

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
September 25, 2025
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. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Davis, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. B. Dawson, Town of Pulaski; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. A. Grafsky, Montgomery County; Ms. T. Hockett, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. W. Seagle, Town of Dublin; Mx. E. Shawish, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. K. Smith, Virginia Tech Foundation; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows and Mr. B. Wheeler, Montgomery County.

ABSENT: Vacant, Town of Rich Creek; Ms. R. Brandon, New River Community College; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. B. Jaunarena, Pulaski County; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. P. Martin, Giles County, and Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County.

Staff Attendees: Kelley Akers, Kevin Byrd, Emma Carroll, Holly Lesko, Julie Phillips, Elijah Sharp, Christy Straight, and Jennifer Wilsie.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for August

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. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for June, July, and August

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

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

Action: Motion carried.

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

Mr. Johnson reported the Executive Committee will be meeting with the Auditors on October 3rd. He noted the annual dinner will be held October 23rd at the Highlander Hotel in Radford.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The AM2 Tech Hub held a conference on September 15th at the Inn at Virginia Tech with over 100 attendees. Participants represented a good cross section of industry, higher education research, and government focused on economic development. The 10-year Road Map was presented which is the primary output of the Tech Hub Strategy Development Grant. Four strategic implementation tracts include: Build AM2 Innovation Studios (Blacksburg/Danville collaboration spaces); Embed AM2 Innovation Fellows (assist with the AM2 discovery pipeline); Launch AM2 Career Network; Continue Development of AM2 Consortium. The AM2 Tech Hub will be making a significant grant application to the US Economic Development Administration in March in pursuit of Disaster Recovery funds for consortium-based projects.

The Pulaski County broadband project is seeing significant progress on pole replacements throughout the county. One section of the project area will have fiber strung on the new pole starting the end of this month. The County and All Points Broadband will be holding a ground breaking ceremony on September 29th.

The Montgomery/Bland County VATI 2022 project continues to make construction progress. A site visit with the Virginia Dept of Housing and Community Development will be held on September 30th.

The Valley to Valley Trail project will have a public survey launching this month. The purpose of the survey is to solidify the final trail alignment. NRVRC staff designed the interactive survey using a software platform new to the agency called Social Pinpoint. This was purchased through a collaborative agreement with other PDCs in Virginia.

The Regional Commission continues to support communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. The Virginia Disaster Assistance Fund (VDAF) program is open for applications. The Regional Commission is serving as the administrative entity. In this role, the agency will assist property owners directly, review applications, and verify all content before submitting to the Commonwealth for its review. Giles County held a community meeting for the VDAF program on 9/17.

The NRVRC Annual Dinner will be held on October 23rd at the Highlander Hotel in Radford 6:00-8:00pm. Radford University will be the host and a mobile workshop will be available in the afternoon starting at 4:30 departing from the hotel. Award recipients this year include: Champion of the Valley, Judge Lee Harrell; Citizen of the Valley, Angie Covey; Friend of the Valley, Tamarah Holmes.

The Regional Commission is planning an annual staff retreat likely to be held on October 30th. The focus this year will be professional leadership development with facilitation by Sharon Scott.

VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Law reported Pemtel is moving forward with their broadband project to bring fiber to the premises.

Mr. Horton reported Radford University and the City of Radford will host the highlander festival on October 11th.

Mr. Spangler reported that the Town of Narrows will hold their fall festival on September 27th.

Dr. Joyner reported that enrollment at Radford University is ahead of last year. The strategic plan is available online and is being reviewed by the Board. There will be a vote to approve the plan in December. Radford University will begin the RFP process for a waterfront amphitheater.

Ms. Hockett reported Christiansburg Town Council has filled the vacant position. They hope to select a new Town Administrator by November.

Mr. Graftsky reported the Teel Park in Riner will open September 27th.

Mx. Shawish reported the Town of Blacksburg opened a business incubator.

Mr. Law reported Mountain Lake Lodge will hold Dirty Dancing Weekend in October.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported that Kim Chido has moved from the interim County Administrator into the County Administrator position.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Regional Commission FY26 Program of Work

Mr. Sharp provided an overview of the FY26 Program of Work. He explained the process utilized by staff to keep everyone on track with project progress and project billing. Ms. Armstrong, Ms. Lesko, Ms. Owens, Ms. Straight and Ms. Wilse each highlighted several key projects included in the FY26 Program of Work.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve the FY26 Program of Work for the Regional Commission. Ms. Hockett seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Community Flood Preparedness Fund FY26 Grant Application

Ms. Straight explained the Community Flood Preparedness Fund was created to provide support to local governments across Virginia to reduce flooding impacts and is administered by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). This fund offers two types of program grants – Capacity Building and Planning and Resilience Projects. Access to Resilience Projects funding requires a DCR-approved resiliency plan which could be funded

through the Capacity Building and Planning grant. The Regional Commission is proposing to apply for a Capacity Building grant to create a resiliency plan for interested localities who do not already have one. A successful applicant has five years to complete the plan. An approved plan is valid for five years and makes the region eligible for flood prevention and reduction project funding through DCR.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve authorizing the Executive Director to submit a grant application in partnership with localities that express an interest.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Remote Meeting Participation Policy

Mr. Byrd explained Virginia State Code was recently amended to permit public bodies to allow remote electronic meeting participation and hold all-virtual meetings, provided the governing body adopt a policy annually. The State Code reference is subsection B of § 2.2-3708.3.

Motion: Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch moved to approve the remote meeting policy.

Ms. Hockett seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

D. November Meeting Date and Time

Mr. Byrd explained the regular Regional Commission meeting is scheduled for the fourth Thursday each month as established in the agency bylaws. Each year the board adjusts the November meeting date due to conflict with the Thanksgiving holiday. Most commonly, the board moves the meeting up one week to the third Thursday at 6:00pm. This conflicts with the Pulaski County Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner event that is historically held on the third Thursday in November at 5:30pm. Regional Commission members from Pulaski County and the towns of Dublin and Pulaski must choose between the two, so meeting quorum for the November Regional Commission meeting can be a challenge.

The Executive Committee discussed trying to avoid the conflict this November by adjusting the Regional Commission meeting. Three options to consider include:

- 1) Wednesday November 19th at 6:00pm
- 2) Thursday, November 20th at 4:00pm
- 3) Thursday, December 4th at 6:00pm

The initial preference is for option #2. Wednesday evening may have church conflicts and the December 4th date conflicts with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner event.

Motion: Mr. Law moved to approve moving the November meeting to Thursday November 20th at 4:00pm.

Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission