

Bluegrass Economic Development Advisory Council (BEDAC)

Meeting Minutes

July 24, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Main Conference Room – Bluegrass ADD

699 Perimeter Drive, Lexington, KY 40517

Attendees:

Anderson	Bourbon	Boyle	Clark	Estill	Fayette	Franklin	Garrard
		Josh Gooch		Joe Crawford	Reid Maynard		Jeff VanHook
Harrison	Jessamine	Lincoln	Madison	Mercer	Nicholas	Powell	Scott
	David West		Amy Scarborough	Greyson Evans			
	Tom Calkins		David Stipes				
Woodford	BGADD	Others					
	Logan Hart						
	Kelly Rode						
	Jakob Marsh						
	Michael Murphy						

I. Call to Order

BEDAC Chair, Judge/Executive David West called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

II. Introductions and Roll Call

Chairman West asked each member in attendance to introduce themselves and which agency they represented.

III. Consideration of Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2025

Motion to approve: Tom Calkins (Jessamine County).
Seconded by: Amy Scarborough (Madison County).
Vote to approve: Unanimously approved by committee.

IV. Survey Discussion

Chairman West turned the floor over to BGADD Economic Development Specialist Jakob Marsh, who provided an overview of the BEDAC survey distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Marsh explained that the survey was designed to gauge the Council’s interest in potential discussion topics for future meetings. A majority of responses indicated strong interest in the following areas:

- Economic Climate
- Emerging Industry Trends
- State and Federal Funding Opportunities

Council members were then invited to participate in an open discussion regarding these and other potential focus areas. Mr. Marsh noted one survey response that suggested offering grant writing training opportunities. He shared that Grant Ready Kentucky, a nonprofit organization, is currently hosting affordable grant writing workshops across the state. He mentioned an upcoming session in Louisville in August and suggested the Council might also consider inviting the Cabinet for Economic Development to present on the G.R.A.N.T. state matching program (House Bill 723) at a future meeting.

During the discussion:

- Chairman West emphasized the critical role of transportation infrastructure and improving access to interstates, especially as it relates to expanding employment opportunities within the counties where workers live.
- Joe Crawford encouraged incorporating areas of the region that have not yet experienced rapid growth into long-term transportation planning efforts.
- Greyson Evans proposed that the Council identify and support regional policies with broad consensus, noting that a jointly signed letter from regional industrial authorities could potentially influence legislative outcomes.
- David Stipes suggested that slip lanes and side streets be proactively included in the design of new four-lane highways to accommodate future development.
- Jeff VanHook supported the idea and added that purchasing right-of-way in advance could help mitigate long-term costs. He also emphasized the importance of workforce development, especially programs targeting incarcerated individuals, and referenced the Work Ready program for 16 to 24-year-olds as an opportunity to connect youth with training in high-demand sectors like advanced manufacturing.
- Amy Scarborough stressed the importance of follow-through on ideas raised during Council meetings and the potential impact of presenting a unified regional voice on policy matters in Frankfort.
- Tom Calkins cited project decision-making delays as a barrier to progress, using the eastern bypass project in Nicholasville as an example of stalled transportation efforts.
- Mr. VanHook noted that county occupational tax revenues are often heavily allocated to the maintenance of jails, with high per-inmate costs placing a financial strain on counties. Chairman West echoed these concerns.
- Chairman West also addressed the workforce impacts of the substance use crisis and stressed the importance of strategically using opioid settlement funds to support training and workforce reintegration for individuals in recovery centers. He concluded by reinforcing the value of the Council as a platform for sharing across the region.

V. KPDI Overview & Discussion

Chairman West invited Mr. Marsh to provide an overview of KPDI Round 4. Mr. Marsh outlined the timeline for the program, including the August 1 deadline for the Letter of Intent (LOI) and the September 5 deadline for the Request for Information (RFI). He noted the eligibility requirements for both applicants and project types. A total of \$35 million is available in funding, with a maximum award of \$2 million per county. However, regional projects may combine county allocations to pursue larger-scale funding. He also explained that cost-share requirements are based on population rankings and presented a chart showing the required match for each BGADD county. For regional projects, he noted, the individual county percentages should be added and averaged across all participating counties.

Mr. Stipes asked whether a county's portion of funding used in a regional project would count toward its \$2 million maximum. Mr. Marsh confirmed that it would.

Mr. Marsh then reviewed the LOI requirements in detail and walked through the template provided by the Cabinet for Economic Development. He reminded the Council that the LOI must be submitted via email to kpdi@kaedonline.org by August 1. He continued with an overview of the RFI spreadsheet, which is due by September 5 and must be accompanied by a \$1,000 application fee made out to the KAED Foundation. He explained that the spreadsheet consists of two tabs: one for project information and one for property information, and discussed the key pieces of information required in each.

Judge West then opened the floor to discussion about potential KPDI applications from within the region and whether any Council members would need assistance from ADD staff. Mr. Stipes noted that GIS staff had provided mapping support during previous rounds. Mr. Marsh confirmed that BGADD will continue to assist with mapping as well as the preparation and submission of other materials related to the application process.

Mr. Stipes suggested that going forward, the program should consider providing funding for marketing purposes to promote sites that had received prior KPDI funding. Mr. Evans agreed and noted that marketing costs can be a barrier to investment for smaller or more rural communities. Mr. VanHook suggested that a regional marketing approach, especially given the growth of megasites in the area, could prove beneficial. Mr. Stipes added that reaching out to consultants who had previously visited sites before recent improvements might also be valuable.

Ms. Maynard shared that a research project related to marketing was currently under development for consideration by the legislature. Mr. Calkins asked whether potential marketing funds would be sourced from Frankfort. Mr. VanHook proposed that such a program could be structured as a cost-sharing initiative.

Chairman West emphasized the importance of continued collaboration between Commerce Lexington and the ADD in support of regional development. Mr. Hart agreed and affirmed that both organizations would continue to share information and coordinate efforts to support shared economic development goals.

VI. Open Discussion / Other Business

Chairman West opened the floor for open discussion.

Ms. Maynard noted that a section on transportation has been included in Commerce Lexington's 2025 legislative policies.

Chairman West reflected on the broader impact of economic development efforts, emphasizing their role in improving individuals' lives by helping people earn a living and support their families.

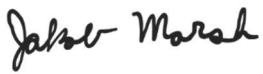
Mr. Stipes suggested that individuals who have received training or educational support may still require assistance navigating the job market and securing employment opportunities. Mr. Calkins agreed and highlighted challenges related to housing affordability in certain areas of the region, which can further complicate workforce stability.

Chairman West also noted a growing concern over the rise in phone scams affecting residents across the region.

VII. Adjournment

Being that there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Jakob Marsh
Economic Development Specialist
Bluegrass Area Development District