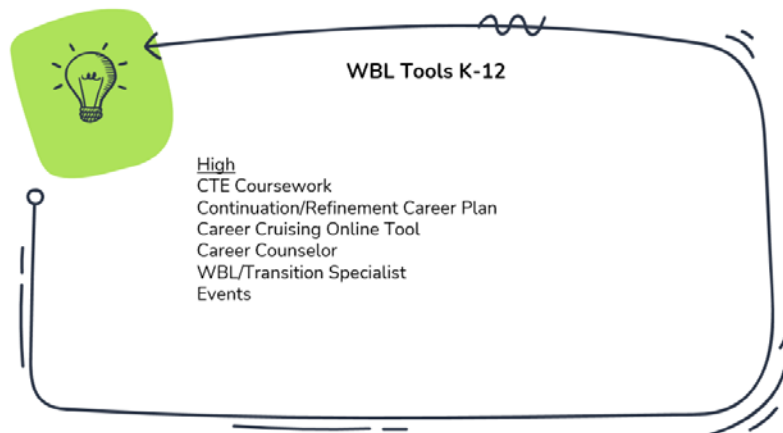
<b>Job Shadowing</b> Short-term, unpaid experience to allow students career exploration opportunities.	<b>Externships</b> Extended job shadow (40 hours) that allows more time to observe in an organization.	<b>Mentorships</b> In depth opportunity for a student to learn about an industry through visits and completion of a related project with mentor guidance.
<b>Internships</b> Hands-on experience supervised by school and workplace supervisors. (Paid or unpaid, short or long term, students may earn a half or full credit.)	<b>Service Learning</b> Community service planned by students and directly related to classroom instruction.	<b>Other</b> Other methods such as Cooperative Education and Apprenticeship exist in order to meet student and employer needs for career preparation.

- Sampling from the State on what is considered Work Base Learning.
- Went over the items listed above.

- Also mentioned the Industrial Maintenance Technology Academy and the Emergency Medical Technology Academy at Lord Fairfax Community College.



- State regulations outline that students as early as elementary school are expected to begin an academic and career plan.
- Wants students to start investigating careers, think of likes and dislikes, and what they would like to do when they become an adult.
- Highlighted the handout "Commonwealth of Virginia Plan of Study" See *Attachment 1*
- In Middle School, counselors begin to work through the Plan of Study with every student and fill in courses based on individual conversations with students.
- There is an annual review 7-12 grade in the State of Virginia for every student, and it is communicated with parents where their children are when completing the document.
- Bev McKay asked how many of these different courses of study are there? Cathy Seal stated there is one for every CTE course and pathway, explaining the handout was just an example for today's presentation.
- Betsy Pritchard asked if there was a way to qualify/quantify the end results and how numbers were generated?
  - o Cathy Seal stated there was no way to see a full-end game. A CTE Completer Follow-Up survey is done one year after the students graduate, and the former CTE Teacher completes that.
- Felicia Hart asked when the data began being collected?
  - o Cathy Seal responded 10-15 years.



- The list of employers above is a sampling of those working with the CTE program looking to add to this list.

**Shaine Coleman Highlights Included:**

- John Milleson asked about the Pitt Crew mentioned in the list above. Shaine Coleman explained a student who went to JMU and got a degree in engineering but found he didn't want to pursue that career path. That student then went to Richard Childress Racing and tried out and is now on the Austin Dillon Team as the gas man. Found there is an academy in North Carolina to train on NASCAR. Has connected current students with this past student to show them the way.
- Previously worked at Caverns Country Club, and the Superintendent is well known through the golf community visited and went over turf management, grasses, etc., will become an annual visit.

- Casey Tree is a new partnership that came about recently. This will be a paid internship over the summer, 7 am-3:30 pm, June, July, and August. There are already eight (8) candidates with more signing up.
- Hagemeyer Taxidermy out of Winchester came to speak to the students about the background of taxidermy. Allowing students to visit and practice mounting, free for the client.
- Working with the Blue Ridge Wildlife Center doing tours.
- Thermo Fisher has a couple of students going to work there as soon as they graduate.

