

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
May 26, 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. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; 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; Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County and Mr. T Wilson, Town of Christiansburg.

ABSENT: Mr. H. Johnson, Vice-Chair, Town of Christiansburg; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. L. Cox, Floyd County; Mr. T. Franklin, Radford University; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford and Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows.

Staff Attendees: Summer Bork, Kevin Byrd, and Julie Phillips

Other Attendees: Jill Williams

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for April.

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

Motion: Mr. Fijalkowski moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Wilson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried; two abstentions, Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch and Mr. Jones.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for April.

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. Harvey seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None

B. Regular Project Review
None

C. Environmental Project Review

1. Radford University Acquisition of Property for Campus Expansion- Jefferson and Davis
2. Radford University Acquisition of Property for Campus Expansion Project 217-17851-005

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS
None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT
None

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) committee met to review the updated goals/strategies, review the project ranking criteria and identify the top projects. This year there are 10 top projects, plus four, that are highly relevant based on economic development partner targeted efforts.

The Huckleberry Trail Plan draft was shared last week with the Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee along with key project partners. Feedback from this group will be incorporated before distributing widely.

The I-81 Advisory Committee will hold their first meeting for 2022 in July. The committee last met in April, 2021.

VDOT held public input meetings last week on the Six-Year Improvement Program and several speakers addressed the I-81 Improvement Plan needing to add a third lane southbound between exits 140 and 132. Federal infrastructure bills may provide an opportunity to add this into the program.

The NRV Passenger Rail leadership group met with the Secretary of Transportation, his leadership team, and legislators last week to discuss current status of the project. It was clear the new administration is well informed and making progress on the project.

Nine of the ten potential members of the NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority have taken action to join. A decision from the last potential member is anticipated in the coming weeks. Once all members are confirmed, a memo will be distributed requesting appointments to serve on the Authority board.

Bethany Peters was recently promoted from an internship to a full-time position as Regional Planner/Information Specialist. Hannah Palko will start in mid-June as a Geospatial Analyst/Regional Cartographer.

Mr. Byrd reported he recently attended the Southeast Regional Directors Institute (SERDI) Conference and a NADO Executive Committee fly-in. They included relevant conversations with peer agencies and Federal staff.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Breslau reported the Virginia rent relief program is being discontinued and asked if anyone has plans at the state or local level to offer this in the future.

Mr. Reis reported Pulaski on Main held the Music and Merchants festival on May 21st and noted it was well attended.

Mr. Wilson reported the Town of Christiansburg held the first Music on Main concert which was also well attended. They will hold a wreath laying ceremony on Memorial Day. The Town also passed their FY23 budget.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported the town of Floyd will continue to hold their summer concert series. They will have a flag ceremony on Memorial Day. Updates and repairs to the sewer system are continuing. A new restaurant, Small Town Grill, recently opened.

Mr. Fijalkowski reported Montgomery County and the Town of Blacksburg held a joint meeting to discuss the creation of a community land trust program to assist with affordable housing. He also noted many people attended recent VDOT meetings to show support for projects in the New River Valley.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Program Calfee Community & Cultural Center Overview

Ms. Williams provided a presentation on the Calfee Community & Cultural Center. In 2018, a group of local citizens partnered with the Town of Pulaski, the YMCA of Pulaski County, and the Pulaski County Department of Social Services to begin the process of revitalizing the historic Calfee Training School, which had been sitting empty for over 10 years. Despite operating for almost a century, the school's existence and its significance to the history of Pulaski were largely unknown outside the local African American community. A community visioning process which engaged 300 Pulaski County residents led to a vision for a future Calfee Community and Cultural Center (CCCC). A 2019 CDBG planning grant allowed the CCCC Board of Directors to partner with the Town of Pulaski to prepare the architectural and business plans for the future facility. Since then, the project has raised nearly \$3 million of a total budget that has grown to \$5 million with skyrocketing construction costs. Pending grant proposals and historic tax credits will cover the balance of the renovation project which is slated to begin by the end of 2022 and be complete by the end of 2023.

- B. Regional Economic Strategy (RES) FY22 Update
Mr. Byrd explained each year the New River Valley Regional Commission reviews and updates the region's Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The purpose of the RES is to continue federal and local partnerships to address economic development in the region. The RES also documents the planning efforts to identify economic development needs in the region and the creation of the strategy document.

To date, there are over 115 projects identified. In more recent years, there have been over 50 projects that had been on the project list but are now considered complete. The top ranked projects were identified through a ranking criteria along project readiness, economic competitiveness and regional alignment. More recently, two RES committee meetings have been held to review the Priority and Strategies, discuss ranking criteria and review the "Top 10 plus 4" project list, and input on the draft RES document. An additional committee meeting will be held to review final documents and discuss ways to provide support around top projects. The NRVRC has also launched a site for ongoing engagement:

www.engagenrv.org/res.

- C. Appointment NRVRC Revolving Loan Fund- New Committee Members Appointment
The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) committee has continued to meet regularly, market the loan fund opportunity and field inquiries from potential businesses. Since the Commission's original appointment of RLF committee members, several have had conflicting obligations or are no longer in the position to allow them to fully participate. Staff is now recommending two replacements to continue the mission of the revolving loan fund. These new recommended members are Lydia Gilmer, Small Business Solutions Manager, Pulaski County and Debbie Thomas, Clerk/Treasurer, Town of Narrows.

Motion: Mr. Wilson moved for the approval of the nominees to serve on the NRV Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Mr. Reeves seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

- D. Regional Commission Awards- Review Criteria and Process
Mr. Byrd explained the award categories, criteria and previous award recipients were included in the packet. A call for nominations will go out next week.

- E. FY23 Nominating Committee Report
Mr. Maslaney reported the nominations for the slate of officers for Fiscal Year 2023 are as follows:

The nominations include:

Chair: Hil Johnson, Town of Christiansburg

Vice-Chair: Steve Fijalkowski, Montgomery County

Treasurer: Leon Law, Giles County

At-Large: Angie Covey, New River Community College

At-Large: Mike Harvey, Montgomery County

At-Large: Catherine Potter, Virginia Tech

Past Chair: Mike Maslaney, Floyd County

The slate will be voted upon during the Commission's regularly scheduled June meeting.

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

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission