

**Minutes
Board of Directors of the
Virginia Economic Development Partnership Authority
March 19, 2026
9:00 a.m.**

**901 East Cary Street
One James Center, Board Room – 9th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219**

Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Chair John Hewa.

Board Members In-Person: Secretary Carrie Chenery, Mimi Coles, Rick Harrell, Bill Hayter, John Hewa, Todd House, April Kees, Pace Lochte, Connie Loughhead, Sarah McCoy, Emily O’Quinn, Nick Rush, Will Sessoms, Secretary Mark Sickles, Steven Stone

Board Members Absent: Sonya Montgomery, Anne Oman

Public Comment Period

Chair Hewa solicited public comments. There were none.

Approval of Minutes for December 11, 2025, Meeting

Chair Hewa asked for approval of the minutes from the December 11, 2025, meeting. Upon motion by Mr. Stone, seconded by Ms. Loughhead, the minutes were unanimously approved.

Chair’s Report

Chair Hewa welcomed the Board and guests, expressing appreciation to all who attended the previous day’s Committee meetings and the Board dinner.

Mr. Hewa welcomed Secretary Carrie Chenery back to the Board in her new role as Secretary of Commerce and Trade and welcomed Secretary Mark Sickles to the Board in his role as Secretary of Finance. Mr. Hewa also welcomed new Board member Sarah McCoy, the interim CEO of the Virginia Port Authority.

Chair Hewa concluded his remarks by reviewing the meeting agenda, including topics that would be discussed during closed session.

President’s Report

Jason El Koubi, President and CEO, provided an update to the Board. A copy of Mr. El Koubi’s report is included in the meeting materials.

Report: Legislation and Policy Committee

Mr. Stone, Chair of the Legislation and Policy Committee, presented an overview of the Committee’s March 18, 2026, meeting, which included updates on elections, congressional redistricting, and the General Assembly.

Report: Rural Virginia Action Committee

Mr. Rush, Chair of the Rural Virginia Action Committee, provided an update on the matters discussed at the Committee’s March 18, 2026, meeting, including a guest presentation by Sean McMurray, Executive Director of the Wellspring Foundation.

Report: Finance and Audit Committee

Mr. Harrell, Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, summarized agenda items from the Committee’s March 18, 2026, meeting. These items included VEDP financial results through December 31, 2025, and updates regarding audit, IT security, extension requests and clawbacks.

Mr. Hewa presented the following consent agenda items from the Finance and Audit Committee to the Board for a vote:

- Accept: VEDP FY26 financial results thru December 31, 2025
- Accept: Extension Request
- Accept: Clawback Update
- Accept: Semi-annual Report on Incentive Compliance

Upon motion to accept the consent agenda by Mr. Harrell, seconded by Mr. Sessoms, the motion was approved unanimously.

Report: Executive Committee

Mr. Hewa, Chair of the Executive Committee, provided an update on the matters discussed at the Committee’s March 18, 2026 meeting, including the proposed creation of a 501(c)(3) nonstock corporation pursuant to § 2.2-2240 of the Code of Virginia. Mr. Hewa then called for a motion to approve the creation of the 501(c)(3) nonstock corporation. Upon motion by Ms. Coles, seconded by Mr. Stone, the motion was approved.

Upon the vote:

Secretary Chenery	Aye
Ms. Coles	Aye
Mr. Harrell	Aye
Mr. Hayter	Aye
Mr. Hewa	Abstained
Mr. House	Abstained
Ms. Kees	Abstained
Ms. Lochte	Aye
Ms. Loughhead	Aye
Ms. McCoy	Aye
Ms. Montgomery	Not present
Ms. Oman	Not present
Ms. O’Quinn	Aye
Mr. Rush	Aye
Mr. Sessoms	Aye
Secretary Sickles	Aye
Mr. Stone	Aye

Update on InternshipsVA

Debbie Melvin, Vice President of Talent and Partnerships, provided an update on the launch and early implementation of the InternshipsVA program, noting that responsibilities for employer

engagement and the matching grant program were transferred from SCHEV to VEDP in 2025. Key milestones included completion of a comprehensive plan with SCHEV, onboarding of staff and Regional Internship Managers, and the official launch of the program and marketing campaign by Governor Spanberger.

The InternshipsVA launch received broad media coverage statewide, supported by a coordinated outreach effort and a marketing campaign focused on raising employer awareness and participation. Early marketing results exceeded industry benchmarks across digital platforms, and engagement on VEDP owned media channels has been strong.

Staff reported positive early outcomes, including active employer and partner engagement, regional outreach through presentations and events, development of employer tools and training resources, and steady growth in newsletter subscriptions. The matching grant program is actively supporting paid internships, with over 100 applications approved to date.

Next steps include continued regional employer outreach, expansion of employer resources and trainings, execution and refinement of the marketing strategy, and development of an employer recognition program.

A copy of Ms. Melvin's presentation is available in the meeting materials.

VEDP Staff Spotlight

Stephanie Agee, SVP of International Trade, introduced Krissy Watson, Internship Program Manager with the Division of International Trade.

Ms. Watson discussed her background as a teacher and how that experience prepared her for her current role recruiting interns and matching them with participating companies. She highlighted the program's strong focus on student success and professional development.

Ms. Watson further explained that the program operates on a small, concierge-style model and oversees all aspects of student recruitment, including job postings, résumé review, and virtual interviews, to facilitate strong candidate - company matches. Participating companies receive a shortlist of qualified candidates, particularly benefiting those with limited internal recruiting capacity. The program partners with small businesses and offers résumé building workshops, and internships frequently lead to full-time employment opportunities.

Closed Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Harrell and seconded by Mr. Stone to convene a closed meeting to discuss elements of VEDP's Strategic Plan, Marketing Plan, and Operational Plan pursuant to subdivision A 50 of § 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia, which allows for the discussion of such activities that would reveal to the Commonwealth's competitors for economic development projects the strategies intended to be deployed, thus adversely affecting the financial interests of the Commonwealth.

Mr. El Koubi asked that VEDP staff be allowed to stay for the closed meeting and Chair Hewa agreed.

Certification of Closed Meeting

After the Board reconvened in open meeting, Counsel certified the closed meeting via a roll call vote:

Do you certify, that to the best of your knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of FOIA were discussed in the closed meeting, and (ii) only such matters as were identified in the motion to go into the closed meeting were heard,

discussed, or considered during the closed meeting?

Upon the vote:

Secretary Chenery	Aye
Ms. Coles	Aye
Mr. Harrell	Aye
Mr. Hayter	Aye
Mr. Hewa	Aye
Mr. House	Aye
Ms. Kees	Aye
Ms. Lochte	Aye
Ms. Loughhead	Aye
Ms. McCoy	Aye
Ms. Montgomery	Not present
Ms. Oman	Not present
Ms. O'Quinn	Aye
Mr. Rush	Aye
Mr. Sessoms	Aye
Secretary Sickles	Aye
Mr. Stone	Aye

Adjournment

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held June 4, 2026. There being no further business, Chair Hewa adjourned the meeting at 12:22 p.m.