

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
March 25, 2021
6:00 p.m.— Hybrid Meeting via Zoom/In-person

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Maslaney, Chair, called the meeting 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. A. Covey, New River Community College; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County and Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech.

PRESENT (zoom): 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; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Ms. M. Sachs, Town of Christiansburg and Ms. S. Thwaites, Town of Narrows and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. J. Coleman, Floyd County; Mr. T. Clontz, Town of Pulaski; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. William Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; and Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Julie Phillips and Jennifer Wilsie

Other Attendees: Jim Drader and Mel Jones

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. Law moved for the approval of the policy. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for February

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

Motion: Ms. Potter moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

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

Motion: Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch moved for the approval of the Treasurer’s Reports. Ms. Sachs 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
 - 1. Radford University Acquisition of Property for Campus Expansion

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

VI. CHAIR’S REPORT

Mr. Maslaney reported the website, www.improve81.org, provides progress updates on the I-81 construction projects and you can sign-up via the website to receive a newsletter. He also shared an article about technology in California being utilized to 3-D print affordable housing.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. The American Rescue Plan was signed into law on March 11th. Counties, cities and towns will be receiving direct payments. Half of the total payment is anticipated to be received this fiscal year with the remaining half next fiscal year. Funds must be spent by December, 2024.

The NRV Passenger Rail regional committee cancelled the meeting scheduled for April 8th in hopes the Department of Rail and Public Transit and Norfolk Southern would have an announcement soon with respect to their ongoing negotiations.

The Business Continuity Team (BCT) continues to schedule vaccine appointments in support of the New River Health District. Last week the Commission executed a contract with a firm to deploy an automated vaccine appointment scheduling system. The platform will launch March 29th.

Starting the week of March 29th there will be large regional vaccine clinics at the Dedmon Center at Radford University.

The Regional + Local Housing Study is in final draft form. Following the presentation at the Commission meeting any remaining edits will be incorporated before public release of the final version.

The Berkley Group was selected to complete a Wage and Compensation Analysis for the Commission which will be presented to the Executive Committee in May to help inform the FY22 agency budget.

The local government managers continue to meet twice a week. They are continuing the discussion of establishing a regional cigarette tax board that could assist with administering cigarette tax locally.

James Jones will be leaving the Commission on April 15th after four and one-half years of service. He started as an intern, was promoted to a full-time position and is leaving as a Planner II. As a result of James' departure, the Commission will be hiring a Regional Planner. The position advertisement is on the website.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Maslaney reported the Town of Floyd approved funds for the town's outdoor music series for this summer. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch added the population of Floyd County is one-third vaccinated.

Ms. Sachs reported that several areas of the Huckleberry Trail in Christiansburg and Montgomery County were vandalized recently. The towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg along with Montgomery County are closely monitoring the situation and responding quickly to remove any damage.

Dr. Joyner reported Dr. Carolyn Ringer Lepre will serve as interim President of Radford University and Dr. Joyner will serve as interim Chief of Staff. The Highlander Hotel construction is underway with an anticipated completion date of 2022. Construction will begin soon for the Center for Adaptive Innovation and Creativity to replace Porterfield and McGuffy halls with an anticipated completion date of 2023. A late April commencement date is scheduled for both the classes of 2020 and 2021. Vaccinations are anticipated prior to commencement for students and staff/faculty. Exit COVID testing will occur for all students at the end of the semester. Funds have been allocated to Radford University-Carilion to help reduce student tuition in high demand fields.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2021 Regional Commission Awards

Mr. Byrd explained the voting process and nominee information was included in the packet. The Commission then voted for the award recipients. Mr. Byrd will be contacting the award recipients to notify them that they will be recognized for their contributions to the region.

B. Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan

Mr. Byrd explained the Commission is required to have a Title VI Non-Discrimination Plan as a recipient of federal funds through VDOT. The plan included in the packet was reviewed by VDOT and it meets all requirements.

Motion: Mr. Harvey moved for the approval of the resolution as amended. Ms. Potter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. NRV Revolving Loan Fund Committee Appointees

Mr. Byrd explained the nominees were included in the packet. The Pulaski County nominee has been confirmed and is Vanessa Dobbins from Atlantic Union Bank.

Motion: Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch moved for the approval of the nominees to serve on the NRV Revolving Loan Fund Committee. Ms. Potter seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

D. Regional + Local Housing Study – Final Report

Ms. Wilsie and Ms. Jones presented the Regional + Local Housing Study findings and regional strategy recommendations. A full detailed report and long-form regional and local strategies will be released at the end of the month.

Mr. Maslaney called to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm.

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission