

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES
of the
August 22, 2019 Meeting

held at the
Commission Office
1100 Madison Street, Martinsville, VA
at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY
Leland Mitchell

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY
Ron Searce
Greg Sides

HENRY COUNTY
Jim Adams, Chairman
Tommy Slaughter
Wes George

DANVILLE
Fred Shanks
Lee Vogler

PATRICK COUNTY
Rickie Fulcher, Vice-Chairman
Jerry Adams

MARTINSVILLE
Kathy Lawson, Treasurer
Jennifer Bowles

ROCKY MOUNT
None

ABSENT

Tim Tatum, Franklin County
Karl Weiss, Patrick County
Ben Farmer, Pittsylvania County
Joe Martin, Martinsville
Ralph Casey, Rocky Mount

STAFF

David R. Hoback, Executive Director
Leah Manning, Deputy Director
Jacob Bullins, Administrative Assistant
Joe Bonanno, Regional Planner

GUESTS

Deborah Gosney, Southside Planning District Commission
Valerie Warner, U.S. Census Bureau
Peggy Hurley, U.S. Census Bureau
Jeffrey Cummings, Franklin County

1. Call to Order and Welcome to Guests

The Chairman established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He introduced and welcomed new Board member, Lee Vogler, representing the City of Danville; Deborah Gosney visiting from neighboring Southside PDC; Jeff Cummings from Franklin County, and Valerie Warner and Peggy Hurley from the U.S. Census Bureau.

2. Regional Forum Opportunity - Comments from the Public

There were none.

3. Consent Agenda

a. Confirmation of Minutes of the May 23, 2019 Meeting—WPPDC/M(19)3

b. Treasurer's Report: May 31, 2019—WPPDC/P(19)29

c. Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process – June, July, August 2019—WPPDC/P(19)30

d. Quarterly Report of Activities: State Data Affiliate Center & VEC Business & Industry Data Center Programs - Fourth Quarter, FY 2019—WPPDC/P(19)31

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda items as presented.

4. Points Arising from Previous Meetings

There were none.

5. Presentation by Ms. Valerie Warner, U.S. Census Bureau

Ms. Warner, accompanied by Ms. Hurley from the U.S. Census Bureau, presented an overview of the Census and the Bureau's Complete Count Committee program to assist counties and cities in obtaining an accurate population count. Ms. Warner provided some statistical information, noting that \$2,000 is lost for each uncounted person over the 10-year period (decennial census). She also addressed historically undercounted populations. In addition, Ms. Warner and Ms. Hurley answered questions from the Board.

The Executive Director added that the PDC would be happy to provide Census-related training space, if needed or requested.

THE BOARD:

Noted this information and thanked the presenters.

6. Discussion of Legislative Letter Review for Upcoming General Assembly—WPPDC/P(19)32

The Executive Director provided an overview of the 2019 legislative program and letter that was included in the Board package. He noted that staff wanted to give the Board, local administrators and officials sufficient time to review and comment on any modifications, requesting that Board members provide additional input in the coming weeks to include any changes, deletions, etc. He recommended that the same format be continued – being concise with only one to two pages, narrow in scope, and much more focused on priorities of regional significance. The Executive Director made note of some potential items to be added, following discussion by the Board.

THE BOARD:

Discussed potential items of interest and noted this information.

7. WPPDC Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report prepared for VA Department of Housing and Community Development in accordance with the Regional Cooperation Act, Code of Virginia—WPPDC/P(19)33

The Executive Director acknowledged that the PDC annually prepared this report for the VA Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), as required by the Virginia Regional Cooperation Act. He explained that this was an overview of PDC staff highlights, and that the report would be submitted to DHCD in order for the Commission to receive the annual funding of approximately \$75,000. This report covered the various work elements undertaken by the PDC during the fiscal year and was reconfigured in a new table format.

THE BOARD:

Noted the report.

8. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW: City of Danville Brownfields Grant Application to EPA for Community-wide Brownfields Assessment Project—WPPDC/P(19)34

The Executive Director advised that the City of Danville was applying for a \$300,000 EPA Brownfields grant to assist with environmental assessments at former industrial sites in the City. He indicated that the assessments would occur primarily in the Schoolfield and River District areas for potential redevelopment. Staff recommended

the Board make favorable comment since the project was consistent with the Regional CEDS and other PDC priorities.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to make favorable comment on the proposed EPA Brownfields project. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make favorable comment on the proposed project.

9. Consideration of Letter of Support for Franklin County Virginia Telecommunications Initiative Grant Application—WPPDC/P(19)35

The Executive Director mentioned Franklin County had requested a letter of support for its VATI grant application. The funding would provide assistance to improve broadband coverage and internet access in remote, underserved areas of the County. The Deputy Director noted this was a multi-phased project in partnership with Blue Ridge Towers, Mid-Atlantic Broadband, and Shentel to expand the service area.

Mr. Shanks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to provide a letter of support and make favorable comment on the proposed broadband project. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to provide a letter of support and make favorable comment on the proposed VATI project.

10. Consideration of Letter of Support for Patrick County Virginia Telecommunications Initiative Grant Application —WPPDC/P(19)36

The Executive Director reported that Patrick County also had requested a letter of support for the VATI grant application in the amount of \$1 million to assist with fixed wireless service in the communities of Patrick Springs, Meadows of Dan, and Woolwine. He added that Patrick County was working with RiverStreet Communications and this also would be a multi-phased project to enhance broadband service in the County.

Mr. Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Lawson, to provide a letter of support and make favorable comment on the proposed VATI project. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to provide a letter of support and make favorable comment on the proposed VATI project.

11. Updates and Reports on WPPDC Regional Projects/Staff Activities Related to:

a. Danville MPO Consultant-led Studies/Projects

The Executive Director summarized the four major planning efforts in progress for the MPO. The first was the five-year update of the Long-Range Transportation Plan for the Year 2045, in conjunction with the consulting firm of EPR. He noted the update was in progress, with completion targeted for August 2020. The Executive Director stated the second project, also in partnership with EPR, was an update of the U.S. 58 West Access Management Study to address safety and access management along the corridor from west of Piedmont Drive to the Brosville area. The expected completion of this study would be early 2020. A third related MPO project was the VDOT STARS study on Riverside Drive in Danville, which would address the U.S. 58 corridor between Main Street and Piedmont Drive, and focus on safety and access management as well as pedestrian accessibility. Lastly, the fourth MPO project included update of the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for FY 2021 to 2024. He reported that staff was working with VDOT Central Office to update the document that would be incorporated into the statewide TIP; a draft would be completed by the end of the calendar year.

b. Martinsville Southern Connector Environmental Impact Study

The Executive Director indicated that VDOT had been working in conjunction with Henry County, PDC staff, FHWA, and other state and federal agencies on the Martinsville Southern Connector EIS for the past year. The study included an environmental impact analysis for the proposed U.S. 220 connection on a new alignment between the NC state line and the existing U.S. 58 Bypass, just south of Martinsville. In performing the study, VDOT arrived at three alternatives, with Alternative C being the recommended route since it would have the least environmental impact. The Executive Director advised a public hearing was held in August, with nearly 300 people in attendance. He added that the next major steps would be a public hearing for the draft EIS to take place in early 2020, a final public review of the EIS in December 2020, and the Corps of Engineers expected to take final action on environmental permitting in February 2021.

c. VTRANS 2045 (Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan)

The Executive Director discussed the VTRANS 2045 statewide transportation plan currently underway and encouraged everyone with an interest to engage in the update process. He mentioned that PDC staff had attended a workshop in Danville where key transportation projects and needs in the region had been advocated. Further, he provided contact information for the VTRANS effort, noting the importance of the process which would determine future Smart Scale funding and other sources that were directly linked to needs identified in VTRANS.

d. Ride Solutions Program

Mr. Bonanno updated the Board regarding the Ride Solutions program, noting that new ads had been placed on billboards along Routes 29 and 220, and via social media. He advised that staff had met with several employers in the region, including Monogram Foods in May, Radial in June, and Results in July where 40 people had signed up for the service. He planned to reach out to more employers in the coming weeks. Mr. Bonanno also reported that he recently attended the ACT (Association for Commuter Transportation) Conference and gained valuable information for future possibilities that may be considered for the region.

e. Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan

Mr. Bonanno reviewed the top 5 project rankings for each locality in the region, following the most recent analysis he had conducted. He provided an overview of the next steps to include confirmation of the rankings from the local government planners along with any recommendations, project recommendations to be formulated in conjunction with VDOT staff, and development of two lists for the plan – one for prioritized short-term projects to be implemented within the next 5 years or so and a vision list for future projects.

f. VIP Investment Pool Update

The Executive Director recalled that earlier in the year the Board decided to invest PDC funds with the Virginia Investment Pool (VIP). A report summary through June 2019 was provided in the Board packet. He gave a more detailed accounting of the funds and noted that staff had been pleased with the investment to date.

g. VACo Region 10 & 11 Meeting

The Executive Director announced that the Virginia Association of Counties would be holding its pre-legislative session for regions 10 and 11 on August 29th at New College Institute in Martinsville. He noted the meeting was being hosted by Henry County and encouraged attendance since the sessions would be particularly informative for local government members.

h. Upcoming Staff Travel

The Executive Director specified upcoming travel for staff, noting an Appalachian Regional Commission conference in Asheville, NC on September 4th through the 6th, and the annual Governor's Rural Prosperity Summit to be held in Blacksburg on September 23rd and 24th. The sessions had always been most informative and provided great networking opportunities.

i. WPPDC 50th Anniversary Event

The Executive Director acknowledged that March 2020 would mark the 50th anniversary of the WPPDC. He discussed options to commemorate the anniversary with a banquet-style dinner and invitation of past officers and staff to take part. He also suggested having a guest speaker and welcomed any input from the Board.

j. 2020 CEDS Process

The Deputy Director reported that the PDC would initiate the 2020 update of the CEDS document with an October 3rd input session with regional stakeholders. She indicated that Mr. Douglas Jackson with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development would facilitate and welcomed Board members to attend.

k. FY 2019 Audit

The Executive Director advised that the PDC staff had been preparing financial records in anticipation of the auditor's visit in September and that the audit should be complete by the end of September. He noted that, once again, the firm of Dunham, Aukamp and Rhodes had been selected to conduct the audit. The audit report would be presented at the upcoming October Board meeting.

l. Regional On-Call Consulting Program

The Executive Director informed the Board that the PDC had entered into the 12th on-call consulting contract this year, with the City of Danville being the most recent. He reported that the service had been successful in assisting many localities in moving projects forward in an expeditious manner.

m. Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) 2020 Grant Round

The Executive Director announced that the annual grant applications through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) would be due in January 2020. He indicated there may be several potential applicants for this round and that other applicants may come forward. Further, he noted that ARC would entertain applications for both housing and childcare as they relate to economic development. This was in light of Martinsville and Henry County's recent efforts to advance these issues. He acknowledged that the PDC stood ready to assist with any ARC project applications and that a how-to-apply workshop would be held in the fall.

THE BOARD:

Noted these informational reports.

12. Other Business and Reports

The Executive Director advised that a Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) meeting would be held the next day, with participating VDOT staff and local government planners. He also reminded the attendees that the next Board meeting would be October 24, 2019.

The Chairman presented resolutions of appreciation in recognition of both Bryce Simmons of Patrick County and David Thorp of Franklin County for their dedicated service on the Board of Commissioners.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to approve the resolutions. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted to approve the resolutions of appreciation for Mr. Bryce Simmons and Mr. David Thorp.

13. Comments from Commissioners

There were none.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:19 p.m.



David R. Hoback
Executive Director

Attachments