

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
April 28, 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; Mr. T. Franklin, Radford University; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech and Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. T. Wilson, Town of Christiansburg 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. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. L. Cox, Floyd County; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek and Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd and Julie Phillips

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for March.

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. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for March.

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

Motion: Mr. Johnson 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. EDA EAA grant for the Calfee Training School Adaptive Reuse Project

- B. Regular Project Review
None
- C. Environmental Project Review
 - 1. Radford University Renovation of Tyler Hall and Norwood Hall

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS
None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Maslaney reported evaluations for the Executive Director will be emailed out following the meeting. Please fill out and return to Mr. Maslaney by May 13th.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) committee has been meeting monthly and continues to make improvements to the program. The Southwest Times in Pulaski County ran an article recently sharing information about the RLF program which resulted in an inquiry and a potential client.

The final network designs are being prepared for the broadband project. Appalachian Power is submitting their updated project to the State Corporation Commission for Montgomery and Bland counties. All Points Broadband is finalizing their routes in Pulaski County. Both steps will allow the environmental review document to get prepared by the Regional Commission for state/federal agency review.

The Huckleberry Trail Plan progress includes one-on-one meetings with trail partners Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia Tech and Friends of the Huckleberry to discuss trail management/maintenance roles and responsibilities along with approaches to promoting the trail. Outside of the planning process, the communities are now working on an event planning application when organizations want to use the trail for purposes such as races and fundraising activities.

The New River Water Trail implementation application to ARC is due at the end of April. The request will be for \$1.5M in grant funds to construct/improve boat launches, website expansion, signage at launches and staff time to manage the project.

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 Regional Housing Trust Fund technical committee kicked-off their work this week. The committee consists of Jessica Wirgau (Community Foundation of the NRV), Darlene Burcham (Town of Pulaski), Kim Thurlow and Matt Hanratty (Town of Blacksburg), and Lydeana Martin (Floyd County). Initially, they will be evaluating other housing trust fund models to determine the most appropriate approach for the region.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration will be visiting the region on May 6th. They plan to visit Volvo in Pulaski County as well as tour investments made in Floyd County.

The Watershed Roundtable met April 27th. There are several programs organized to help clean the waterways. Friends of Claytor Lake offers a debris removal service; Montgomery County held Bloomin' and Broomin'; Pathways for Radford held a tree planting event; Pulaski County coordinated their second annual Adopt-a-Spot program; and Giles County is implementing a year-round virtual event by installing mailboxes at boat launches with orange trash bags available for trash collection while on the river.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Horton reported the City of Radford will host a tree planting event in honor of Arbor Day. They will also host the Highlander 5K and the Spring Wing Ding on April 30th. They have a concert series planned to take place throughout the summer.

Ms. Covey reported New River Community College will hold its first paid concert since the pandemic and it will be held on April 29th.

Mr. Griffin reported the Town of Floyd will offer their Small Town Summer concert series beginning June 9th through August.

Mr. Wilson reported the Town of Christiansburg will host a carnival at Uptown Christiansburg April 29th – May 1st. The new town park has been named Christiansburg Huckleberry Park.

Mr. Spangler reported the Town of Narrows will hold its annual Kids Fishing Day on May 14th.

Ms. Anderson reported the Town of Blacksburg passed their FY23 budget. The last day of classes at Virginia Tech will be Wednesday, May 4th. During a recent intergovernmental meeting in Montgomery County, school system administration expressed increased concern with cell phone use and vaping. She suggested a region-wide discussion on this topic could be helpful.

Mr. Reis reported Pulaski on Main will hold the Music and Merchants festival on May 21st. The Town of Pulaski is welcoming a new business to the community that will be constructing 3-D printed houses. Their first house in the area will be under construction in late April within town limits.

Mr. Johnson gave an update on the Revolving Loan Fund committee. They have an application from a business in Pulaski and are working through business ownership changes for a current client.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Program Pulaski County's Focus on Small Business Economic Development Strategy
Ms. Gilmer provided a presentation on the county's focus on small business services. Since she has been in this role, initially part-time during graduate school and now full-time, the county has been able to provide a single point of contact for businesses as they start up in the community or expand. The county has also been successful with keeping the Innovation Center fully occupied the past few years which is a direct reflection of small business relationships.

B. Regional Commission website Redesign Walkthrough
Mr. Byrd explained the Regional Commission staff has been working on a website redesign with the help of a consulting firm over the past year. The last website redesign was performed in 2015 when the new name and brand were released. Over time it became more difficult to perform in-house updates due to constraints in the back end of the site. The redesigned site uses a different software platform and staff has been trained on making routine updates such as calendar events, newsletter postings, and hosting project reports.

Users will find an easier to navigate site with streamlined program content and a new library feature that hosts all project publications, Regional Commission agendas and minutes, audits and annual reports. This was also an opportunity to overhaul the data dashboard portion of the site to ensure the most requested data was easy to find. The site will go live on May 2nd.

C. Appointment of FY23 Nominating Committee
Per the Regional Commission bylaws, the nominating committee is comprised of the Chair, Treasurer and a member at-large. Mr. Maslaney appointed Mr. Harvey to serve on the committee as the at-large member.

Mr. Maslaney called to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 pm.

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission