

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

of the
February 27, 2020 Meeting

held at the
Commonwealth Centre for Advanced Training
870 Commonwealth Crossing Parkway, Ridgeway, VA
at 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY

None

DANVILLE

Fred Shanks
Lee Vogler
Kimberly Walker

HENRY COUNTY

Jim Adams, Chairman
Tommy Slaughter
Wes George

MARTINSVILLE

Kathy Lawson, Treasurer
Ronikka Hannans

PATRICK COUNTY

Clayton Kendrick
Clyde DeLoach

ROCKY MOUNT

Ralph Casey

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Greg Sides

ABSENT

Leland Mitchell, Franklin County
Tim Tatum, Franklin County
Jerry Adams, Patrick County
Ron Searce, Vice-Chairman, Pittsylvania County
Vic Ingram, Pittsylvania County
Jennifer Bowles, Martinsville

STAFF

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

GUEST

Mark Heath, President/CEO, Martinsville Henry County Economic Development Corporation
Kim Barto-Meeks, Martinsville Bulletin

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Awaiting the presence of a quorum, the Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Introductions were made and everyone was welcomed.

2. Presentation and Facility Tour by Mr. Mark Heath, President/CE, Martinsville Henry County Economic Development Corporation

Mr. Heath provided an overview of the Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre and the meeting facility, Commonwealth Centre for Advanced Training.

3. Regional Forum Opportunity – Comments from the Public

There were none. However, Mrs. Barto-Meeks from the Martinsville Bulletin was introduced and in attendance to learn more about the early childcare education item on the agenda.

4. Consent Agenda:

a) **Confirmation of Minutes of the December 5, 2019 Meeting—WPPDC/M(19)6**

b) **Treasurer’s Report – November 30, 2019—WPPDC/P(20)1 and December 31, 2019—WPPDC/P(20)2**

c) **WPPD Quarterly Report of Activities: State Data Affiliate Center and VEC Labor Market Info Service Programs – 2nd Quarter FY 2020—WPPDC/P(20)4**

d) **Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process – January/February 2020--WPPDC/P(20)5**

With no questions or comments regarding the Consent Agenda items, Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Shanks, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

5. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEWS: (Federal Transit Administration Grant Applications–Section 5310):

a) **Applicant: Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services, Danville, VA**

Project: Purchase of Two Vehicles for City of Danville and Pittsylvania County--WPPDC/P(20)6

Description: \$80,000 total cost (\$64,000, with 20 percent local match of \$16,000) to purchase two modified minivans with wheelchair ramps to provide transportation for developmentally disabled clients in the Danville-Pittsylvania County area for medical appointments or other agency-related activities.

Comments: The Executive Director presented application information.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to make favorable comment on the application. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make favorable comment on each of the applications.

b) **Applicant: West Piedmont Planning District Commission, Martinsville, VA**

Project: Ride Solutions Program – Intent to Apply for Transportation Demand Management Operating Assistance, FY 2021--WPPDC/P(20)7; Resolution WPPDC 2020-1

Description: The application was submitted for \$66,000 to provide Transportation Demand Management operating assistance under the Ride Solutions initiative. The funding would assist in supporting activities of the PDC to implement the Ride Solutions program across the district.

Comments: The Executive Director reviewed application information and discussed the need for assistance. He noted there were two parts to this discussion. First, he requested the Board consider an accompanying resolution for intent to apply for the TDM operating assistance and to provide the required 20% matching funds in the amount of \$13,200. The second portion requested the Board conduct an intergovernmental review for the proposed project.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to approve Resolution 2020-1 to authorize staff to submit the TDM application and to provide the 20% match. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Shanks made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to make favorable comment on the project application. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve Resolution 2020-1, authorizing staff to submit the TDM application, to provide matching funds, and to make favorable comment on the proposed TDM project.

6. INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEWS: (Appalachian Regional Commission Grant Application)

a) **Applicant: The Harvest Foundation, Martinsville, VA**

Project: Workforce Foundations: Advancing Early Childhood Education in Martinsville and Henry County--WPPDC/P(20)8

Description: Application was for a \$201,880 ARC grant, with \$80,083 in matching funds provided by the Harvest Foundation, to increase workforce training for early childhood education providers and aid in expanding the number of early childhood education businesses. This effort would assist in training 30

individuals, create at least 15 new jobs and 6 new childcare businesses, and create 50 new openings for infants, extended hours care, and special needs care in Martinsville and Henry County. Collaborative partners included United Way, Smart Beginnings, Patrick Henry Community College, and Longwood Small Business Development Center.

Comments: The Executive Director provided application information, noting the project would improve the regional workforce and advance economic development by addressing one of the barriers to employment in the region. Further, it would benefit employers by retaining skilled workers and reducing turnover rates, and provide parents/workers with reliable, quality childcare.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to make favorable comment on the application. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make favorable comment on this application.

7. Establishment of Regional Priorities for the Virginia Community Development Block Grant Program, Year 2020 at Request of Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development—WPPDC/P(20)9; Resolution WPPDC 2020-2

On an annual basis, DHCD requested that the PDC solicit input from the member localities for development of the region's CDBG Priority List. Based on responses received, staff developed a list of priorities and accompanying resolution for consideration of the Board. The Executive Director explained the various categories and rankings, and discussed potential projects. Upon approval, the resolution and list would be forwarded to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee had voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the resolution/priority list as presented by the Executive Director, with the authority to change to accommodate any potential projects that may surface prior to submission to DHCD.

Mr. DeLoach made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Lawson, to approve the 2020 resolution/priority list as presented, with the authority to change to accommodate any potential projects that may surface prior to submission to DHCD. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve the resolution/priority list for 2020 as presented for submission to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, with the authority to change to accommodate any potential projects that may surface prior to submission to DHCD. [A copy of the resolution and approved priority list are attached.]

8. US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

• **Distribution of 2020 Draft Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)**

The Deputy Director presented the draft 2020 CEDS document, noting that the 30-day public review period had begun with notices published in local newspapers, distribution of the CEDS for public display at local government administrative offices and local libraries in the region, and posting on the PDC's website. She reviewed the various changes with the latest edition, highlighting the new "Regional Spotlight" document which replaced the former "Looking Forward" supplement from 2019. The 2020 CEDS would be on the March Board agenda for consideration of approval at the next meeting. She recognized the CEDS Committee Chair, Ms. Bowles, who was unable to attend, but also acknowledged the important work of both the Working Committee and the CEDS Committee as well as PDC staff members who had assisted in the process.

• **Review of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Performance Measures in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration—WPPDC/P(20)10**

As part of the PDC's Planning Grant, EDA's CEDS development process required the document to include performance measures as a means of benchmarking tasks and activities. Included in the Board package were the "Program Evaluation for April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020" and "Implementation Plan for April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021." This information would be included in the 2020 CEDS document for submission to EDA in March.

Mr. Vogler made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Lawson, to approve the "Program Evaluation for April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020" and "Implementation Plan for April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021" for submission to EDA with the 2020 CEDS document as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve the "Program Evaluation for April 1, 2019 – March 31, 2020" and "Implementation Plan for April 1, 2020 – March 31, 2021" for submission to EDA with the 2020 CEDS document.

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

a) **Danville-Pittsylvania MPO Update**

The Executive Director reviewed the ongoing activities of the Danville MPO consultant-led projects utilizing the on-call consulting firm EPR, noting the two projects to include the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan update - a comprehensive, multimodal plan with two major components being a Constrained project list and a Vision list (projected needs); the second being an update of the Route 58 West access management study first conducted in 2012. He indicated the Long-Range Plan required an update every 5 years; it was last updated in 2015 and would be completed by August 2020. For the access management study, the Executive Director pointed out the focus on safety, with an emphasis on traffic access management issues related to median openings and multiple commercial property entrances. He noted the draft plan was nearing completion and anticipated recommendations

from the study would be future Smart Scale applications later this year.

b) Smart Scale Update

The Executive Director briefed the Board regarding the Smart Scale process for the upcoming round. He acknowledged an upcoming Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) meeting in March with attendance by VDOT staff to assist in the application process. He advised Smart Scale pre-applications would be due in early April, with an August 1st deadline for completion and submittal of full project applications. He also indicated that staff had nearly completed the Regional Rural Long-range Transportation Plan update which would serve as an invaluable resource for localities to utilize for potential Smart Scale applications. The Executive Director noted the completed Plan would be presented to the Board at the March meeting for consideration of approval. Further, he mentioned that the Danville MPO was still evaluating potential project applications in consultation with VDOT.

c) Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan

The Regional Planner, Mr. Bonanno, provided an overview of the Regional Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan update in conjunction with VDOT and local government staffs. He discussed the various data elements analyzed in the update process and explained some of the rankings utilized for recommended projects. He noted the top 20 projects were listed as priorities, with additional projects incorporated in a vision list for future transportation needs. Mr. Bonanno informed the Board that the Plan would be complete in early spring; the Executive Director added that the Plan would be presented to the Board for final approval at a future meeting.

d) FHWA Danville TDM Workshop

Mr. Bonanno reminded the Board that, as part of the Ride Solutions program, he had attended an Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT) conference last year, where he learned about a technical assistance opportunity through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). He contacted FHWA regarding the training to integrate emerging mobility transportation into the transportation system and incorporate this into the MPO's Long-range Transportation Plan. He noted this included bike-ped opportunities such as a bike-share program and others that could serve Danville. He reported that FHWA staff had agreed to hold a workshop in Danville on March 5th, and invited all to attend.

e) Martinsville Southern Connector

The Executive Director referenced the information regarding the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Martinsville Southern Connector from Route 220 at the North Carolina line to the existing Route 58 Bypass in Henry County. He acknowledged that there were safety issues, heavy truck traffic, and some traffic congestion along the corridor. He advised that VDOT had been conducting the study over the last 18 months and presented the draft recommendations to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) on January 15th, when it was approved by the CTB. He mentioned a draft EIS would be issued on March 6th and a public hearing would be held by VDOT on March 26th at Drewry Mason Elementary School in Ridgeway. He further indicated that an interagency process would continue through the remainder of this year, with a February 2021 forecast for a concurrent Record of Decision by FHWA and the issuance of the required permits by applicable state and federal agencies.

f) WPPDC Work Program Activities Report – January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2019

The Executive Director provided an overview of the Work Program Activities Report for calendar year 2019, which was distributed to the member jurisdictions at the end of the year to update them on work undertaken by the Commission staff. The report was for informational purposes to provide work items accomplished by staff during the past year.

g) VAPDC State Funding Request

The Executive Director noted that the West Piedmont PDC was a member of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC), which advances the mission and interests of the 21 planning districts in Virginia. He stated that one of the more recent efforts was being introduced in this year's General Assembly bills in both the House and the Senate to increase funding for all of Virginia's PDCs. He noted that if this were approved, each PDC would receive an additional \$14,000 annually or \$294,000 for the entire state. The Executive Director advised he would send contact information for the Conference Committee for Board members to advocate for the additional funding through the General Assembly. He added that, as he learned more, he would share the information at a later date.

h) Senior Planner Position Update

The Executive Director reminded the Board about their decision at the December meeting to seek applications in the interest of adding a senior planner who may potentially take a senior leadership position at a later date. However, he reported that the position had been advertised for 30 days with no qualified applicants. He recommended that staff re-evaluate the advertisement which had been listed in the Roanoke Times, the Richmond Times Dispatch, and the Greensboro News & Record. Additionally, he noted the job posting was listed with the VAPDC, VACo, VML and VPA, as well as the PDC website and on the local government sites. The Executive Director recommended modifying the job description and advertising again as an Associate Director/Senior Planner position to find a more competitive candidate field. It was the consensus of the Board to accept this recommendation.

i) Local Government Funding Requests

The Executive Director briefed the Board on an update of the local government funding requests, noting that each had been submitted in a timely manner and in advance of the deadline for each respective locality. He reiterated that level funding would be maintained for FY 2021.

j) Office Computer System Upgrades

The Executive Director reported that the PDC was in the process of upgrading office computer systems to stay current with IT issues; three had recently been updated from Windows 7 operating system to Windows 10. However, he stated that two systems were in need of complete replacement since they would not accommodate the Windows 10 upgrade and that staff would take care of this quickly.

k) WPPDC Meeting Schedule

The Chairman discussed the Board of Commissioners meeting schedule for the remainder of the calendar year, noting that other Committee meetings took place during the year for various activities such as the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and the CEDS Committees. The schedule was provided by the Executive Director.

THE BOARD:

Noted these informational reports.

10. Other Business and Reports

Several items were discussed under Other Business. First, the Chairman requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr. Heath to express the Commission's appreciation for the meeting accommodations at the CCAT facility and for Mr. Heath's assistance in coordinating with the PDC staff.

THE BOARD:

Noted this information.

Secondly, the Chairman recognized Mr. Ben Farmer of Pittsylvania County for his service to the Commission. Mr. Shanks made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeLoach, to approve the resolution of appreciation for Mr. Farmer and his dedicated service. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve the resolution of appreciation for Mr. Ben Farmer and his dedicated service to the Commission.

Next, the Deputy Director recognized Mr. Greg Sides for his work and dedicated service on the CEDS Committee from September 2013 to December 2019, when Mr. Sides retired from his position at Pittsylvania County. A Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Mr. Sides for his contributions to the CEDS Committee and the Commission. The Chairman also noted Mr. Sides' service on the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC) over the years.

THE BOARD:

Noted this information and thanked Mr. Sides for his service on the CEDS Committee and the TTAC.

The Deputy Director referenced Board Paper (20)11 in regard to the City of Martinsville's Pine Hall Neighborhood Rehabilitation project through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program application. She noted the City was requesting a letter of support for the \$1.25 million proposed project to rehabilitate approximately 15 single-family homes in the Pine Hall Neighborhood, improve infrastructure including installation of a T-turn, improving storm drainage, and potentially expand access to the City's high-speed Internet service, MiNet.

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

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make favorable comment on the proposed CDBG project.

Lastly, the Deputy Director acknowledged Franklin County's successful Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) application which was awarded in the amount of \$2.4 million. The PDC staff had provided the County with technical assistance for the application. The funding would assist in expanding broadband and internet service throughout the County in unserved and underserved areas. She noted this effort would also provide service to the County's Summit View Business Park.

The Executive Director also congratulated Patrick County on the successful VATI grant that was awarded to expand internet service. He acknowledged that staff had provided mapping and technical assistance on this application as well.

THE BOARD:

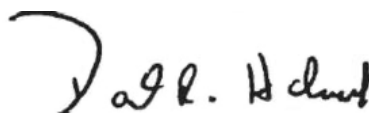
Noted this information.

11. Comments from the Commissioners

Mr. George questioned staff about the CEDS regarding the March meeting. He asked if the full document would be presented again, to which the Deputy Director responded that only any noteworthy changes would be brought before the Board at the next meeting – not the full CEDS document.

12. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



David R. Hoback
Executive Director