

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
September 29, 2022
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; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Reis, Town of Pulaski; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows and Mr. T. Wilson, Town of Christiansburg.

ABSENT: Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Aphi Fancon and Julie Phillips

Other Attendees: Darlene Burcham

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for August

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

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

Action: Motion carried; one abstention, Mr. Patton.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for August

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

Motion: Mr. Wilson moved for approval of the Treasurer's Reports. Mr. Horton seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried; one abstention, Mr. Patton.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None

B. Regular Project Review
None

C. Environmental Project Review
1. Pulaski County Community Water Improvements Project
2. Reissuance of VPDES Permit No. VA0075361 Mountain Lake Biological Station WWTP

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS
None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson reported the October executive committee meeting has been rescheduled to October 20th and the November meeting has been rescheduled to November 9th.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) committee approved two loans this month. Both clients were referred by community partners in economic development and local government.

All items on the VATI 2022 broadband implementation project pre-contract list were submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development for the Pulaski County project. The Montgomery/Bland portion of the project has one item to submit while the project is concurrently being reviewed by the State Corporation Commission since it is a partnership with Appalachian Power.

The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority held the first meeting on September 28th at the Pulaski County Innovation Center.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce is holding an Eggs and Issues event on October 6th that will be a panel discussion on passenger rail. Mr. Byrd will be on the panel discussing the NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority alongside Ray Smoot with the Commonwealth Transportation Board, Sandy Davis representing NRV Passenger Rail advocacy group, and Michael McLaughlin, Chief Operating Officer with the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.

ReNew the New had great weather and a strong turn out in all four counties and the city on August 27th. Preliminary figures are still coming in, but early indications are over 500 participants and close to 5 tons of debris removed.

The Business Continuity Team grant with a Community Development Block Grant through Giles County wraps up in February and staff recently submitted a budget revision heading into the final phase of work. The revision allows for purchasing of testing supplies for businesses. A survey was circulated to gauge demand. The BCT continues to be a resource to businesses and schools as different variants are circulating in the community.

The Regional Commission Annual Dinner is scheduled for October 27th and will be hosted in Radford at Brick House Pizza. Invitations will be going out next week. The focus for the event is networking among community leaders while celebrating regional award recipients. Award recipients this year include the following: Champion of the Valley (elected official) – Penny Franklin; Citizen of the Valley – Janaka Casper; Friend of the Valley – New River Conservancy. We will issue a press release about the award recipients following the event.

Nicole Hersch recently moved into a part-time role and John O’Shea is transitioning into retirement.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS’ REPORTS

Mr. Wilson reported the Town of Christiansburg has many events planned in the fall season including a food truck rodeo, fire truck parade, and Rockin’ Main Street.

Mr. Horton reported Radford University Homecoming will be held October 1-2 and the Highlander Festival will be held October 8th. The Mountains, Rivers and Roads: Understanding Appalachia Conference will be held October 22nd.

Mr. Law reported the Giles County Historical Society has reopened in Pearisburg.

Mr. Fijalkowski reported Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center received a 2022 VACO Achievement Award.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported two houses have been completed with the Floyd County Community Development Block Grant scattered site housing project and progress has been made on the townhouses with the Floyd County Habitat for Humanity project. The Clean the Little event in conjunction with ReNew the New was a success.

Mr. Johnson reported two loans closed with the NRV Revolving Loan Fund.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Town of Pulaski Projects Completed, Underway, and Forthcoming

Ms. Burcham provided an update about projects in the Town of Pulaski. Ms. Burcham addressed recently completed projects such as a community development block grant for downtown improvements and a skate park, along with projects underway to include a mountain bike skills park, water line upgrades that will allow for second story residential in downtown, and forthcoming transportation projects to change one-way traffic to two-way, among several others. Lastly, she addressed the teamwork it takes between elected officials, community leaders, and local government administration to make these types of projects a reality.

B. NRV Revolving Loan Fund Update

Mr. Byrd reported the New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund Committee recently approved two loan applications.

Dobbins Hollow Horticulture, LLC is a vineyard and farm operating in Floyd County. Loan funds were secured to purchase equipment to increase winemaking production at the site. The business is also growing other fruits for table wines and ciders. The farm lends itself to a disc golf course, which will be added as a new feature. Given Floyd County Tourism's focus on Agri-tourism business, this will be a great addition to the local and regional offerings.

The Chandlerie, LLC is a candle making and lifestyle business that is expanding from online to a brick-and-mortar store in downtown Christiansburg. Loan funds were secured to complete interior renovations to the two-story building to allow for retail sales and candle making in-house. The business will also offer candle making classes to the public. The retail store will focus on other home goods/decor and gifts. This business is complementary to the work of the town and Downtown Christiansburg, Inc. which is committed to the growth and success of downtown.

C. Regional Commission FY22 Annual Report

The FY22 Annual Report was distributed to all board members in attendance. Copies will be mailed out to elected officials and partners next week.

D. October Commission Meeting and November Commission Meeting.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of canceling the October Meeting due to the Annual Dinner conflict.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of moving the November meeting to November 17th to avoid a conflict with the Thanksgiving holiday.

Mr. Wilson 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