

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
February 23, 2023
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; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County, Vice-Chair; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. M. Reis, Town of Pulaski; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows; Ms. M. Trigiani, Virginia Tech Foundation and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd and Mr. T Wilson, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Jessica Barrett, Kevin Byrd, Julie Phillips and Emily Warren.

Other Attendees: John Provo, Tammy Shank, Dr. Raymond Smoot and Justin Yalung.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for January

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

Motion: Dr. Horton moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Martin seconded the motion.
Action: Motion carried.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for January

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. Mr. Harvey seconded the motion.
Action: Motion carried.

III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. Calfee Community & Cultural Center Funding Assistance

B. Regular Project Review

None

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson reported the Executive Committee meets every month, even the months the full board does not meet such as December, July, and October. There is a vacant at-large seat currently on the Executive Committee due to Ms. Potter's recent departure. Rather than filling the vacancy close to the end of the fiscal year, the Executive Committee decided the vacancy could be filled through the annual nominating committee process conducted each spring. If a board member is interested in serving on the Executive Committee, please reach out to Mr. Johnson.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. For the VATI 2022 project, Pulaski County is under contract and final engineering is underway. Early planning has started for a community event to announce the project before field work gets underway. Montgomery/Bland is on track to be under contract this month and will shift to final engineering. Construction is anticipated to start in the Eastern Montgomery area in the spring.

For the VATI 2023 project, Giles County submitted two applications. One application is with PemTel, and another is with GigaBeam. The two proposals cover adjoining geographies. All the VATI 2023 applicants are currently waiting on announcements from the Governor's Office.

Commission staff is helping to coordinate a meeting between the county/city administrators to discuss options for a regional opioid abatement program. Any approaches would be closely aligned with implementing partners in the region.

The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority held a meeting February 23rd at the Pulaski County Innovation Center. Bylaws were adopted at the January meeting while the Regional Commission was selected to provide staffing support and Sands Anderson, PLC will serve as legal counsel. The board voted on officers to include Chair - Craig Meadows, Montgomery County Administrator; Vice Chair - Mike Barber, Town of Christiansburg Mayor; Secretary - Lynsey Belshe, Virginia Tech VP for Enterprise Administrative and Business Services; and Treasurer - Darlene Burcham, Pulaski Town Manager. The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority will host a regional update briefing in March or April.

The Business Continuity Team, with support from Uncork-it and other Regional Commission team members, has been working on a NRV Public Health Task Force After Action Report. The document covers lessons learned, what worked well, what did not, and items the region should take into account in the future when assembling a regional response. The report will be released in March and a presentation will be on the Commission's agenda next month.

The annual NRV Livability Exchange is taking place on 3/16 at the German Club in Blacksburg from 8:30am-12:00pm. The Regional Commission is co-hosting with the Community Foundation of the NRV. There will be lightning round speakers highlighting projects across the region followed by a panel discussion on engaging people in collectively led projects.

Mr. Byrd along with Jeremy Holmes from Roanoke Valley- Alleghany Regional Commission, were invited to participate on the Blue Ridge Public Television show, Conversations with Dr. Bob Denton. The focus will be on the role of the Planning District Commissions along with projects in the past and future of our organizations. This will be a great opportunity to discuss the high-level of regional collaboration in the New River Valley.

The Roanoke-Blacksburg Airport will resume updates to their master plan. There will be public comment opportunities in the future.

VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Horton reported the Special Olympics will be hosting their Polar Plunge fundraising event on February 25th at Bisset Park in Radford and the city will host an Easter Egg Hunt on March 25th in the park as well.

Mr. Fijalkowski reported Montgomery County recently approved a new housing development off of Route 114. There will be several different housing types in the project to include multi-family and single-family options. The developer will be adding a turn lane to help address traffic safety issues at the neighborhood entrance.

Mr. Johnson reported Christiansburg's Huckleberry Park is scheduled to open in April and has been delayed mostly due to supply chain issues for transformers.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. Virginia Region 2 Overview and Program Impact

Dr. Ray Smoot and Justin Yalung gave a presentation about the GO Virginia program with a focus on Region 2. The Region 2 geography includes the New River Valley, Roanoke Valley, and Lynchburg regions and utilizes the planning district commission geographies of the three areas. In the New River Valley, the GO Virginia program has helped support numerous projects, a few in which the Regional Commission was highly involved, which included expansion of the Roanoke Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to have a full-time staff member serving the New River Valley. GO Virginia was also a key funder for the pandemic response Business Continuity Team that served over 480 unique businesses impacting more than 57,000 jobs in the New River Valley.

B. Salvation Army of the New River Valley Overview and Engagement Opportunities

Ms. Shank gave a presentation about the Salvation Army of the New River Valley. Ms. Shank discussed the organization and ways communities across the region can become involved.

C. FY22 Audit Report

Mr. Byrd provided an overview of the FY 22 Audit Report. The report did not include any findings or deficiencies. He thanked the finance team for their hard work throughout the year, which helps to ensure a smooth and successful audit process.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to accept the FY22 Audit Report. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission