

New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority

Minutes

December 15, 2023

11:30 a.m.

Pulaski County Innovation Center – New River Room

Attendees: Dirk Compton, Pulaski County; Angie Hill and Mary Biggs, Montgomery County; Randy Wingfield and Mike Barber, Town of Christiansburg; Darlene Burcham and Shannon Collins, Town of Pulaski; C.B. Andrews, Giles County; Brandon Cohen, Radford University; Lynsay Belshe, Virginia Tech; Jerry Ford and Larry Spencer, Town of Blacksburg; Kevin Byrd and Chris Owens, New River Valley Regional Commission; Reid Broughton, Sands Anderson PC; Ann Cassell, Blacksburg Partnership; and Colin Burch and Jenna Friedberg, Virginia Passenger Rail Authority.

Absent: Jonathan Sweet, Pulaski County; Sherri Blevins, Montgomery County; Ricky McCoy, Giles County; Angela Joyner, Radford University; and David Horton and David Ridpath, City of Radford.

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—Brandon Cohen sworn in as an alternate.

II. Minutes from September 28, 2023

Motion: Ms. Burcham moved for approval of the September 28th minutes.

Mr. Ford seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. Virginia Passenger Rail Authority Update (VPRA) – Colin Burch/Jenna Friedberg

a. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process overview—Mr. Burch and Ms. Friedberg reported that the Environmental Review was in progress and it is anticipated to be completed in 2024. A more detailed timeline will be presented in January.

b. Anticipated next steps for the NRV project-- Mr. Burch and Ms. Friedberg reported that the public outreach process will be initiated in January 2024. The Board requested that VPRA consult with NRVRC and NRVPRSA before scheduling future events to ensure the most opportune times and locations.

IV. Nominating Committee

a. Consideration of proposed slate of officers for 2024

The Nominating Committee identified the following slate of officers:

Chair— Michael Barber, Town of Christiansburg

Vice Chair— Angie Hill, Montgomery County

Secretary—Lynsay Belshe, Virginia Tech

Treasurer—Dirk Compton, Pulaski County

Motion: Ms. Burcham moved to close nominations for the officer positions.

Ms. Ford seconded the motion.

Discussion: None

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

V. Project Update

a. 30% design anticipated at VPRA meeting on 1/23—Meeting will be held in Richmond, Virginia from 10:30-2:00. Virtual option via YouTube channel.

b. Briefing for Authority + NRV Passenger Rail group on 1/25—Meeting will be held in Blacksburg from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. in the Assembly Hall of the Holtzman Alumni Center at the Inn at Virginia Tech.

c. NEPA public input meeting on 1/29 evening—Meeting will be an Open House event from 4:30-8:00 p.m. at the Blacksburg Community Center.

VI. NRV Passenger Rail Update – Ann Cassell

Ms. Cassell reported the Blacksburg Partnership will be conducting Legislative Outreach with David Bailey, a government liaison, in the upcoming General Assembly session.

VII. Staff Report

a. Status of the Appalachian Regional Commission Grant—Ms. Owens reported that the ARC Application had been sent to the ARC office in Washington D.C. The next step will be to address any questions ARC may have and complete contract negotiations.

b. Authority Invoices Distributed—Ms. Owens reported that FY 2024 Invoices were distributed; however, they had the wrong FEIN number. Therefore, they would be corrected and redistributed promptly.

VIII. Next Meeting Date—January 25, 2024

a. Potential joint meeting with NRV Passenger Rail to receive NRV project update from VPRA.