

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
March 24, 2016
6:00 p.m. – New River Valley Business Center, Fairlawn

I. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Mr. J. Carpenter, Radford University, Vice-Chair; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Garrett, Town of Narrows; Dr. H. Harvey, City of Radford; Mr. W. Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Ms. C. Newcomb, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Ms. A. Perkins, Montgomery County; Mr. M. Sutphin, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. M. Turk, City of Radford, and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. K. Sullivan, Chair, Virginia Tech; Mr. G. East, Town of Pulaski; Mr. F. Gerald, Floyd County; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Ms. S. Journell, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. H. Lesko, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. H. Showalter, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. J. Soileau, Virginia Tech and Mr. S. Weaver, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Janet McNew, Elijah Sharp and Julie Phillips.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for February

Mr. Carpenter called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Ms. Newcomb moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Perkins seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for February

Mr. Carpenter called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Law moved for the approval of the Treasurer's Report. Ms. Newcomb seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None.

B. Regular Project Review

None.

C. Environmental Project Review

1. DEQ Air Quality Monitoring Program

Mr. Carpenter called for approval of the environmental review.

Motion: Mr. Bopp moved for the approval of the environmental review. Mr. Kantsios

seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously

2. State Revolving Loan Funds Capitalization Application

Mr. Carpenter called for approval of the environmental review.

Motion: Dr. Warren moved for the approval of the environmental review. Dr.

Harvey seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None.

V. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Law reported Giles County Planning Commission discussed a proposed development project near Shumate Falls on the New River, which is a 1,500 acre site half in Giles County, Virginia and half in West Virginia. Mr. Byrd added Commission staff met with investors on the project to discuss economic projects to help with development and possible funding. Dr. Harvey explained there was an editorial in the Roanoke Times about attracting businesses and suggested the Commissioners read the article. Dr. Warren added the value outdoor amenities offer in attracting businesses to the area. Mr. Carpenter reported the Southwest Virginia branding meeting took place earlier in the week which provides a tool for attracting and retaining people and businesses in the region. Mr. Patton welcomed Mr. Michael Maslaney, Floyd County's new citizen representative to the Commission. Lastly, Mr. Carpenter announced Radford University recently moved into the Center for the Sciences building and explained it will not only be an asset for Radford University, but it will also be important to K-12 education in the region as a resource.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Carpenter reported the Executive Committee met the week previous. The agenda included annual dinner planning and implementing a pre-tax medical premium for staff. He noted all items discussed would be covered in the agenda.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. Mr. Byrd reported the Commission is in the process of updating the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) document. The annual Local Government Planning Commissioner Training event is scheduled for April 21st at 6:00pm at the NRV Business Center. The Commission hosted three sub-committee meetings on March 14th to advance Renew the New Expansion. Mr. Byrd noted the 2016 clean-up will take place late August in Radford covering 11 miles of river from the I-81 bridge through Radford to the Rt. 114 bridge. The Livability in Action regional convening had 140 registrants demonstrating interest in the region for collaboration and learning best practices from neighboring communities. The Commission's annual dinner will take place on May 11, 2016 at the Draper Mercantile and will include mobile workshops beginning at 3:30 that afternoon. Mr. Byrd explained the Commission is working to coordinate a USDA Rural Development workshop that will be held this summer to help local governments learn about programs available. He reported the

towns of Pembroke and Narrows downtown revitalization programs will hold open houses March 28th and 29th to gather public input. Mr. Byrd shared the Southwest Virginia Brand was introduced at a regional meeting hosted by the Commission on March 21st. The brand will be open source so it can be used by anyone interested in marketing the region. The Southwest Virginia Outdoor Expo planning meeting with destination marketing organizations in the region will be held on March 30th. Lastly, he reported he will be attending ARC, NADO, and EDA conferences the first week of April in Washington, DC and will learn more about the POWER program along with opportunities to recapitalize the New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund Program.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. GO Virginia Presentation

Christopher Lloyd from McGuire Woods Consulting presented an overview of GO Virginia. Mr. Lloyd explained the Go Virginia program structure and how funds are planned to be distributed throughout the state. He explained the GO Virginia Regional Councils, comprised of two or more planning district geographies across the state, will include local leaders in business, higher education, and local government. The Regional Councils will prioritize projects and decide how a portion of the funds are used within each region established by GO Virginia. He encouraged the region to begin thinking about leaders to serve on the regional council and identify projects of regional significance.

Discussion: Ms. Newcomb asked how GO Virginia is planned to help higher education. Mr. Lloyd explained the General Assembly dedicated funds for higher education, particularly for matching research funds that have a STEM focus (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). Ms. Newcomb asked if the regional council board members will serve in a volunteer capacity. Mr. Lloyd explained the role would be on a volunteer basis. Mr. Byrd asked how appointments would be made to the regional councils. Mr. Lloyd responded the regions will constitute the regional council, rather than a state-level entity making appointments. Mr. Carpenter asked if there are deadlines for creating a regional council. Mr. Lloyd responded the timeline has not been set, but anticipates the councils to be formed by November or December of this year.

B. Rural Transportation Work Program for FY17

Mr. Sharp explained the Virginia Department of Transportation allocates funding each year to the Regional Commission to deliver transportation planning assistance for non-urbanized areas outside the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundaries. Mr. Sharp gave a brief presentation covering the proposed work program. Mr. Sharp noted the NRV Rural Transportation Technical Advisory Committee reviewed and recommended the Commission adopt the FY17 Transportation Planning Work Program at their meeting on March 15, 2016.

Mr. Carpenter called for approval of the Rural Transportation Work Program for FY17 as presented.

Motion: Ms. Newcomb moved to approve the Rural Transportation Work Program for FY17.
Mr. Bopp seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Consideration of Implementing Pre-tax Medical Premium (Section 125 Plan)

(This portion was moved up in the agenda to allow more time for the Commission Awards program discussion.)

Mr. Byrd explained staff who pay for a portion of their health insurance premiums currently do so after taxes are withdrawn from their paycheck since the Commission does not have a pre-tax plan in place. The Commission's auditor recommended implementing a Section 125 plan that enables employees to pay insurance premiums pre-tax. Mr. Carpenter added that implementing the plan would be a benefit to the staff.

Motion: Mr. Patton moved to approve implementing the Section 125 plan. Mr. Law seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

D. Commission Awards Program for 2016 Annual Dinner

Mr. Byrd explained the process which nominations were solicited and then overviewed the voting procedure for Commissioners. Following the overview, nominee information was distributed for the three award categories. The Commission reviewed the nominees then voted to award Delegate Joseph Yost and Mr. Bill Brown as Champions of the Valley, President Penelope Kyle as Citizen of the Valley, and the Mary Moody Northern Endowment (Mountain Lake ownership) Friend of the Valley. Mr. Byrd will be contacting the award recipients for recognition at the annual dinner event.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

Kevin Sullivan, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission