

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

of the
October 22, 2020 Meeting

held at the Commission Office
1100 Madison Street, Martinsville, VA

Or via

Zoom (Meeting ID 998 8093 8985, Passcode 922284)

(Call In Information 1-929-205-6099, 998 8093 8985#, 0#, 922284#)

(<https://zoom.us/j/99880938985?pwd=ZWJmSDh0Y0RuSkN3NmVFcVBGOGMzUT09>)

at 6:30 p.m.

PRESENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Leland Mitchell

David Rotenizer

HENRY COUNTY

Jim Adams, Chairman

Wes George, Henry County

PATRICK COUNTY

Jerry Adams

MARTINSVILLE

Jennifer Bowles

Ronikka Hannans

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Ron Scearce, Vice Chairman

Greg Sides

DANVILLE

Lee Vogler

Kimberly Walker

ROCKY MOUNT

Ralph Casey

ABSENT

Tim Tatum, Franklin County

Tommy Slaughter, Henry County

Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County

Clyde DeLoach, Patrick County

William "Vic" Ingram, Pittsylvania County

James Buckner, Danville

Kathy Lawson, Treasurer, Martinsville

STAFF

David R. Hoback, Executive Director

Michael Armbrister, Associate Director

Jacob Bullins, Administrative Assistant

Kathleen McEvoy, Grant Coordinator

David Rakes, Cartographer

GUESTS

Mark Rhodes, CPA, Dunham, Aukamp, & Rhodes, PLC



1. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME TO GUESTS

The Chairman established a quorum was present and called the Board meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He welcomed new staff member, Kathleen McEvoy, to the WPPDC and provided some details about her education and experience. Ms. McEvoy thanked the Chairman and stated she was excited about her new position as Grant Coordinator.

2. REGIONAL FORUM OPPORTUNITY—COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC

There were none.

3. POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There were no points from previous meetings.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

a. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 27, 2020 MEETING—WPPDC/M(20)5

b. TREASURER'S REPORT: JUNE 30, 2020—WPPDC/P(20)38

c. ACKNOWLEDGE REGISTER OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS UNDER THE VIRGINIA INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020—WPPDC/P(20)39

d. WPPDC QUARTERLY REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: STATE DATA AFFILIATE CENTER & VEC BUSINESS & INDUSTRY DATA CENTER PROGRAMS - FIRST QUARTER, FY 2021—WPPDC/P(21)40

Mr. George 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.

5. PRESENTATION OF THE AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE COMMISSION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020—MARK RHODES, CPA, DUNHAM, AUKAMP, & RHODES, PLC—WPPDC/P(20)41

The Planning District Commission, as a subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia, is required to conduct an annual audit of the Commission's finances and financial conditions, which can include matters such as compliance, internal control, schedule of revenue and expenses, schedules of allocated costs, fringe benefits, and federal financial assistance. A copy of the Auditor's Report of all Commission accounts for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020, as prepared by the Certified Public Accountant firm of Dunham, Aukamp, & Rhodes, PLC, was provided to the Board and reviewed by Mr. Rhodes. Detailed information regarding the audit was presented and noted that, in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards, there were no non-compliance issues related to the financial statements of the Commission. Mr. Rhodes reported the audit was "clean" and followed the regulations found under Government Auditing Standards Board Section 34 rules. Mr. Rhodes added that the PDC was fiscally sound and in a good position financially. The Executive Director asked Mr. Rhodes to explain pass through funds and why actual revenue and expenses were higher than originally budgeted.

The Chairman commended staff, especially Mr. Bullins, for the hard work to prepare for the audit.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Ms. Walker, to accept the Auditor's Report as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to accept the Auditor's Report for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020, as presented.

6. CONSIDERATION OF YEAR 2021 DRAFT ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM—WPPDC/P(20)42

The Executive Director provided an overview of the draft Legislative Letter, noting that this was an annual process and acknowledged that staff had contacted local government managers for input and reviewed

VACo and VML legislative agenda items for potential content. He discussed three changes to the 2021 letter and provided background information supporting those changes. The Executive Director explained a final change that was not included in the attached draft regarding opposition to a statewide solid waste tipping fee being studied by the Commonwealth. That change was recently suggested by Pittsylvania County.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board accept the 2021 Legislative Letter, as presented.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to accept the 2021 Legislative Letter, as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to accept the WPPDC legislative letter for the 2021 Virginia General Assembly, as presented. (Copy of final Legislative Letter attached.)

7. CONSIDERATION OF RE-ADOPTION OF WPPDC DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2021—WPPDC/P(20)43

As part of the Economic Development Administration planning grant anticipated for submission to EDA in 2021 by the PDC, a Certification of Drug-Free Workplace Requirements was needed as entailed by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988. In order to comply with the Act and to maintain an updated policy statement, the staff had reviewed the current policy statement and found no changes were required.

Mr. Vogler made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to re-adopt the WPPDC Drug-Free Workplace Policy Statement, as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to re-adopt the WPPDC Drug-Free Workplace Policy Statement for 2021, as presented.

8. CONSIDERATION OF RE-ADOPTION OF WPPDC AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN FOR 2021-WPPDC/P(20)44

The Executive Director also noted that, on an annual basis, the Commission staff is responsible for reviewing the PDC's Affirmative Action Plan and reporting to the Board any necessary changes and subsequently present a plan or revised plan for renewal adoption. Upon previous review of the document, it had been determined that no changes were necessary at this time.

Mr. Rotenizer made a motion, seconded by Ms. George, to re-adopt the WPPDC Affirmative Action Plan without modifications. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to re-adopt the WPPDC Affirmative Action Plan for 2021 without modifications.

9. OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:

a. APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION

• AUTHORIZATION FOR ANNUAL APPLICATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE GRANT FUNDS FROM THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION—WPPDC/P(20)45, RESOLUTION WPPDC 2020-14

The Executive Director explained that the localities of Martinsville, Henry and Patrick counties are eligible members of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). In Virginia, planning district commissions serve as "Local Development Districts," or LDDs, with responsibilities similar to those of "Economic Development Districts," or EDDs, in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. Currently, the West Piedmont Planning District Commission serves as an EDA-designated EDD. He noted that the West Piedmont Planning District Commission was eligible to receive an ARC planning grant for the period from January 1, 2021, through December 31, 2021, with approximately \$41,000 in ARC funding.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. George, to adopt Resolution 2020-14 authorizing the PDC staff to submit an application for funding to the Appalachian Regional Commission for the Planning District Commission's work in the capacity as a Local Development District and to provide the required local match for said grant. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to adopt a resolution [copy attached] authorizing the PDC staff to submit an administrative grant application for funding to the Appalachian Regional Commission for the Planning District Commission's work in the capacity as a Local Development District and to provide the required local match for said grant.

• **INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW--APPLICATION TO APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION FOR PLANNING GRANT FUNDS FOR ANNUAL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT PROGRAM ACTIVITIES—WPPDC/P(20)46**

The Executive Director advised that, in its capacity as a Local Development District, the Planning District Commission was eligible to receive planning grant monies from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). This grant required a 30% match, which was to be allocated from the PDC funds. For 2021, the Planning District Commission would submit its annual grant application to the ARC requesting approximately \$41,000. As part of the grant application, an Intergovernmental Review was required; therefore, this item was placed on the Board agenda for consideration and approval.

Mr. Walker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to make a favorable comment on an application for funding to the Appalachian Regional Commission for the Planning District Commission's work in the capacity as a Local Development District. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make a favorable comment on the request.

b. **U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION**

• **AUTHORIZATION FOR ANNUAL APPLICATION FOR PLANNING FUNDS FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION—WPPDC/P(20)47, RESOLUTION WPPDC 2020-15**

The Executive Director recognized that in its capacity as an Economic Development District, the Planning District Commission is eligible to receive planning grant monies from the Economic Development Administration. In recent past, this amounted to \$70,000 in EDA funding. However, the grant requires up to a dollar-for-dollar match, which is allocated from the PDC funds. He noted the program allowed for the CEDS development and other related work.

