

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
November 17, 2022
6:00 p.m.— Pulaski County Innovation Center, Fairlawn

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

PRESENT: Mr. H. Johnson, Town of Christiansburg, Chair; Mr. S. Fijalkowski, Montgomery County, Vice-Chair; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. D. Breslau, Town of Blacksburg; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. M. Harvey, Montgomery County; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech and Ms. C. Potter, Virginia Tech.

ABSENT: Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. C. Clark, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Mr. M. Patton, Town of Floyd; Mr. M. Reis, Town of Pulaski; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows; Dr. D. Warren, Pulaski County and Mr. T Wilson, Town of Christiansburg.

Staff Attendees: Kim Bonner, Kevin Byrd, Julie Phillips, and Jennifer Wilsie

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for September

Mr. Johnson 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 minutes. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for September and October

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

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

Action: Motion carried.

IV. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

1. Holiday Inn Christiansburg - Debt financing from USDA Rural Development

B. Regular Project Review

None

V. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Johnson reported the annual dinner held October 27th had a great turnout of around 100 guests.

VII. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) received a loan payoff from Sweet & Savory Donuts in Radford. Currently, the RLF has two loan participants with businesses in Christiansburg and Floyd.

The VATI 2022 broadband implementation project in Pulaski County had a budget modification. A contract with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is expected by the end of November. The Montgomery/Bland portion of the project is awaiting final determination by the State Corporation Commission which is scheduled for December 6th.

Regional Commission staff assisted the Town of Narrows with two applications to the Industrial Revitalization Fund program with DHCD and served an advisory role for the Town of Christiansburg and Floyd County on their applications.

The NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority will hold their second meeting on November 30th at 10:00am at the Pulaski County Innovation Center. The agenda will focus on determining staffing, legal services, and reviewing draft bylaws.

The NRV Metropolitan Planning Organization approved a task order last week with the Regional Commission to update the Passenger Rail Station Ownership and Operations Report. This will enable Regional Commission staff to support the development of the authority's policy documents such as bylaws and provides funds to secure preliminary engineering services to represent the authority on site development. Procurement for engineering is likely to take place in the spring.

VDOT project updates include: I-81 New River bridge is scheduled for Summer '23 completion; Exit 114 Park & Ride lot is in the design stage; US Route 460 "big dip" section will receive safety improvements to include shoulder widening, rumble strips, and guardrail.

The New River Water Trail Expansion project was funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission with POWER funds for coal impacted communities. The \$1.5 million grant will be matched by local government funds and in-kind resources. The project will construct/improve four boat launches to include Giles County below McCoy Falls, Whitethorn expanded parking in Montgomery County, Pulaski County's Sheffey Park new launch, and a paddle craft launch in Bissett Park.

Kim Bonner was recently hired for our Regional Planner/Communications role. Kim has a strong design background and will lend her talents to many projects across the organization. She will be supporting the Ride Solutions program and development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan while

providing graphic design for several other projects. Interviews were held recently for the Project Manager-Infrastructure position and we hope to have a candidate confirmed soon.

VIII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Mr. Fijalkowski reported the New River Valley Revolving Loan Fund has around \$47K to loan out. He also shared a recent report of a PFAS material leak discovered by the Western Virginia Water Authority in a local waterway.

Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch reported she attended the VACO regional meeting. Floyd will hold many holiday events; they will have a holiday light and gingerbread contest and a tree lighting ceremony. The county economic development department recently completed the C-4 small business challenge program with several county-based businesses receiving awards.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

None

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Regional Housing Trust Fund Program Overview

Ms. Wilsie provided an update about the Regional Housing Trust Fund Program. A housing trust fund is a locally controlled funding pool purpose-built to provide a reliable funding stream for housing activities. Funding can come from public and/or private sources, and the Commission anticipates pursuing both. The funding can be used by developers and service providers to build or preserve affordable homes and to deliver many different types of housing assistance. Funding priorities and programmatic requirements are created locally, typically as an additional leverage source, and can provide a means of funding for project components currently ineligible for more commonly used state and federal funding sources such as Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds.

To assist with the planning process, the Commission has created a small Technical Team of six regional partners as well as a larger 25-member Oversight Board of regional stakeholders comprised of local government staff, lenders, realtors, nonprofit housing organizations, universities, health care institutions, and more. The Oversight Board held its kickoff meeting in early November and will meet monthly to review and evaluate critical decision points for the creation of the fund. It is important to note an entity's participation in the Oversight Board does not obligate them to make a financial commitment, but each participant is aware of the critical role ongoing funding will play in the long-term sustainability of the fund.

As a means of providing long-term organizational structure for the Housing Fund, the Commission is exploring the creation of a 501(c)(3) arm. A non-profit arm could be structured broadly, serving not just a housing-specific purpose, but other initiatives in which the Commission may choose to participate. Commission staff have had preliminary conversations internally, with the Commission's auditor, and with the Executive Committee.

The Commission aims to have a completed pilot program design and Request for Proposals ready by late summer of 2023. After selecting the winning proposal(s), it is estimated that construction of housing units will be complete in 2026.

B. Setting FY24 Per Capita Assessment Rate (Dues)

Mr. Byrd explained the current assessment rate is \$1.32 per capita based on estimates from the 2020 census. The Executive Committee is recommending keeping the FY24 proposed rate of \$1.32, which is level from last fiscal year. The Commission typically adjusts the rate every two years, and this would be the second year of a level rate. Next year, the Commission may choose to adjust the rate, or reinstitute utilizing Weldon Cooper Center population estimates.

Mr. Johnson called for approval of the FY24 Per Capita Assessment Rate to be set at \$1.32.

Motion: Ms. Anderson moved for the approval of the FY24 rate at \$1.32. Ms. DeVito Kuchenbuch seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

C. December Commission Meeting.

Motion: Ms. Covey moved for the approval of canceling the December Meeting due to the holiday conflict.

Ms. Martin seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission