

Northumberland County Economic Development Commission
Meeting: June 17, 2025
6-8 pm

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.
2. Roll Call. In attendance were Commissioners: Dr. Karen Pica, Melissa Carter, and Maurice Johnson; Staff: Drew Basye, Robert Bullard (Virtually). John Kost, Planning District; Keenan Allen, Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board, Talent Development Coordinator.
3. Discovery Session: Mr. Keenan Allen
 - a. Mr. Allen introduced the CARE Project, funded by GO Virginia Region 6 and Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board.
 - b. Focused sectors: Manufacturing, Aquaculture, and Information Technology.
 - c. Key concerns:
 - (1). Shrinking talent pool (aging population, undereducation, out-migration).
 - (2). Difficulty of small/medium businesses competing for workforce.
 - (3). Need to match education/training to industry needs.
 - d. CARE Project aims to:
 - (1). Convene employers to define workforce needs and pain points.
 - (2). Identify in-demand skills and credentials.
 - (3). Partner with educational institutions for targeted training.
 - (4). Consider non-traditional labor sources (e.g., returning citizens, ESL speakers, older workers).
 - e. Project is employer-led and data-driven, using the U.S. Chamber's Talent Pipeline Management model.
 - f. Initiative is in the initial stages; first manufacturing convening is scheduled for July 7 in Warsaw.
 - g. Mr. Allen requested help connecting with employers, particularly in aquaculture.
4. Review of Agenda: Mr. Johnson motioned for approval and Ms. Carter second. The agenda was approved.
5. Review of Meeting Minutes: May 2025. Mr. Johnson motioned for approval of the May meeting minutes, Ms. Carter second, and the motion passed.
6. Commissioners' Corner
 - a. District 1 – Mr. Corder – not in attendance
 - b. District 2 - Vacant
 - c. District 3 – Ms. Carter –
 - i. Emphasized employers must offer competitive wages to attract and retain talent.
 - ii. Mentioned upcoming opening of Buc-ee's in Virginia and its wage levels.
 - d. District 4 – Dr. Pica – No updates.

- e. District 5 – Mr. Johnson –
 - i. Noted alignment between Keenan Allen’s remarks and previous business owner discussions.
 - ii. Raised questions about posted bylaws. Dr. Pica clarified bylaws are posted for public review and were previously reviewed in strategic planning. Will revisit in January if needed.
7. Executive Director Items. Mr. Basye read the comments Mr. Bullard provided.
- i. Discussed logistics for the June 23 Golf Tournament:
 - 1. EDC participation is needed from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM.
 - 2. Booth will be co-located with Compass.
 - 3. Chair and Executive Director to attend; additional attendance optional.
8. County Administrator Corner – No updates
9. Current Projects
- a. Business and Heritage Expo – June 22 at Heathsville Farmers Market:
 - i. Low participation from businesses, but the event will proceed with YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Mayor Corp, and EDC.
 - ii. EDC handouts and flyers will be provided.
 - b. Main Street Proposal:
 - i. Members asked to review and provide input.
 - c. Excess County Property:
 - i. Board of Supervisors to discuss during the July 10 meeting.
 - ii. Commissioners encouraged us to attend in the Chair’s absence.
 - d. Workforce Data Analysis:
 - i. Collaborating with Commissioner of Revenue and Bay Workforce Consortium.
 - ii. Aim: Review and analyze year-over-year registered business and employment trends.
 - e. Tourism Grant Opportunities:
 - i. Goal: Apply for next year’s round of grants supporting workforce and tourism.
 - f. Digital Zoning Map:
 - i. Dr. Pica emphasizes the importance and urged prioritizing this long-delayed project for better business recruitment tools.
 - ii. Will escalate request to Board of Supervisors.
 - g. Comprehensive Plan Update: (Input from Mr. Kost)
 - i. Draft to be completed June 18; public hearing scheduled for July 22.
 - ii. Includes “Pillars of Community Growth” framework with twenty-four evaluation factors.
 - iii. Commissioner’s encouraged to review once released.

10. New Business –

- a. Discussion of engaging more small businesses and industry sectors in planning and workforce initiatives.
- b. Emphasis on improving data access, streamlining communication with employers, and identifying concrete project outcomes.

11. Citizen Engagement. N/A

12. Adjournment. Dan motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Carter motioned for adjournment, Mr. Johnson second. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.