

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
November 18, 2021
6:00 p.m.— Pulaski County Innovation Center, Fairlawn

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. C. Bopp, Pulaski County; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Ms. M. Sachs, Town of Christiansburg and Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County.

ABSENT: Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. J. Ballard, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. T. Clontz, Town of Pulaski; Mr. J. Coleman, Floyd County; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County; Mr. T. Franklin, Radford University; Mr. William Kantsios, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech and Ms. S. Thwaites, Town of Narrows.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Julie Phillips and Joy Rumley.

Other Attendees: Amy Slone

III. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes for September
Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken.
- B. Approval of Treasurer's Report for September and October
Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

- A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)
None
- B. Regular Project Review
None
- C. Environmental Project Review
 - 1. Implementation of Master Planning Actions at the Industrial Core District, Radford Army Ammunition Plant, Virginia
 - 2. Virginia Tech Baseball New Pitching Lab

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Maslaney reported three members will be transitioning off the board. He thanked Ms. Sachs, Mr. Coleman, and Mr. Ballard for their service to the board. Ms. Sachs was presented a plaque in appreciation of her service. Mr. Coleman and Mr. Ballard will receive their plaques in the mail since they were not able to attend the November meeting.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Commission agenda packet. The Regional Commission's broadband application to the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) program covering Bland, Montgomery and Pulaski counties received a challenge to certain areas by an incumbent internet service provider. Responses to the challenge were due 11/18 with responses from the state scheduled for 12/3. Announcement of project awards is anticipated in late December.

The NRV Revolving Loan Fund committee will have their first meeting on December 6th. This will be an opportunity to orient the committee to the program and discuss recapitalization opportunities through US-Economic Development Administration and US Dept of Agriculture-Rural Development.

The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority organization documents are being adopted by the future members. So far the City of Radford, Montgomery County, Town of Christiansburg, and the Town of Pulaski have taken action while other local governments have the item scheduled. Radford University and Virginia Tech plan to discuss it at their respective upcoming Board of Visitors meetings.

The Valley to Valley Trail project is soliciting public input through December 1st.

The Business Continuity Team (BCT) is working closely with Cowan Perry on providing legal summaries of vaccine mandates for employers with more than 100 employees. The topic is currently moving quickly in the court system. The BCT is also supporting employer vaccination clinics along with youth clinics since 5 to 11 year olds are now eligible.

The Regional Commission held the annual dinner event on October 28th at Moon Hollow Brewing. By all accounts the event went smoothly as the award recipients were celebrated and guests enjoyed visiting with each other for the first time since before the pandemic.

The Federal Reserve Bank is releasing a book, Investing in Rural Prosperity. Mr. Byrd was invited to be a contributing author for a chapter entitled, Breaking Down Friday Night Rivalries: Strengthening Regional Governance Structures to Facilitate Collaboration.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported Floyd County is working on a Habitat for Humanity project and has several houses being remodeled or rebuilt through a Community Development Block Grant scattered site housing grant project.

Mr. Horton reported the City of Radford has holiday decorations set up and the city plans to keep the Winterfest decorations up until February.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Warm Hearth Village Presentation

Ms. Slone provided an update on Warm Hearth Village. Warm Hearth is a dynamic community with several living options such as independent living, assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing, long-term nursing, and home health. There are also low-to-moderate incoming housing options. Officially incorporated in 1974, Warm Hearth Village has been an integral part and valued partner of the New River Valley Community for more than 46 years.

B. Regional Economic Development Program Update

Ms. Rumley provided an overview presentation of the Regional Commission's economic development program. NRVRC staff have been working to put the final touches on the Economic Recovery Plan which will be incorporated into the Regional Economic Strategy. The updated RES (formerly CEDS) will be complete, along with top priority projects and a complete local project list, in the spring of 2022. The new Regional Commission website is expected to roll out in January/February 2022. This website will include an updated Data Dashboard, a tool that is useful to local economic development professionals, grant writers and non-profits in the region.

Staff is also identifying project recommendations for the Economic Recovery Plan that are eligible to apply for a US EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance grant. This program can fund implementation of regional recovery projects.

Several localities have requested Regional Commission assistance with administration of their American Recovery Plan Act Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Staff are staying current with the federal regulations, guidance and reporting requirements.

Ms. Rumley explained the staff is researching options to recapitalize the New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund, which serves small businesses in the region.

C. Setting FY23 Per Capita Assessment Rate

Mr. Byrd explained the current assessment rate is \$1.29 per capita based on estimates from the Weldon Cooper Center from the 2010 census. An increase of three cents to a rate of \$1.32 is recommended by the Executive Committee since the 2020 census reflects an overall

decrease in population from the projections made by Weldon Cooper Center utilizing the 2010 census. This rate provides slightly above level funding with \$978.45 more than the current assessment rate.

Due to a lack of quorum no action was taken. Mr. Maslaney explained that the FY23 rate needs to be set prior to December for deadlines associated with the Joint Budget Review process. Because this is due before the full board will meet, he directed Mr. Byrd to use the rate of \$1.32 as recommended by the Executive Committee.

D. Next Commission Meeting

Mr. Byrd explained the December Commission meeting is historically cancelled due to holiday conflicts.

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

M. Maslaney, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission