

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
June 23, 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; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County and M. Reis, Town of Pulaski.

ABSENT: Mr. H. Johnson, Vice-Chair, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. L. Cox, Floyd County; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; 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. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows; Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County; Mr. T Wilson, Town of Christiansburg and Vacant, Radford University

Staff Attendees: Kathleen Armstrong, Jessica Barrett, Kevin Byrd, Julie Phillips, Joy Rumley, and Elijah Sharp

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes for May.
Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken.
- B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for May.
Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

- A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)
None
- B. Regular Project Review
None
- C. Environmental Project Review
 - 1. Virginia Tech Tennis-Outdoor Court Design

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 final package for FY22 that is included in the meeting packet for the Commission to consider forwarding to the US Economic Development Administration. The RES committee will take a brief break before resuming a quarterly meeting schedule for FY23.

The I-81 Advisory Committee will hold their first meeting for 2022 on July 7th 1:00-3:00. It will likely be a hybrid meeting with the physical location to be determined.

The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority membership process concluded with nine members and a memo requesting appointments from the members will be sent to chief administrative officials soon. The first meeting of the authority will be approximately 60 days after the appointment memo is distributed. Authority members include: Montgomery, Pulaski, and Giles counties, City of Radford, the towns of Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Pulaski, along with Virginia Tech and Radford University.

Please nominate worthy candidates for the Regional Commission annual awards program. Nominations are due August 15th!

In May, the Regional Commission was recognized by the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce as a Top 25 Place to Work! In 2018, the Commission was selected Best Place to Work, government category. These recognitions certainly help in employee recruitment as most interviewees inquire about the culture that leads to the designation.

There were two facilitated retreats in June: Radford City Police Department leadership team on 6/8 and Christiansburg Town Council on 6/17. Please reach out if the Commission can assist your leadership group in strategic planning and facilitated discussions.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Ms. Anderson reported there was a ribbon cutting event at the new Blacksburg Police Department. The Town of Blacksburg met with Montgomery County to discuss setting up a Community Land Trust to assist with implementation of affordable housing projects. The Town of Blacksburg is allocating \$4 million of its ARPA funds to affordable housing projects. The Art at the Market event will be held July 16th and the Steppin' Out festival will be August 5th and 6th.

Mr. Horton reported the City of Radford is holding a summer concert series. Radford Reels will be showing movies at the lawn at Glencoe Museum. Jimmy Fortune will be performing at the 4th of July celebration at Bissett Park along with a fireworks display.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported the Town of Floyd will continue to hold their summer concert series. Floydfest recently announced they purchased property in the Check portion of the county and will be relocating prior to the 2023 event.

Mr. Reis reported the Town of Pulaski recently opened a new skate park and they are working to open a mountain bike trail/skills park off Route 99 in the fall.

Mr. Law reported the Newport Agricultural Fair will be held August 12th and 13th. There are currently two ongoing broadband projects in Giles County.

Mr. Reeves reported the need for VDOT to have more road equipment to keep road shoulders cleared in Pulaski County. He mentioned the current equipment is shared between Montgomery County and Pulaski County. Some of the secondary roads are becoming unpassable with limited sightlines that are dangerous.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. NRV Revolving Loan Fund Update

The Revolving Loan Fund committee reviewed two applicants, one with a full pre-application, the other beginning their pre-application. The recent interest demonstrates increasing demand for the program.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Huckleberry Trail Plan Overview

Mr. Sharp and Ms. Armstrong provided a presentation on the Huckleberry Train Plan. Friends of the Huckleberry identified the opportunity to create a Huckleberry Trail Plan as a first step towards defining future goals. In September 2021, the New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (NRVMPO) partnered with the Regional Commission to begin work on facilitating the development of the Huckleberry Trail Plan. The scope of work included developing a strategy for collaboration among local partners and to evaluate and implement formal policies for future trail development or maintenance. The plan would be a first step towards establishing a stronger sense of place and identify methods to increase continuity and consistency of user experiences.

The first goal of the plan was to document how the Huckleberry Trail is managed currently. The plan includes information on existing trail conditions and assets, operations and maintenance standards, future design and construction considerations, and funding resources. The plan also reflects on interviews with other long-distance trail managers and trail influencers. Next steps include the following:

- Establishing a bi-annual meeting among trail owners and trail partners
- Maintaining the existing trail at a high standard
- Continuing to expand and enhance the trail and connections to other alternative transportation assets
- Developing 3-4 "gateway" trail access locations
- Streamlining event coordination

- Identifying more ways to contribute (alternatives to benches, trail ambassadors for volunteers, etc.)

B. Regional Economic Strategy (RES) FY22 Update

Ms. Rumley 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.

Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken.

C. Consideration of Proposed FY23 Budget

Mr. Byrd explained the proposed budget was included in the agenda packet and provided additional details on both the budgeted expenditures and the anticipated revenue.

Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken. Mr. Maslaney explained that the FY23 budget needs to be set prior to the start of FY23 on July 1st. Because this is due before the full board will meet, he directed Mr. Byrd to use the proposed budget as recommended by the Executive Committee.

D. Commission Officers for FY23 - Slate Introduced at the May Meeting

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

Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken.

E. July Commission Meeting (Historically it is cancelled.)

Mr. Maslaney explained the July Commission meeting is historically cancelled due to VAPDC summer conference conflicts.

Mr. Maslaney called to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 pm.

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission