

New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority

Minutes

September 28, 2023

11:30 a.m.

Pulaski County Innovation Center – New River Room

Attendees: Jonathan Sweet and Dirk Compton, Pulaski County; Sherri Blevins, Angie Hill, and Mary Biggs, Montgomery County; Randy Wingfield and Mike Barber, Town of Christiansburg; Darlene Burcham, Town of Pulaski; C.B. Andrews and Ricky McCoy, Giles County; Angela Joyner, Radford University; Chris Kiwus and Lynsay Belshe, Virginia Tech; David Horton and David Ridpath, City of Radford; Jerry Ford and Larry Spencer, Town of Blacksburg; Kevin Byrd and Chris Owens, New River Valley Regional Commission; Reid Broughton, Sands Anderson PC; and Ann Cassell, Blacksburg Partnership.

Absent: Craig Meadows, Montgomery County; Shannon Collins, Town of Pulaski; and Laura Quesenberry, Radford University.

I. Welcome and Introductions

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

- a. Oath of office for any new appointees—Mary Biggs sworn in as an alternate.

II. Minutes from February 23, 2023

Motion: Ms. Burcham moved for approval of the June 22nd minutes with suggested changes.

Mr. Ford seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. Status of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Grant—Kevin Byrd

- a. Recommended by the Governor for funding—Mr. Byrd announced that Governor Youngkin recommended approval of the project to the Appalachian Regional Commission office in Washington, DC. We are currently awaiting a contract.
- b. Letters of match commitment secured—The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) requested copies of the letters of commitment to complete the application package. All have been secured and submitted.
- c. Awaiting announcement from Washington, D.C. Office—Application package has been submitted to the ARC office in D.C. Formal announcement to come.

IV. NRV Passenger Rail Legislative Advocacy Opportunities—Ann Cassell

- a. In-region post General Assembly Election—There was a discussion about the upcoming election and the best way to engage legislators about the NRV project. Information from VPRA 30% design drawings may be delayed which would

negate the need for an in-region legislative event prior to the 2024 General Assembly session starting on January 10th.

- b. General Assembly Opening Reception in Richmond—David Bailey, the lobbyist for NRV Passenger Rail (Blacksburg Partnership contract), has coordinated an opening night reception for clients in previous years. Mr. Bailey will be working with the Blacksburg Partnership on legislative engagement opportunities whether it will be the opening night reception, or another format for 2024.

V. Nominating Committee

- a. Consideration of proposed slate for balance of calendar year—The Nominating Committee met on September 19, 2023, to fill the role of Chair. Craig Meadows is retiring at the end of October 2023 and is therefore unable to complete his term as Chair. The Committee identified the following individuals to ensure that the Board continues to have a full slate of officers for the remainder of the 2023 term. The Board accepted the recommendations as presented to fill the positions for the remaining two months of the term.

Chair— Michael Barber, Town of Christiansburg

Vice Chair—Dirk Compton, Pulaski County

Secretary—Lynsay Belshe, Virginia Tech

Treasurer—Darlene Burcham, Town of Pulaski

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve the slate of officers for the balance of the 2023 calendar year.

Mr. Andrews seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Discuss next steps for Nominating Committee regarding 2024—There was a discussion about the process. Before his retirement at the end of October, Chair Meadows will support the process to identify individuals willing to serve on the nominating committee and those willing to serve as officers in 2024. He asked for those willing to serve on the nominating committee not be in consideration for an officer position.

VI. Project Update

- a. 30% design anticipated in early December—There was a discussion about the design schedule and how it is contingent upon the final selection of the project site/location. It is anticipated that an update will be provided at some point around the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's December meeting.
- b. Bank Account—Mr. Byrd reported that the Commission had gone through the procurement process for banking services and selected First Bank and Trust. He also reported that the account for the NRV PRSA has been set up and that invoices would be forthcoming.

- VII. Next Meeting Date—October 26th at 11:30
- a. Discuss whether October meeting is needed. If cancelled, next meeting date would be November 23rd at 11:30. The board agreed to cancel the October 26th meeting and reschedule the November 23rd meeting to November 30th due to the conflict with Thanksgiving.