

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
February 25, 2021
6:00 p.m.— Hybrid Meeting via Zoom/In-person

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT (in-person): Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County, Chair; Mr. H. Johnson, Vice-Chair, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County and Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County.

PRESENT (zoom): Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. J Ballard, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. J. Coleman, Floyd County; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech; Ms. M. Sachs, Town of Christiansburg and Ms. S. Thwaites, Town of Narrows and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. T. Clontz, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. William Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke and Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Summer Bork, Aphi Fancon and Julie Phillips

Other Attendees: Charlie Jewell

II. ELECTRONIC MEETING PARTICIPATION – Commission Action

Mr. Maslaney called for approval of the electronic meeting participation policy. Section 2.2-3708.2 of the Virginia State Code, 1950, as amended, Section 3. Any public body may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency in accordance with § 44-146.17.

Motion: Mr. Law moved for the approval of the policy. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for January

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

Motion: Ms. Sachs moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for January

Mr. Maslaney 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 Reports. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None

B. Regular Project Review

None

C. Environmental Project Review

None

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Maslaney shared Floyd County recently hired Dr. Linda Millsaps as its County Administrator. She will start on March 1st.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. The Senate and the House passed their respective NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority bills. Next, the Governor is anticipated to sign the bill into law making it effective beginning July 1, 2021.

The Business Continuity Team (BCT) continues to support the New River Health District in the regional vaccination effort. The BCT staff helps schedule employer groups, K-12/Childcare and others in group 1b. The NRV Vaccine Call Center is updating its name to the NRV Vaccine Scheduling Center. Anna Champion was hired to fill the Volunteer Coordinator position. She is overseeing the Vaccine Scheduling Center and volunteer recruitment for various vaccine related roles.

There will be a Moderna second dose clinic at the Dedmon Center at Radford University Saturday, February 27th. This will be the first satellite vaccine pod with more planned in different locations within the region.

Staff is building out the online public engagement tool, Bang the Table, for a downtown planning project in Radford and will use the tool for other community development projects such as the Town of Pulaski Comprehensive Plan update.

Proposals are due on 2/24 for the Commission's website update and 2/26 for an update to the Wage and Compensation Analysis initially performed in 2017.

The Commission hired an intern from New River Community College, Bethany Peters. Bethany will start next week.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Harvey reported the New River Watershed Roundtable met this month. The Roundtable is working on coordinating a regional event for ReNew the New in the fall while also promoting local spring clean-up events. The group also discussed the recent Appalachian Regional Commission grant to the Commission that will provide staff support to develop an implementation plan for the New River Water Trail expansion. He also shared the Stroubles Creek Coalition provided a presentation at the meeting and one of their significant accomplishments was planting approximately 20,000 trees in the watershed over several years.

Mr. Johnson reported Ms. Covey presented on the New River Community College Access to Community College Education (ACCE) program recently at a Christiansburg Town Council meeting.

Ms. Morris reported there will soon be significant construction underway at Virginia Tech including the Multi-Modal Transit Facility, a six-acre site near the parking deck along Prices Fork Road, and projects along Old Turner Street and Perry Street.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Economic Recovery: Targeted Industries Survey Insights
Charlie Jewell, Executive Director of Onward NRV, provided a presentation on the findings from their recent survey of employers relating to impacts associated with the pandemic. Onward NRV and the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board are sub-grantees to the Commission supporting the development of the New River Valley Economic Recovery Plan. One component of developing the Recovery Plan is engaging employers to understand real-time impacts of the pandemic which cannot readily be determined through data, particularly when employment data lags several months before it is released.
- B. Setting Community Development Black Grant Priorities for 2021
Mr. Byrd explained each year the Regional Commission is asked by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development to submit a list of anticipated local projects for

Community Development Block Grant competitive grants within the region. The suggested 2021 priorities are based on projects listed in the packet with input from local governments across the region.

Motion: Ms. Anderson moved for the approval of the Community Development Block Grant Priorities. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. NRV Revolving Loan Fund Committee Appointees

There was a discussion of the nominees received to-date to serve on the Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Staff will contact the potential members prior to the March meeting so a committee list can be confirmed at the meeting on March 25th.

Mr. Maslaney called to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 pm.

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission