

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
September 24, 2020
6:00 p.m.— Hybrid Meeting via Zoom/In-person

I. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT (in-person): Mr. M. **Maslaney**, Floyd County, Chair; Mr. H. **Johnson**, Vice-Chair, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. L. **Law**, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. L. **DeVito Kuchenbuch**, Floyd County; Mr. S. **Fijalkowski**, Montgomery County; Mr. M. **Harvey**, Montgomery County; and Mr. J. **Martin**, City of Radford.

PRESENT (zoom): Ms. S. **Anderson**, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. C. **Bopp**, Pulaski County; Mr. D. **Breslau**, Town of Blacksburg;; Ms. A. **Covey**, New River Community College; Mr. J. **Coleman**, Floyd County; Mr. T. **Garrett**, Town of Narrows; Mr. D. **Horton**, City of Radford; Dr. A. **Joyner**, Radford University; Ms. M. **Sachs**, Town of Christiansburg; and Dr. D. **Warren**, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. J **Ballard**, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. L. **Clevinger**, Town of Pulaski Mr. T. **Clontz**, Town of Pulaski; Mr. W. **Kantsios**, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. C. **Kiwus**, Virginia Tech; Mr. R. **Lawson**, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. **McCoy**, Giles County; Mr. M. **Patton**, Town of Floyd; and Ms. C. **Potter**, Virginia Tech.

Staff Attendees: Ashley Briggs, Kevin Byrd, Melanie Morris, Julie Phillips, and Elijah Sharp

II. ELECTRONIC MEETING PARTICIPATION – Commission Action

Mr. Maslaney called for approval of the electronic meeting participation policy. Section 2.2-3708.2 of the Virginia State Code, 1950, as amended, Section 3. Any public body may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency in accordance with § 44-146.17.

Motion: Mr. Harvey moved for the approval of the policy. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for August

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

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of the minutes. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Approval of Treasurer’s Report for August
Mr. Maslaney called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Johnson moved for the approval of the Treasurer’s Reports. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

- A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)
None
- B. Regular Project Review
None
- C. Environmental Project Review
None

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

VI. CHAIR’S REPORT

Mr. Maslaney reported Dr. Helen Harvey decided to not seek reappointment to the Commission. He noted she served the Commission from September 1991 until September 2020; for a total of 29 years. He wished Dr. Harvey well and thanked her for her service. She served many important roles on the Commission including Chair (1999-2000), NRV Development Corporation representative, Smart Beginnings NRV Advisory Council representative and served on the Executive Director hiring committee in 2009. He welcomed Mr. Jeff Martin who will be serving as the City of Radford’s citizen representative. He reported New River Community College recently received the Gerald Baliles Virginia Horseshoe Initiative Award from the Virginia Foundation for Community College Education (VFCCE) to increase high school and college completion.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. Over the past two months all four counties and the city launched small business relief programs with their CARES Act funding.

The Commission completed a first draft of the MPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan and submitted it to the MPO Technical Advisory Committee for its review.

The local government managers and the Health District continue to meet regularly. Regional use of CARES Act funding for the Business Continuity Team and expansion of the NRV Community Services Crisis Intervention program are current focus areas. The Business Continuity Team (BCT) launched in late August. The program design for how businesses engage with the BCT is complete; procurement is complete for firms providing environmental cleaning, public relations

and legal for human resources; marketing of BCT is underway, and most importantly, businesses are being served. The BCT is expanding to include a Public Health School Liaison position. The role will focus on COVID health education for students and teachers. Any administrator-level questions will still go to the Health District for advisement. Commission staff worked closely on supporting information needs for the NRV Public Health Task Force. The website www.nrvroadtowellness.com was updated to include more information on the Task Force as well as its initiatives. Staff was also asked to prepare a data dashboard for the region which is being updated three times weekly on Monday, Wednesday and Friday to be included with the Task Force update.

New phones were installed in the Commission office with Voice-over Internet Protocol (VOIP). This will enable many features not available through the previous system. Staff is working with TeleworkVA!, a firm providing no-cost technical assistance through a contract with the VA Dept of Rail and Public Transit, on developing a telecommute policy to include in the Commission personnel manual. The Executive Committee will review prior to the Commission being asked to take action at an upcoming meeting.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Maslaney reported the Floyd Country store has a Go Fund Me page to support the business operations. Mr. Fijalkowski reported Montgomery County has used CARES Act funds for several items including leave for employees after COVID exposure, air quality evaluations, wireless on wheels internet solution for rural areas, a camera system in the Government Center for exposure tracking, a kiosk for no-contact bill payments, and additional vehicles to utilize when a vehicle needs to be removed from the fleet for cleaning after a COVID exposure. They have also awarded several small business, childcare, and non-profit grants. Mr. Fijalkowski noted the Commission should discuss presenting two special awards in addition to the regular annual awards. He explained the work both Dr. Bissell and Chief Wilson have done for the NRV Public Health Task Force have greatly benefited the region. Mr. Harvey reported Montgomery County added two locations for early voting. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported Floyd County is offering drive through voting. Mr. Horton reported the City of Radford has a new welcome center and tourism office on Main Street. Ms. Sachs reported state legislators have the ability to change the current tax structure and noted several changes would positively impact numerous small businesses. Ms. Anderson reported the Town of Blacksburg has awarded several small business, childcare, and non-profit grants with their CARES Act funds and there will be a bike parade on Saturday 9/26 to wrap up Sustainability Week.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. New River Valley Business Continuity Team

Ms. Briggs and Ms. Morris gave a presentation on the Business Continuity Team (BCT). They explained the BCT is working in coordination with the New River Health District-Virginia Department of Health to provide employers with technical assistance from a multi-disciplinary team. If businesses have a positive case and they need services to assist with implementing

their continuity of operations plan, companies will have access to facility cleaning, legal assistance focused on human resources and public relations for messaging to clients, employees and/or the general public. This program provides immediate, coordinated responses to outbreaks, consistent public messaging, education, and the development of best practices. Ms. Briggs explained how the Business Continuity Toolkit the team developed is used to assist a business navigating a positive COVID case. Ms. Morris explained the reimbursable services offered to businesses are public relations, legal services, and cleaning services. She noted the services are eligible to be reimbursed at 50% of the cost, provided a business continuity plan is established and being followed. Lastly, they detailed the milestones accomplished to-date per the grant objectives with GO Virginia.

B. FY 21 Program of Work for the Regional Commission

Mr. Sharp provided an overview of the FY21 Work Program. He noted there are currently over 40 projects and more may be added during the year. He highlighted the process utilized by staff to keep everyone on track with project progress and project billing.

Motion: Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch moved to approve the FY21 Program of Work for the Regional Commission. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. SMART Scale Project Resolution of Support

Several Commissioners addressed additional areas that need improvements beyond those included in the resolution. Mr. Fijalkowski noted the intersection of Route 114 and Prices Fork Road; Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch noted Route 8 from Christiansburg to Floyd; and Mr. Law noted widening Route 100 to a four-lane facility in Giles County.

Motion: Mr. Law moved to approve the SMART Scale Project Resolution of Support. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

D. CEDS Consumer Version

Mr. Byrd explained the “consumer version” of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) provides a user-friendly overview of the CEDS content for public distribution, including information about the CEDS, the region’s economic development goals, top-ranked projects, and select regional demographic and economic data.

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

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission