

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
March 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. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. L. Cox, Floyd County; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; Mr. M. Reis, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. H. Johnson, Vice-Chair, Town of Christiansburg; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. T. Franklin, Radford University; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech and Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford and Mr. T. Wilson, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Jessica Barrett, Ashley Briggs, Kevin Byrd, Holly Lesko, Julie Phillips, Elijah Sharp, Christy Straight and Emily Warren.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for February.

Mr. Maslaney 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. Reis seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for February.

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. Spangler seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None

B. Regular Project Review

- C. Environmental Project Review
None

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS
None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Maslaney shared the Public Service Authority (PSA) in Floyd is currently updating and making repairs to their system. As a part of the process, the PSA contracted with a firm to take images of the pipes to identify problem sites that needed to be repaired. He shared some images that show the challenges confronting the system. He encouraged other communities become engaged in system maintenance if they are not already.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. Next steps with the broadband project involve receiving final network designs from GigaBeam and All Points Broadband. This will allow the Regional Commission to start the environmental review portion of the project. The project timeline is being updated to reflect the re-design and environmental review time not anticipated when the grant was initially submitted. Each county/ISP will be handling external communications on the project.

The VA Passenger Rail Authority held two public meetings on the NRV Passenger Rail station project. Between the two meetings close to 200 participated. Appointments to form the NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority will be requested soon.

The Commission is preparing an ARC POWER application for implementing expansion of the New River Water Trail. Grant match commitments from local governments and partners are being solidified currently.

The Commission is co-hosting a workshop on karst with the VA Dept of Conservation and Recreation on May 3rd and 4th. The first day will be classroom style at the Pulaski County Innovation Center with the second day being a field trip to visit a karst/cave site.

The New River Symposium is taking place April 10th and 11th at the New River Gorge National Park. Our region will be well represented by participants and presenters.

The annual Livability in Action Regional Exchange took place on March 17th with impressive projects highlighted during the lightning round. The overarching theme of the event was introducing diversity, equity and inclusion from the lens of organizational leaders across the region.

In March, the Commission hosted the monthly local government managers luncheon and invited chief law enforcement officers to attend and discuss recent incidents of violent crime in the

region. Law enforcement provided insight which will be shared at the next Mayors and Chairs regional meeting at a date to be determined.

In March and April the Commission will be saying good-bye to three employees. Ashley Briggs and Melanie Morris will be leaving the Business Continuity Team. Kristie Warrack will be leaving the Data Systems Manager (GIS) position in early April.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Fijalkowski reported Montgomery County passed redistricting and added polling places as a result. The changes will go into effect in June after the primary. Montgomery County will be hiring paid rescue squad staff for day shifts, 6:00am to 6:00pm, primarily to provide coverage for areas outside of Blacksburg and Christiansburg.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported Floyd County moved to a paid rescue squad system 5-6 years ago. They also recently passed redistricting. She encouraged board members to become informed about the good work at the NRV HOME Consortium and discussed several projects currently underway.

Mr. Horton added that a region-wide discussion about first responder compensation would be helpful to ensure communities are not taking staff from each other due to minor pay differences. He also recommended cultural organizations could work together to form "cultural trails" to help connect communities and assets.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY23 VDOT Rural Transportation Work Program

Mr. Sharp explained 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. Mr. Sharp provided a brief presentation overviewing the proposed work program included in the meeting packet.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve the Rural Transportation Work Program for FY23. Mr. Fijalkowski seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Ride Solutions Program Overview

Ms. Straight explained RIDE Solutions NRV serves the region with transportation demand management services for commuters and employers and is part of a larger brand serving central and southwest Virginia. Partners in this brand include the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, Central Virginia PDC, and West Piedmont PDC. The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provides operating funding to commuter assistance

programs across Virginia. The agency provides funding at an 80% match of project costs, with local investment at 20% of costs, through the Commuter Assistance Program (CAP) Operating Assistance. The goal of the CAP Operating Assistance grant program is to mitigate traffic congestion through the elimination of single occupant vehicle (SOV) auto trips by shifting SOV trips to carpool, vanpool and transit.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of the FY23 Ride Solutions NRV CAP Grant Application to DRPT. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. Business Continuity Team Update

Ms. Briggs and Ms. Lesko presented a brief update on the Business Continuity Team (BCT). The BCT staff started in late August of 2020. They explained how the BCT continued to support the NRV through both the Delta and Omicron variants as well as the more recent endemic phase in the region. Public schools have continued to offer in-person instruction and the BCT is supporting them by coordinating a weekly call with school district administrations across 19 counties from Montgomery to Lee County. As masking guidance changed, the BCT provided N95 mask fit testing and conducted in-school vaccination clinics for staff and students. The BCT continues vaccination efforts by visiting businesses in-person to offer education and onsite vaccination clinics for COVID-19 as well as influenza. In FY2021, the BCT served 480 unique businesses impacting over 57,000 jobs. This included coordinating the full vaccination of approximately 30,000 employees. During FY22, the BCT has continued vaccination efforts by bringing 32 vaccine clinics into businesses and providing outreach education to both employers and employees. So far in FY22, the BCT has served 132 unique businesses impacting almost 13,000 jobs.

D. Regional Economic Strategy Committee

Mr. Byrd explained the proposed committee list was included in the packet and is a chance for the Commission board to review and edit the participant list.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of the nominees to serve on the Regional Economic Strategy Committee. Ms. Potter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Maslaney called to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm.

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission