

**NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Commission Meeting**  
**held on**  
**April 23, 2026**  
**6:00 p.m. - Pulaski County Innovation Center, Fairlawn**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Anderson, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

**PRESENT:** Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg, Vice-Chair; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Mr. C.B. Andrews, Town of Pembroke; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. B. Dawson, Town of Pulaski; Mr. A. Graftsky, Montgomery County; Mr. R. Gibson, Virginia Tech Foundation; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. M. Harvey; Town of Blacksburg; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; Mr. W. Seagle, Town of Dublin and Mr. B. Wheeler, Montgomery County

**ABSENT:** Mr. H. Johnson, Town of Christiansburg, Chair; Dr. R. Brandon, New River Community College; Ms. A. Davis, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. T. Hockett, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. M. Mann, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. P. Martin, Giles County; Ms. L. Ramsey; Pulaski County and Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Julie Phillips, Elijah Sharp and Jennifer Wilsie.

Other Attendees: Ian Friend, Kelsey Grow, and Steve Semones.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes for March**

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

Motion: Mr. Harvey moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Maslaney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

**B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for March**

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

Motion: Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch moved for approval of the Treasurer's Reports. Mr. Graftsky 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

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS  
None

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Anderson reported the Executive Director's evaluation was emailed out. She encouraged everyone to fill it out and return it to Mr. Johnson by May 18th. The Nominating Committee will be made up of Mr. Johnson, Mr. Law, and Mr. Harvey to identify officers for FY27 and Executive Committee members at-large. Board members that are interested in serving on the Executive Committee were encouraged to contact a member of the Nominating Committee.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The AM2 Tech Hub statewide competitive GO Virginia grant was approved by the state board in late March. A contract is anticipated in the coming weeks which will enable project kick-off. The application to the US Economic Development Administration was submitted on March 3rd. An All Hands meeting will be held in Lynchburg on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Regional Commission submitted a separate GO Virginia grant this month for expansion of the GOTECH program in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville. It was initially in the statewide competitive proposal and upon review it was requested to be resubmitted at a later date. It was reviewed by the Region 2 Regional Council this week and forwarded to the state board with a recommendation to approve.

Opportunity Zones legislation recently passed in Congress and the program was modified in 2026. New census tracts have been determined as eligible and there are nine in the region. More information will be coming soon regarding the process to identify preferred census tracts because not all eligible tracts can be included in the program.

The Valley to Valley Trail connection project is hosting public input meetings in Christiansburg, Radford, Pulaski and Blacksburg this week and next week.

The first round of Virginia Disaster Assistance Fund projects are under review by the VA Dept of Housing and Community Development. We anticipate receiving notification in the next week regarding funding for property owners.

The annual local government Planning Commissioner Training was held on 4/22 at the Montgomery County Government Center. Two training sessions were offered: the first session tested Commissioners' knowledge in a fun game of PLAN-eopardy! and the second session showcased guest speakers from Botetourt County as they share the story of bringing a data center to the county. Each year this training event is facilitated by the Regional Commission in collaboration with local planning staff around the region.

Congratulations to Leo Priddy for being accepted into the Virginia Rural Leadership Institute presented by the Virginia Rural Center.

The office construction project is progressing well. Water and sewer connections have been made for the expansion and the foundation for the new meeting space was recently installed. There is a new sign out front with the logos of Kesler Contracting, Colley Architects, and the Regional Commission.

Mr. Byrd was recently nominated to join the GO Virginia Region 2 Regional Council and the board affirmed the nomination at its meeting this week.

## **VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Ms. Morris reported the transition to the next president of Virginia Tech is expected to take place before the end of the calendar year. Governor Spanberger will speak at commencement in May. The parachutist injured during the spring game did not have any serious injuries and the parachute was removed recently. The jumbotron is scheduled to be replaced before the football season this fall.

Dr. Joyner reported Radford University commencement will be held May 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Planning for the riverfront amphitheater has begun as well as a program to select artists. Radford University athletics added women's flag football. Radford University athletics held their RUBY's award banquet and of the 14 athletic programs nine have an average GPA over 3.0. Construction of a pocket park across from The HUB is wrapping up. Community fest will be held August 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Mr. Law reported Pentel has completed their broadband expansion into the Craig Creek area and added new customers in the Walker Creek Valley area.

Ms. Anderson reported budget season has begun in the Town of Blacksburg. They held the first public input session and had no public comment.

Mr. Gibson reported the Entrepreneur Resource Center (ERC) at the Corporate Research Center (CRC) will hold a ribbon cutting on May 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 and all are invited to attend.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported the Composite Index, which determines a school division's ability to pay education costs, is creating hardships in smaller communities. She will be taking the discussion to the Virginia Association of Counties in the future.

Mr. Griffin reported the Town of Floyd recently purchased a property and the Regional Commission is assisting the Town with redevelopment of the site through the Community Development Block Grant planning process.

Mr. Horton reported the City of Radford will celebrate Arbor Day on April 25<sup>th</sup> with the planting of new redbuds around the city. The Radford City/Floyd County Victim Witness Program will host a 5K at Bisset Park on April 25<sup>th</sup>. The Radford Farmer's Market starts the new season on Saturday April 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

None

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **New River Valley Home Builders Association Housing Data Report**  
Steve Semones, chair of the NRVHBA Government Affairs committee, and Ian Friend, President of the NRVHBA, shared current data and on-the-ground perspectives of the housing industry. Drawing from recent permit trends, cost analysis, and project case studies, they outlined how rising land and material costs, layered pre-construction expenses, regulatory requirements, and inflation are converging to limit new supply and drive prices beyond what many households can afford. They also highlighted practical tools and policy approaches that local and regional partners can consider to expand housing availability across the region.
  
- B. **FY27 VDOT Rural Transportation Work Program**  
Mr. Byrd overviewed the memo in the board packet prepared by Elijah Sharp, Deputy Executive Director. 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) geography. Numerous planning projects are prepared each year with this program and several projects in FY27 are being conducted in partnership with the MPO to maximize resources.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve the Rural Transportation Work Program for FY27. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Anderson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm.

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H. Johnson, Chair  
New River Valley Regional Commission