

New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority

Minutes

August 29, 2024

11:30 a.m.

Montgomery County Government Center

Attendees: Angie Hill, Mary Biggs and Steve Fijilkowski, Montgomery County; Randy Wingfield and Mike Barber, Town of Christiansburg; C.B. Andrews, Giles County; David Ridpath and David Horton, City of Radford; Jonathan Sweet and Michael Mooney, Pulaski County Angela Joyner and Chris Stafford, Radford University; Lynsay Belshe and Dwyn Taylor, Virginia Tech; Jerry Ford and Larry Spencer, Town of Blacksburg; Kevin Byrd, and Chris Owens, New River Valley Regional Commission; and Reid Broughton, Sands Anderson PC.

Others Present: Ann Cassell and Larry Hinker, NRV Passenger Rail; Colin Burch, Jenna Friedberg, Christine Fix and Oliver Thatcher, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority; Chris Robinson, Wendel Architecture, PC; and Mike Gangloff, Roanoke Times.

Absent: Dirk Compton, Pulaski County; Shannon Collins and Todd Day, Town of Pulaski; Ricky McCoy, Giles County; and Brandon Cohen, Radford University.

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Barber, Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 11:50 am.

- a. Oath of office for any new appointees—New appointee, Chris Stafford, was sworn in just prior to the meeting being called to order.

II. Minutes from June 27, 2024

Motion: Mary Biggs moved for approval of the June 27th minutes.

C.B. Andrews seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Update—Colin Burch and Jenna Friedberg

On August 27, 2024, the VPRA Board of Directors made a recommendation to proceed with the N-Line, Norfolk Southern Main Line, through Christiansburg.

- a. Overview of Cambria Station Location—VPRA staff PowerPoint presentation highlights the 2024 Norfolk Southern (NS) agreement and the benefits to the New River Valley.

Some key points:

- Expands to New River Valley no later than 2027—about two (2) years sooner.
- Save VPRA over \$100 million.
- Acquires historic depot building.

- Opens the door for future Radford service and a third daily train out of Roanoke.

IV. Sub-recipient of CRISI CDS Grant from VPRA to NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority—Mr. Byrd reported that the VPRA has requested to transfer a \$2 million Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant award via Congressional Directed Spending to the NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority. These funds are for rail station improvements and can be used for the development, design, and construction of the NRV passenger rail station. It was also reported that there is a 20% match (or \$400,000) requirement. There was a discussion about grant match scenarios. Additional information was requested for further discussion at the next meeting.

V. NRV Passenger Rail Organization Update—Ann Cassell.

Ms. Cassell reported that hearing a lot of enthusiasm about the Cambria passenger rail station location particularly in the tourism community. It was also noted that the Station Authority should start thinking about marketing strategies.

VI. Administrative Items:

- a. Board member appointments for the 2-year terms are due; 4-year appointments begin—NRVRC Staff

Mr. Byrd reported that the two-year term appointments are due to expire on 12/31/24 and that board members will need to be appointed to four-year terms (e.g. 2025 – 2028). A memo with additional information is forthcoming. It was also reported that the NRVRC is working toward a contract with the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) for the architectural/engineering services pre-construction work. Once under contract with ARC, the NRVRC will send out invoices for the match commitments for the ARC Planning Grant.

VII. Next Meeting Date—September 26, 2024

VIII. Adjourn