### Questions/Comments

Christina Kraybill

- Asked if there was an aviation track? Noting there will be a shortage in 4-5 years. Offered to volunteer her husband as a point of contact.
  - Working on this.

## 6. *Economic Development and Tourism Update*

Highlights by Felicia Hart Include:

### **Goals**

1. Convene a group of hospitality owners/operators.
  - Group has met once in person. Discussion continues as needed and when appropriate.
    - I have not heard from anyone regarding the new meals tax.
2. Engage stakeholders on the feasibility of a hotel in Berryville (this would include owners/operators in the region).
  - Work in progress - COVID major consideration right now.
  - In talking with other localities, a majority of the hotels are having difficulty hiring front line staff.
    - In another locality, one hotel has decided to hold off on building; in another locality, two are holding off.
    - Locally, the occupancy rate is holding at about 75% right now - see *Attachment #1, page 41* of the meeting packet.
    - Local hotels are competing against the AirBnBs and short-term rentals.
3. Continue efforts on small business attraction, retention, and expansion (seminars, promotion, assistance). I have also expanded this to include workforce initiatives and expansion.
  - Working regionally regarding the Worlds of Work!, Workforce Initiative, and programs Clarke County schools are currently involved in.
  - We have brought in Virginia Career Works, the Virginia Employment Commission, and other local and state agencies as needed for networking.



- Wrapped up the latest Economic Gardening program. Have met with participants, and they are very pleased with the results and the end product.
  - Note newest Clarke County unemployment numbers - see attachment #2, page 9 of the meeting packet. We had an unemployment rate of 3.9% in March - lower than February's rate of 4%, although some of our Main Street businesses are reducing hours because of the lack of employees applying.
  - See *attachment #3, page 47 of the meeting packet* - full-page ad paid for by Frederick County.
4. Engage in a dialogue with property owners of vacant buildings and the developable land to spur economic activity.
    - Ongoing. Continue to work on a database of property owners.
    - Weekly I update my list of available properties.
  5. Evaluate what is needed to make the Berryville Main Street program viable and successful – report back to Joint Committee on a recommendation.
    - Letter received from Berryville Main Street regarding reorganizing.
  6. Formalize website and social media strategies for economic development.
    - Work in progress regarding updates.
    - A new website is in design works - it will better enable us to post immediately and provide more pertinent information for those who use it.
  7. Establish relationships, and provide training for realtors in the area.
    - In regular conversations with ED Nancy Silva.
    - Made introductions with ED and Clarke County High School officials as a partnership for teaching students.
    - Made BRAR aware of the new Waterloo water/sewer program and the potential at Double Tollgate.
    - Continue meeting one-on-one with realtors.
  8. Develop and implement an incentive program using the CARES funding
    - Program completed.
    - New funds are available through the American Rescue Plan. We are currently trying to understand how these new funds can be used and when.

**Other projects:**

**Economic Development**

- Continue having broadband meetings/updates/phone calls. We are looking at opportunities to use the new American Rescue Plan funds.
- On behalf of the Virginia Health Department, we are coordinating with local businesses to schedule on-site vaccines.
  - This is a no-cost program that allows the Health Department to schedule on-site (at the businesses) vaccines for all their employees. This will help

- to eliminate manufacturing downtime while at the same time vaccinating more people.
- Working with the Commissioner's Office, I have developed handouts for our restaurants regarding available grant monies from the American Rescue Plan program.
  - The Commissioner's Office will be visiting each restaurant/store to educate them on the recently passed meals tax program and will be distributing this information.
- Met with representatives from our local Department of Social Services to make them aware of several local programs and organizations for partnership opportunities.
  - Made them aware of numerous existing programs their clients may be able to take advantage of. Made several introductions to local organizations/businesses for the DSS Director to speak at to update local elected officials (Town of Berryville) and citizens (civic clubs) as to DSS current reality. We have now set up quarterly meetings for regular updates.
- Have monthly phone calls with representatives of the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA). We continue to update them on the current reality of Clarke County and regionally.
- I have met several times with Ali Farahani, the owner of Oakhurst Cabinetry on Cattleman's Lane.
  - I have made several introductions with local businesses and organizations and a couple of State organizations. I am continuing to work with him on needs/opportunities as they arise.
- Continue to utilize Christine Kriz from the Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center.
- Regionally (Winchester, Frederick County, Clarke County), we had a meeting with Draper Aden regarding the EPA Community-Wide Brownfields Coalition Grant.
  - This is a new opportunity grant program Clarke County agreed to participate in. The program will allow us to work with any property owner who is in need of an environmental site assessment in order to sell their property. This is especially pertinent for any older farms that may have used any chemicals or pesticides. This is a no-cost program to the property owner or Clarke County. The program has a total value of \$600,000 with no match required.
- Regionally participating in the Startup Shenandoah Valley program. This program works with businesses to identify and address their risks while scaling up.
- Continue to meet regularly with Christy Dunkle for updates/catch-up.
- I continue to meet regularly with Clarke County's Planning and Zoning Directors for updates/catch-ups.

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- Have monthly phone calls with representatives of the Virginia Economic Developers Partnership (VEDP). We continue to update them on the current reality of Clarke County and regionally.
  - VEDP is establishing a new division - Office of Education Economics. I have already made introductions with them and Clarke County High School officials to make them aware of the programs already in place here in Clarke County.
  - Had a conference call with VEDP's representative regarding international sales.
- Work/talk continues on both the Waterloo and the Double Tollgate areas. Clarke County is still awaiting word back from Frederick County regarding our water/sewer request.
- Continue hosting weekly meetings with Frederick County and the City of Winchester EDAs. Also part of the group is Christine Kriz with Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center and Cynthia Snyder with the Top of Virginia Chamber.
- Regionally we are part of the Small Business Resiliency Team program as part of the GOVirginia - this is in partnership with Lord Fairfax Small Business Development Center. This program assists small businesses with marketing, financial guidance, the creation of an e-commerce website, and accounting software.

*See attachment #4, page 49 of the meeting packet-*  
SmartAsset piece

- Clarke County has been rated 8 out of 10 for 2020. See the methodology applied.

### **Tourism**

- Continue to write blogs for state, regional, and local use.
- Continue conversations with our local farmers/farm markets about needs and opportunities.
- Our partnership in the Shenandoah Valley Spirits Trail continues to show results. Social media and website stats are improving, and we are getting visitors from further away - and they are sharing and posting positive comments on our wineries and breweries.
- Expanded blog opportunities listings with the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership (SVTP) and the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association (SVTA).
- Continue to update the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC) website regarding Clarke County and our assets/businesses.
  - *See attachment #5, page 51 of the meeting packet.*

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*7. Roles and Responsibilities of the EDAC*

Highlights by Felicia Hart Include:

- Sample questionnaire provided to members to start the conversation with businesses.
- Noting the questionnaire was not designed as an interrogation, but a way to get more information at a deeper level on the concerns business owners have.
- Asked the members to look over and let Felicia Hart know of any questions.

*8. Next Meeting*

July 21, 2021

- Felicia Hart introduced Reid Dodson, owner of Persimmon Ridge Farm, who came to visit as the possible new member of the EDAC. Mr. Dodson stated he would like to be more a part of the community and pursue the EDAC committee membership.

*9. Adjournment*

Being no further business, at 1:53 pm, Chairman John Milleson adjourned the meeting.

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Minutes recorded and transcribed by Tiffany R. Kemp, Clerk