

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
January 25, 2024
6:00 p.m.— Pulaski County Innovation Center, Fairlawn

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT: Mr. H. Johnson, Town of Christiansburg, Chair; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. C. Bond, Town of Floyd; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Ms. A. Davis, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. A. Grafsky, Montgomery County; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Ms. T. Hockett, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. M. Reis, Town of Pulaski; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski Count; Ms. M. Trigiani, Virginia Tech Foundation and Mr. B. Wheeler, Montgomery County.

ABSENT: Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Jessica Barrett, Anna Champion, Julie Fox, Holly Lesko, Walter Midkiff, Kelly Patton, Julie Phillips, Christy Straight, Emily Warren and Kinsey Weaver.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for November

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

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Reis seconded the motion.
Action: Motion carried.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for November and December

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

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for approval of the Treasurer's Reports. Mr. Martin seconded the motion.
Action: Motion carried.

III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. Giles Health & Family Vehicle Purchase
2. Radford Probation & Parole office

B. Regular Project Review

1. New River Valley Senior Services Vehicle Purchase

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson reported that Dr. Warren has had some health issues recently and is now recovering. Mr. Johnson will be traveling to Richmond and plans to attend a session of the General Assembly.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The NRV Recovery Ecosystem Program recently executed a contract with the Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) along with all of the local Operating Agreements for partner organizations. The contract execution phase required extensive legal review and finance coordination provided by Montgomery County.

The Montgomery/Bland and Pulaski County broadband projects are going through final engineering and evaluating utility pole attachments which is called "make-ready". The make-ready phase of work has received press recently due to the significant volume of projects taking place across the Commonwealth. The utility pole evaluations and subsequent replacements required in certain situations has delayed project deployments in many parts of the state. The two NRV projects continue to work very well with the electric utility, Appalachian Power, through the make-ready tasks. Connections to homes/businesses in the eastern Montgomery area are beginning to take place as part of an earlier round of funding.

The NRV/Danville Tech Hubs project for Additive Manufacturing and Advanced Materials held a project kick-off meeting on 1/8 with 45 participants. The Regional Commission is currently advertising for a Regional Innovation Officer position to support this project.

A GO Virginia grant request for their capacity building program that dovetails with the Tech Hub program was recently approved and a contract negotiation meeting was held on 1/16. This funding will allow for a larger geography to be included in the Tech Hubs asset mapping and engagement process to include firms in all of GO Virginia Region 2 geography.

The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority held a joint meeting on 1/25 with the larger NRV Passenger Rail organization at the Inn at Virginia Tech. Virginia Passenger Rail Authority staff presented present findings from the 30% design phase which includes more detailed project costs, timeline, location, and the forthcoming environmental process. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority will hold the first public meeting for the NRV project on 1/29 at the Blacksburg Community Center. A public survey will be made available for one month beginning on 1/29.

The New River Watershed Roundtable held a quarterly meeting on 1/24. Updates included Christiansburg Stormwater Program, watershed clean-up events scheduled for the spring, New

River Water Trail expansion progress, and a Water Watchers water quality report from the New River Conservancy.

The NRV Livability Exchange co-hosted by the Regional Commission and the Community Foundation of the NRV is scheduled for 3/21 8:30am-1:00pm with lunch included at the German Club in Blacksburg. This marks the 10th year of the annual event. It is a fast-paced and fun way to learn about projects taking place across the region with networking opportunities built into the agenda.

A General Assembly regional bill of interest to include all of PDC 4 (New River Valley) in the Virginia Tobacco Commission appears to have not made it out of committee. Thank you to Delegate Ballard for carrying this item.

The Regional Commission is pleased to provide facilitation support for elected body retreats. Retreats are scheduled for the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors and Blacksburg Town Council in January.

VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Horton reported the City of Radford will host the Polar Plunge to support the Special Olympics on 2/17 at Dudley's Landing in Bisset Park.

Ms. Covey reported Dr. Huber will be retiring as President of New River Community College at the end of 2024.

Ms. Anderson reported the Town of Blacksburg will hold a Council Retreat in Radford on 1/30. She will be attending Virginia Municipal League meetings in Richmond next week.

Ms. Trigiani shared a letter written by Samuel R. Buxton, the first president of the Virginia Municipal League.

Ms. Hockett reported the Town of Christiansburg approved a project with 114 new housing units. Carter Machinery will be locating on Roanoke Street near the park and ride lot. Dunkin' celebrated their grand opening recently, also located along Roanoke Street.

Mr. Reeves shared an article that ranked the New River Valley 48th in the country for economic growth.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Election of Vice-Chair Position to Fill Vacancy
Mr. Johnson explained that there is currently a vacancy in the Vice-Chair position due to the recent resignation of Mr. Steve Fijalkowski representing Montgomery County due to his

increased leadership role with the Board of Supervisors and other commitments. The Executive Committee discussed the vacancy and options to fill the role at their meeting on January 17th. The committee recommends the board elect Ms. Angie Covey, representing New River Community College, to fill the balance of Mr. Fijalkowski's term as Vice-Chair through June, 2024. Ms. Covey is an at-large member of the Executive Committee and has served in this capacity for more than five years.

Motion: Ms. Anderson moved to elect Ms. Covey as Vice-Chair. Dr. Joyner seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. FY25 Ride Solutions Program Overview and Operating Grant Resolution

Ms. Straight explained RIDE Solutions NRV serves the region with transportation demand management services for commuters and employers and is part of a larger brand serving central and southwest Virginia. Partners in this brand include the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, Central Virginia Planning District Commission, and West Piedmont Planning District Commission. The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provides operating funding to commuter assistance programs across Virginia. The agency provides funding at an 80% match of project costs, with local investment at 20% of costs, through the Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Operating Assistance.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of the FY25 Ride Solutions NRV CAP Grant Application to DRPT. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. FY23 Audit Report

Mr. Byrd provided an overview of the FY 23 Audit Report. The report did not include any findings or deficiencies. He thanked the finance team for their hard work throughout the year, which helps to ensure a smooth and successful audit process.

Motion: Mr. Reis moved to accept the FY23 Audit Report. Mr. Law seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

D. NRV Recovery Ecosystem Program Overview

The NRV Recovery Ecosystem team presented on the Regional Commission Community Health program. All four team members have been onboarded and started developing technical teams to support the local governments, agencies, and community partners critical to the success of the opioid abatement work. They each introduced themselves and their role in the project.

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission