

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
May 28, 2026
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; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg, Vice-Chair; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Mr. C.B. Andrews, Town of Pembroke; Dr. R. Brandon, New River Community College; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. B. Dawson, Town of Pulaski; Mr. R. Gibson, Virginia Tech Foundation; 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. Mann, Town of Rich Creek; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; Mr. W. Seagle, Town of Dublin and Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows.

ABSENT: Ms. A. Davis, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. A. Graftsky, Montgomery County; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Ms. T. Hockett, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Mr. P. Martin, Giles County; Ms. L. Ramsey, Pulaski County and Mr. B. Wheeler, Montgomery County.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Zoe Hunter, and Julie Phillips.

Other Attendees: Jenny Bolte

CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for April

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

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

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Treasurer’s Reports for April

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

Motion: Dr. Joyner moved for approval of the Treasurer’s Reports. Mr. Dawson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None

- B. Regular Project Review
 - 1. VPA02069 - Radford City Water Treatment Plant

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS
None

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson reported the executive committee conducted the executive director's annual performance evaluation at its May meeting. He thanked the board for those that contributed feedback. At the next executive committee meeting the group will discuss methods to increase board member contributions to the annual performance review process.

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 meeting with DHCD was held 5/28. The \$40M application to the US Economic Development Administration is still under review.

The Regional Commission submitted a separate GO Virginia grant last month for expansion of the GO TEC program in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools and the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville. It was recommended for approval by the Region 2 Board. Leo Priddy led the state pitch call this month. The state board responded with follow-up questions pertaining to long-term operations of the program and maintenance of grant-funded purchased equipment.

Friends of SWVA is kicking-off Destination SWVA, an updated strategic plan for the creative and outdoor economy of the greater region. County-specific focus groups will be held this summer and into the fall. Regional input meetings will be held this winter. PDCs are assisting with the focus groups and regional input meetings.

Governor Spanberger's administration is in the process of developing the State Comprehensive Economic Development policy. This is required within the first year of each administration. Regional input meetings are being held by GO Virginia geography. Region 2 has not been scheduled. It will likely take place in late July. Information will be sent out once received.

The Pulaski County and Montgomery/Bland counties broadband projects are closely examining their project schedules to determine whether extension requests will be needed beyond June 30th. Both are likely to extend their project delivery dates.

The VDOT Salem District office held its Six-Year Improvement Program public hearing last week in Roanoke. This was Secretary Donahue's first round of public hearings in his new role. Mr. Byrd shared remarks on behalf of the Commission expressing appreciation for the I-81 Corridor Improvement Program including PDC representation on the I-81 committee, and the NRV Passenger Rail extension investment.

The first two investments of the Regional Housing Fund have progressed well through construction. The Claremont School redevelopment in Pulaski has initial occupancy underway. The Legacy on Main in Blacksburg is anticipating construction completion the second week of July.

The first round of Virginia Disaster Assistance Fund projects are receiving approval letters. To date, the Commission has received letters for eight property owners equating to approximately \$275,000.

Congratulations to Dr. Angela Joyner with Radford University for receiving the Ruby Award from the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC) and President Sands being inducted into the RBTC Hall of Fame at its Tech Nite event earlier this month.

The office construction project continues to make good progress following the project schedule. Interior and exterior framing is complete. A site visit was held recently to select exterior materials for the addition to include brick and stone.

VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Harvey shared a recent story from Cardinal News about a dilapidated building in downtown Blacksburg.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported the Town of Floyd will begin their Small-Town Summer Concert Series next Thursday and it will run until August 27th.

Mr. Mann reported the Town of Rich Creek recently held a council retreat facilitated by Mr. Byrd. The Town established an events committee and has put on four events this year.

Mr. Law reported Pemetel has completed its broadband expansion into the Walker Creek Valley area.

Dr. Joyner reported Radford University held commencement for 1,400 students including its largest nursing class. Dollywood tickets were given to students from the commencement speaker, Eugene Naughton. September 8-9 Radford University will host a Summit on Adventure Works which will focus on leveraging tourism for small business development and economic benefit.

Dr. Brandon reported New River Community College had their largest graduating class with 712 students receiving 1,192 credentials. The college recently established an endowment that will cover licensure exam costs for every student going forward.

Mr. Dawson reported the Pulaski River Turtles baseball season will start June 4th.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch thanked Virginia Tech for the renovations being done for WUVT.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. New River-Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board Overview
Jenny Bolte, executive director of the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board (NRMWDB), provided an overview presentation on the organization. The NRMWDB

is an important partner of the Regional Commission. The two organizations often collaborate on economic development and workforce projects. Currently, there is a collaboration on providing a 2nd Chance Employer Workshop for companies hiring people in substance use recovery. An important component of the partnership has been the mutually beneficial fiscal agent services agreement whereas the Regional Commission provides finance team support to the operations of NRMRWDB.

NRMRWDB administers a wide range of workforce initiatives designed to address both immediate workforce needs and long-term economic growth. Programs and services include workforce training and credential attainment, youth and young adult career development, apprenticeship and work-based learning opportunities, business services, incumbent worker training, digital skills development, reentry and recovery-to-work initiatives, and targeted support for individuals facing barriers to employment. The organization works closely with industry partners across sectors including healthcare, advanced manufacturing, construction, information technology, transportation, and skilled trades to align workforce strategies with regional labor market demands.

B. Regional Commission Awards- Review Criteria and Process

Mr. Byrd explained the award categories, criteria and previous award recipients were included in the packet. A call for nominations will go out next week.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve the criteria and process for the Regional Commission Awards. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. FY 27 Nominating Committee Slate of Officers Presented

Mr. Johnson shared the nominating committee report. The slate presented is below. Election of officers will take place at the June 25th meeting.

Chair: Hil Johnson, Town of Christiansburg
Vice-Chair: Susan Anderson, Town of Blacksburg
Treasurer: Leon Law, Giles County
At-Large: David Horton, City of Radford
At-Large: Linda DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County
At-Large: Larry Clevinger, Town of Pulaski
Past Chair: Mike Maslaney, Floyd County

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission