

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
February 24, 2022
6:00 p.m.— Pulaski County Innovation Center, Fairlawn

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT: Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County, Chair; Mr. H. Johnson, Vice-Chair, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County; Mr. T. Franklin, Radford University; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; Mr. M. Reis, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows Town of Blacksburg; Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County and Mr. T Wilson, Town of Christiansburg.

ABSENT: Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. L. Cox, Floyd County; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke and Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford.

Staff Attendees: Kathleen Armstrong, Kevin Byrd, Aphi Fancon, Julie Phillips and Elijah Sharp.

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: Mr. Johnson moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for January.

Mr. Maslaney 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. Wilson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. Calfee Community & Cultural Center Funding Assistance

- B. Regular Project Review
None
- C. Environmental Project Review
 - 1. SCOPING George Washington and Jefferson National Forests – Forest wide Fiberoptic Telecommunication Line Project
 - 2. Christiansburg Land Exchange and Parking Lot Construction

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Maslaney reported the NRV Livability event will be held March 17th at the German Club in Blacksburg.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. The Regional Commission's \$68M broadband project through the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) is going to be split into two projects. One will focus on Montgomery/Bland counties working with GigaBeam as their Internet Service Provider (ISP) and a second for Pulaski County working with All Points Broadband.

The NRV Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) committee has vacancies in Pulaski and Giles counties. It would be good to fill these positions in the next month since the RLF guidelines and marketing materials are complete and before any new loan requests are submitted.

The VA Passenger Rail Authority held public input meetings on the environmental review portion of station analysis on 2/28. Both meetings were virtual with live Q&A.

The Huckleberry Trail planning team hosted consultant Amy Camp with Cycle Forward. Amy helps community leaders connect to and fully leverage their trails. She has a strong background in trail tourism and placemaking. Her observations while visiting, and engagement with the trail stakeholders, will help inform the plan strategies.

The annual regional river clean-up, ReNew the New, is scheduled to take place on August 27th. Nicole Hersch will work with host communities/organizations to coordinate regional resources such as bags, gloves and shirts.

The annual Livability in Action Regional Exchange will return to an in-person event on 3/17 8:30-12:00 at the German Club in Blacksburg. The event features ever-popular lightning round presentations highlighting projects across the region and will have a panel discussion focused on advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in organizations and communities.

The Business Continuity Team (BCT) continues to work with employers offering vaccine clinics as first, second and booster doses are being administered. In January, the BCT has been a resource

to schools and employers as masking policies have rapidly changed. Going forward, the BCT is preparing an overview of services for local governments to consider continued partnership with ARPA funds once the current Community Development Block Grant funds are spent.

Emily Warren was selected to fill the new Finance Technician position. She is a 2021 graduate of Radford University with a degree in Finance and comes to the Commission from a position with Real Life Dental. She started on March 1st.

Commission staff held our annual Souper Bowl competition on 2/17. Aphi Fancon surrendered the trophy she has held onto since we last gathered for the event before the pandemic to Summer Bork who made an impressive gumbo!

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Horton reported the Polar Plunge will be moved to the Glencoe Museum since the river flows are elevated due to recent rain. He also reported that he met with the mayors from the town of Blacksburg and the City of Roanoke to discuss a violence prevention framework.

Ms. Anderson reported the Town of Blacksburg will hold a public hearing at their next town council meeting on The Legacy, a proposed affordable housing project on South Main Street.

Mr. Law reported Newport will hold their agricultural fair this year.

Mr. Wilson reported the mall in Christiansburg has been rebranded as Uptown Christiansburg. Mr. Johnson added many additional businesses have opened at The Marketplace.

Ms. Morris reported Virginia Tech will be participating with the NRV Metropolitan Planning Organization and Virginia Department of Transportation on the Southgate Extension Alignment Study.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Radford East Main Street Redevelopment Project Overview

Ms. Armstrong, Ms. Fancon and Mr. Sharp presented the East Main Downtown Plan and shared some of the initial steps towards project implementation. They explained the City of Radford received grant funding through the Appalachian Regional Commission to create a vision and establish an action plan for the revitalization of East Main Downtown. The Commission supported city staff with community and local stakeholder engagement, conceptual planning, developing an inventory of building occupancy and conditions, and analyzing parking needs. The planning process also created an opportunity for additional contractual work for building facades and streetscapes.

B. Setting Community Development Block Grant Priorities for 2022

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 2022 priorities are based on projects listed in the packet with input from local governments across the region.

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

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Regional Revolving Loan Fund Program Guidelines

A one-page marketing piece and the program guidelines document were included in the agenda packet for informational purposes.

Mr. Maslaney called to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 pm.

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission