

Town of Richlands
Industrial/Economic Development Authority
May 4 2026

The Richlands IEDA held its regular monthly meeting at 6 PM with the following present:

Lynna Mitchell	Joseph Vance
Craig Earls	Cody Harman
Mike Bales	

Members Absent: Jeff Casey
Town Representatives: Billy Shelton
Guests:

Call to Order:

Joseph Vance called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda:

Craig Earls made a motion to approve the agenda as amended with the addition of a discussion topic for adding an IEDA member. Lynna Mitchell seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

The minutes of the April 6th 2026 meeting were presented for approval with a minor correction. Lynna Mitchell made a motion to approve the minutes. Craig Earls seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the minutes were unanimously approved.

IEDA Discussion Items:

Pop-Up Program Funds and Micro-Grant Discussion

Joseph Vance reported that the IEDA had discussed a potential grant application for existing businesses during the previous meeting. Due to scheduling constraints, he had not yet updated the application form for further review but plans to revise the document for future discussion.

The group continued discussing the remaining Pop-Up Richlands funds and expressed concern that the approximately \$25,000 balance could be absorbed into the Town's general budget rather than being dedicated to economic development initiatives. Members reiterated their interest in identifying opportunities that would support business growth and attract new investment to the Town.

The IEDA also discussed the ongoing housing grant program. Members noted their understanding that proceeds from the sale of homes developed through the program would return to the Town. The group further discussed that eligible flood victims may receive up to \$50,000 toward the purchase of a qualifying home.

Craig Earls noted that the Town is currently engaged in its annual budget planning process and that upcoming public hearings will provide additional opportunities for discussion regarding economic development priorities.

IEDA Long-Term Plan

Cody Harman expressed interest in developing a formal long-term strategic plan for the IEDA. Members discussed the importance of establishing long-term economic development goals and priorities for the organization.

The group agreed that the arrival of a permanent Town Manager would provide an important opportunity to collaborate on the development of a comprehensive long-term plan that aligns with the Town's broader economic development objectives.

Other IEDA Updates

The IEDA discussed opportunities to strengthen collaboration with the Tazewell County Industrial Development Authority. Members felt that increased cooperation between the two organizations could be beneficial and discussed the possibility of having representation from the County IDA participate in Richlands IEDA meetings.

Mike Bales specifically suggested inviting Darrell Addison to attend future Richlands IEDA meetings to promote knowledge sharing and regional collaboration.

Members also discussed the continued importance of attracting new businesses to the Town, particularly restaurants and other retail establishments. Billy Shelton advised that the Town currently has traffic count data available and is continuing to collect additional data that could be valuable when marketing Richlands to prospective businesses and developers.

Joseph Vance provided an update regarding online FOIA training and noted that he had contacted Mike Thomas regarding the training requirements. Members were reminded to notify Craig Earls upon completion of the training so records can be maintained.

Additional IEDA Member

Billy Shelton reported that the Town has advertised for interested individuals to serve on the IEDA. Applications will be reviewed through the Town Council appointment process, and the matter is expected to be addressed during upcoming Council meetings.

Action Items:

Joseph Vance: Update the micro-grant application per the groups feedback.

Additional Discussion:

Craig Earls made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Lynna Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting adjourned.

Next meeting June 1st, 2026, 6:00PM