

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
August 24, 2023
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; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; Mr. M. Reis, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows; Ms. M. Trigiani, Virginia Tech Foundation and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County, Vice-Chair; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. B. Wheeler, Montgomery County and Mr. T Wilson, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kathleen Armstrong, Kevin Byrd, Holly Lesko, Julie Phillips, Elijah Sharp, and Jennifer Wilsie.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for June

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

Motion: Mr. Patton moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for June

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

Motion: Mr. Patton moved for approval of the Treasurer's Reports. Mr. Maslaney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried.

III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. Reissuance of VPDES Permit No VA0088048 Pembroke WWTP
2. Pedestrian Improvements- Route 460/Laurel Street

3. Claytor Project No. 739 Water Management Plan: Proposed 2023 Drawdown
4. Virginia's Additive Manufacturing & Applied Materials Tech Hub

B. Regular Project Review

1. Virginia Tech Hahn Horticulture Garden Marquee, DEQ
2. Virginia Tech Duck Pond Dredging Project
Discussion: Mr. Law explained when the pond was dredged in the past, the draw down killed many fish and asked that precautions be taken to avoid this impact.
3. Reissuance of VPDES Permit VA0062219 for Elliston-Lafayette WWTP in Montgomery County

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson announced Ms. Covey was awarded the Kathleen H. Smith Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia Community College System. Dr. Joyner was recently chosen as one of the higher education leaders who will take part in the Executive Leadership Academy.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) awarded full funding to the NRV Recovery Ecosystem project. Montgomery County is the grant recipient contracting with the Regional Commission for grant administration. The project is awaiting a contract from the Authority. In the interim, the project leadership team has an extended meeting scheduled for 8/30. This will be an opportunity to revisit community-specific and regional projects and define the position descriptions needed to support execution of the program.

There will be a project kick-off event for the VATI 2021 award focusing on eastern Montgomery County on 9/6 at 11:00am at the Meadowbrook Library. Construction is underway with fiber being pulled and connections to houses/businesses will take place soon. People can sign-up for service at <https://www.gigabeam.net> For the VATI 2022 project in Montgomery/Bland counties, a lot of the equipment has been delivered along with rolls of fiber. For Pulaski County, All Points Broadband is working through the pole attachment process and final engineering.

The Regional Commission was pleased to submit a Tech Hubs proposal to the US EDA as lead applicant on behalf of a strong consortium of partners. All four counties, the city, all three higher education institutions, numerous corporate partners, and several non-governmental organizations all came together from April until the August 15th deadline to conceptualize and prepare the proposal, entitled Virginia's Additive Manufacturing and Advanced Materials Tech Hub.

The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority received great news with a recommendation from Governor Youngkin to fully fund the Appalachian Regional Commission grant request of \$354,000 for architecture/engineering services related to the station design/construction. The proposal is

matched with \$240,000 in local funds from authority members and the NRV Metropolitan Planning Organization. The ARC grant would save considerable local resources for the project while helping to develop a significant economic asset for the region.

ReNew the New river clean-up is set for August 26th.

The Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHTF) began soliciting its first round of project proposals in June and received two proposals by the closing date of July 30. The goal of the RHTF is to provide a flexible source of funding for affordable housing development in the region. The RHTF received proposals for projects in Pulaski and Blacksburg. Combined, the two projects represent over 100 units of affordable housing. This initial round of projects will be funded 100% by the Virginia Housing grant of \$2.0M to the Regional Commission which carries a requirement to provide 10 units per \$1.0M in grant, so the initial round is over delivering significantly.

The Regional Commission Annual Dinner Event is scheduled for October 19th at the Volvo Customer Experience Center in Dublin. A mobile workshop/tour will take place 4:30-5:45 and the dinner event will be 6:00-8:00. A Save the Date was emailed to attendees last week. An invitation with registration information is scheduled to go out the week of August 28th.

The Regional Commission has an open Request for Proposals for Banking Services to support two programs at the agency, Broadband Deployment and the NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority.

The Regional Commission is currently looking to fill the economic development position and positions supporting the NRV Recovery Ecosystem will be underway for recruitment in September.

VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Horton reported ReNew the New and the Literacy Volunteers of the NRV Potter in the Park event will be held on Saturday 8/26/2023 in Bisset Park.

Mr. Reeves reported the American Jet Ski Championship will be held September 9th at Claytor Lake. There will also be a fundraising race on September 8th with the proceeds going towards the Access to Community College Education program.

Mr. Reis reported Calfee Community Center held a groundbreaking event with 120 people in attendance. The Marketplace farmers market has returned for the 2023 season.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported FloydFest received their stormwater permit and plans to return in 2024. Construction is expected to start next week. Floyd County is close to getting broadband extended to every home in the county. The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development VATI long drop program funding has helped make the final extensions.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Regional Commission FY24 Program of Work
Mr. Sharp provided an overview of the FY24 Work Program. Mr. Sharp noted there are currently over 60 projects and more may be added during the year. He explained the process utilized by staff to keep everyone on track with project progress and project billing. Ms. Armstrong, Ms. Lesko, and Ms. Wilse each highlighted several key projects included in the FY24 Work Program.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve the FY24 Program of Work for the Regional Commission. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Appropriating ARC Grant Funds for New River Water Trail Expansion
Mr. Byrd explained a resolution to appropriate funds for the New River Water Trail Expansion Project (NRWT) is required by the funder and a resolution for consideration was included in the packet.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve appropriating the sum of \$1,500,000 to this project contingent on receiving the funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission. Mr. Patton seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

- C. 2023 Regional Commission Awards
Mr. Byrd explained the nominee information was included in the packet and then he overviewed the award voting process. The Commission proceeded to vote by secret ballot for the award recipients. Mr. Byrd will be contacting the award recipients to notify them that they will be recognized for their contributions to the region.

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission