

**NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION**  
**Minutes of the Commission Meeting**  
**held on**  
**May 27, 2021**  
**6:00 p.m.— Hybrid Meeting via Zoom/In-person**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Johnson, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

**PRESENT (in-person):** 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 and Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County.

**PRESENT (zoom):** Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County, Chair; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech; Ms. M. Sachs, Town of Christiansburg and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

**ABSENT:** Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. J., Ballard, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. J. Coleman, Floyd County; Mr. T. Clontz, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. William Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd and Ms. S. Thwaites, Town of Narrows.

Staff Attendees: Kathleen Armstrong, Summer Bork, Kevin Byrd, Patrick O'Brien, and Julie Phillips.  
Other Attendees: Mirielle Burgoyne, Josh Hess, and Joe McKinney

**II. ELECTRONIC MEETING PARTICIPATION – Commission Action**

Mr. Johnson noted that due to a lack of quorum voting will not take place during the meeting.

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes for April**

Mr. Johnson noted that due to a lack of quorum the April minutes will be voted on at the next meeting.

**B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for March**

Mr. Johnson noted that due to a lack of quorum the April treasurer's report will be voted on at the next meeting.

**IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

**A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)**

None  
B. Regular Project Review

None  
C. Environmental Project Review  
1. RAAP Nitrate Ester Manufacturing Facilities

**V. PUBLIC ADDRESS**

Mr. Johnson welcomed Joss Hess, Rep. Morgan Griffith's Deputy District Director to the meeting.

**VI. CHAIR'S REPORT**

None

**VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. He welcomed Kathleen Armstrong to the meeting. Kathleen joined the Commission staff this month as a regional planner.

Federal guidance for use of American Rescue Plan funding was released in May. The four primary funding objectives include: support urgent COVID-19 response efforts; replace lost revenue for governments to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs; support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses; address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to inequal impact of the pandemic.

Governor Northam was in Christiansburg May 5<sup>th</sup> to announce the Western Rail Initiative. The program will include passenger service to the New River Valley, a second daily train on the Northeast Corridor and a significant investment by the Commonwealth to purchase right of way from Norfolk Southern.

The Valley to Valley Trail planning project will hold a stakeholder meeting before releasing a survey to the public and holding a public meeting planned to take place in August. The stakeholder meeting will be an opportunity to review potential alignments and ask questions of the consultant before the public process gets underway.

The ReNew the New annual fall clean-up event will take place on August 28th.

The Business Continuity Team (BCT) is winding down the large-scale vaccine clinics with the last held at Lane Stadium on 5/18. Focus has shifted to supporting schools with vaccine clinics before schools close for the summer. The VA Dept of Emergency Management is also deploying a mobile clinic in the region starting on 5/23. There will be 13 clinics over 13 days offering Johnson and Johnson single-dose vaccine. BCT staff helped schedule clinic locations.

Virginia Housing recently announced a program dedicated for planning district/regional commissions in Virginia. Based on population, our organization will have access to \$2.0M to assist

with housing units being built and supporting regional initiatives identified in the recently completed Regional + Local Housing Study.

The Berkley Group presented findings from the Wage/Compensation Study to the Executive Committee in May. NexGen Media was selected to assist with the Commission website update. A full-staff workshop was held, and sub-committees have met to provide content to the developer. The Commission released a RFP for photography services and will be working with Charlie Whitescarver of Christiansburg and Alisa Moody of Giles County.

## **VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

Mr. Johnson reported the Town of Christiansburg held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new park off of Peppers Ferry Road near the Huckleberry Trail. He also reported Comcast is moving along with internet installation through the town.

Ms. Sachs reported the Town of Christiansburg has moved the location of the farmers market to the Recreation Center and the market is now open. Iron Tree brewing is also now open in downtown.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported Floyd County, specifically the Floyd Country Store and the Crooked Road are featured in Rolling Stone Magazine. The Pharm House hosted the last vaccine clinic last weekend.

## **IX. OLD BUSINESS**

None

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Federal Policy and Programs Update**

Mr. McKinney, Executive Director, and Mirielle Burgoyne, Deputy Executive Director/Director of Government Affairs, with NADO provided a presentation on federal legislation and programs. There is a tremendous amount of activity underway at the federal level in response to the pandemic along with initiatives being proposed by the Biden Administration. Key topics NADO is tracking include the American Rescue Plan, US Economic Development Administration, transportation reauthorization and proposed infrastructure packages.

### **B. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update**

Mr. O'Brien gave a presentation on the annual update cycle for the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to align with the ongoing EDA CARES Act Recovery Assistance award. He explained the two-year award complements the Commissions' existing EDA-supported CEDS planning process, providing additional staff and funding to improve the CEDS format and accessibility, revise the CEDS to reflect a focus on top-priority pandemic recovery economic development projects, and develop strategies to improve the region's economic resilience. The revised strategies and projects developed will provide the

initial content for the online CEDS 'storymap,' which will largely replace the existing report format that is in PDF.

C. FY22 Nominating Committee Report- Slate Presented

Mr. Johnson reported the nominating committee comprised of Mr. Maslaney, Mr. Law, and Ms. Anderson proposed the following slate for their term to begin on July 1, 2020, for a one-year duration. The slate will be voted upon during the Commission's regularly scheduled June meeting.

The nominations include:

Chair: Mike Maslaney, Floyd County

Vice-Chair: Hil Johnson, Town of Christiansburg

Treasurer: Leon Law, Giles County

At-Large: Angie Covey, New River Community College

At-Large: Steve Fijalkowski, Montgomery County

At-Large: Catherine Potter, Virginia Tech

Past Chair: Mike Harvey, Montgomery County

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 pm.

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M. Maslaney, Chair  
New River Valley Regional Commission