Mr. Sides made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to adopt Resolution 2020-15, as presented, to apply for EDA funds for the period from April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022, and to allocate Planning District Commission funds for the required match up to a dollar-for-dollar amount for the EDA Planning Grant. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to adopt the resolution of intent [copy attached], as presented, to apply for EDA funds for the period from April 1, 2021, through March 31, 2022, and to allocate Planning District Commission funds for the required match up to a dollar-for-dollar amount for an EDA Planning Grant.

c. **TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROGRAMS (VDOT, FHWA)**

• **AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY FOR RURAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ASSISTANCE FUNDS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022—WPPDC/P(20)48, RESOLUTION WPPDC 2020-16**

The Executive Director noted that the resolution included with the Board paper, if approved, would be included with an application to the Virginia Department of Transportation to obtain Fiscal Year 2022 funds allocated for planning district commissions to utilize in continued development of a Rural (non-

MPO) Transportation Planning Program. The grant request would include \$58,000 from the Department's SPR funds available and \$14,500 from the Commission in matching amounts. The expected VDOT funds would be incorporated in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2022 WPPDC budget and work program for personnel, indirect costs, and direct costs related to personnel costs in carrying out the program preparations.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to adopt Resolution 2020-16, as presented, and to allocate the matching funds for the Rural Transportation Planning Grant Assistance for Fiscal Year 2022 as required by VDOT. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to adopt the resolution of Intent [copy attached], as presented, to apply for VDOT Rural Transportation Planning Assistance funds for the Fiscal Year 2022 period and to allocate the matching funds for the grant as required by VDOT.

• **AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT LETTERS OF SUPPORT AND RESOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES GRANT PROJECTS—FISCAL YEAR 2022—WPPDC/P(20)49**

The Executive Director requested that the Board authorize PDC staff and the Chairman or Vice-Chairman to submit letters of support and resolutions for local government Transportation Alternatives grant projects, formerly VDOT enhancement grants, as has been done in the past.

Mr. Rotenizer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to authorize the Chairman or Vice-Chairman to co-sign with the Executive Director requests from local governments for letters of support or resolutions to be used in applications for Transportation Alternatives Grant Program funds for Fiscal Year 2022. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to authorize the Chairman or Vice-Chairman to co-sign with the Executive Director requests from local governments for letters of support or resolutions to be used in applications for Transportation Alternatives Grant Program funds for Fiscal Year 2022.

10. CONSIDERATION OF ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONTRACTING WITH HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING CONSULTANT (RESOLUTION WPPDC 2020-17) – WPPDC/P(20)50

The Associate Director provided an update on the status of the Hazard Mitigation Plan consultant procurement. He stated the review committee had finished its work and WPPDC staff were ready to negotiate a contract with the top ranked firm, which was Dewberry. Upon authorization from the Board, staff would begin the contract negotiation process. Mr. George asked for a definition of hazard. Mr. Armbrister stated hazards would include physical hazards like flooding, wind, snow fall.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board adopt the resolution authorizing contracting with a hazard mitigation consultant.

Mr. George made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rotenizer, to adopt the resolution authorizing contracting with a hazard mitigation consultant. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously adopt the resolution authorizing contracting with a hazard mitigation consultant.

11. UPDATES AND REPORTS ON WPPDC REGIONAL PROJECTS/STAFF ACTIVITIES RELATED TO:

a. DANVILLE MPO

The Executive Director announced that the Danville MPO had identified its next study which would evaluate the Piney Forest Road Corridor from North Main Street south to include Nor-Dan Drive and possibly Piedmont Drive. This corridor included a number of high PSI (Potential for Safety Improvements) intersections, and there was a recent fatality at the intersection of Piney Forest Road and Ashe Street. The

goal of the study would be to identify key projects with a high potential for safety improvements for future grant applications.

b. REGIONAL PLANNING UPDATES – HAZARD MITIGATION, PANDEMIC RECOVERY & RESILIENCY, CEDS

The Associate Director stated the Hazard Mitigation Planning process was underway and on schedule with planning to begin in late November to early December. He also provided a status update on the Pandemic Recover & Resiliency Planning process, and stated the procurement committee would finish reviewing proposals and schedule interviews the week of October 26, 2020. Finally, the Associate Director stated the CEDS Strategy Committee met the prior week. Due to the Pandemic Recovery & Resiliency Planning process and limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CEDS would receive a light update this year. The update had been initiated and the Working Committee would meet in November. The Associate Director informed the Board the CEDS would undergo a full update next year with a 5-year planning cycle.

c. IALR INDUSTRY 4.0 EDA APPLICATION

The Associate Director informed the Board that the EDA application submitted by the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in summer 2020 was denied due to timing concerns. However, IALR had some new opportunities develop and the application would be resubmitted with a new timeframe and other information that would be more favorable. The new application would be submitted to EDA in early November 2020.

d. RIDE SOLUTIONS PROGRAM DRPT FUNDING

The Executive Director advised the Board that funding for the Ride Solutions Program was reduced this year due to State budget shortfalls. The Ride Solutions Program promoted activities and alternative means of transportation to reduce the number of vehicles traveling our roads, such as carpooling, van pools, public transit, and biking. The funding was reduced by 20 percent from \$66,000 to \$52,000 with an 80/20 match requirement. The WPPDC would amend the program budget to reduce activities such as marketing carpool and van pool travel options, which were not feasible during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Director advised the reduced funding would not have a major impact on the budget.

e. FRANKLIN COUNTY EDA GRANT

The Executive Director was pleased to announce a major EDA grant award was announced recently. WPPDC staff wrote the EDA application for Franklin County and worked with County staff to address questions that were asked during the review process. The \$4.7 million grant would be matched by \$9.5 million in local and other funds to construct an access road network through Summit View Business Park. The project would result in 83 new jobs, 53 retained jobs, and \$43 million in private investment.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the WPPDC staff and Board for the assistance with and support of the EDA application.

f. WPPDC STAFF POSITIONS UPDATE

The Executive Director reported that Kathleen McEvoy, who was introduced at the beginning of the meeting, was already reaching out to and engaging with WPPDCs local and regional partners. He also stated that Kristina Eberly had accepted the Associate Director/Program Administrator position and would start on November 2, 2020. Ms. Eberly had approximately 17 years of experience with a regional planning organization in Maryland and recent experience working with a local government. The Executive Director noted the pieces were in place for a seamless transition of staff with recent and planned retirements this fiscal year. He thanked and commended the Commission for planning ahead and investing in the succession plan. He also stated the new staff would report directly to Mr. Armbrister as part of the transition process.

g. PATRICK COUNTY MAPPING

David Rakes, WPPDC Cartographer, reported on recent mapping projects completed for Patrick County, including an update and reprint of the county street map and a scarecrow map for the Chamber of Project.

h. COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The Associate Director reported that staff were working on comprehensive plans for the City of Martinsville and Patrick County. Updates for the City of Martinsville would be finished by the end of October and sent to VDOT for a required review. The Patrick County Comprehensive Plan update was just initiated and a schedule was provided to the Patrick County Planning Commission. That planning process should be completed in late summer 2021.

i. HENRY COUNTY ARC GRANT ASSISTANCE

The Associate Director stated that staff were assisting with several grant projects connected to Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre in Henry County, including a recently awarded ARC POWER grant to install natural gas at the park. With natural gas utility in place, the park would be the only Tier 5 certified park in the region. The Associate Director discussed providing environmental review services for that grant; however, the WPPDC was still developing the capacity to provide that and other grant administration services. He stated the WPPDC would develop the capacity to provide grant administration to support local government partners and generate new revenue sources for the WPPDC.

Mr. George asked about the source of the natural gas line and if it would tap into the large main line that passed through the area. The Chairman stated he was not certain, but would find out.

THE BOARD:

Noted these informational reports.

12. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES:**a. BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAM COMMITTEE****b. REGIONAL BLOCK GRANT PRIORITIES**

The Executive Director indicated that, historically, the Executive Committee served as both Committees – the Budget and Work Committee and the Committee to set the Regional Block Grant priorities.

Mr. Scarce moved to appoint the Executive Committee to serve in the capacity of of Budget and Work Program Committee and the Regional Block Grant Priorities Committee for the upcoming year; this motion was seconded by Mr. Mitchell. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to accept the appointment of the Executive Committee to serve in the capacity of the Budget & Work Program Committee and the Regional Block Grant Priorities Committee for the upcoming year.

13. ESTABLISH DATE FOR NOVEMBER-DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

The Chairman identified both November 19, 2020 and December 10, 2020 as possible dates for the next meeting. There were Board members who had conflicts with both dates, so the Executive Director suggested using a Doodle poll to find the best possible date. The Board was in general agreement with this approach.

THE BOARD:

No action was taken.

14. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION HONORING FORMER WPPDC DEPUTY DIRECTOR LEAH MANNING (RESOLUTION WPPDC 2020-18)

The Chairman reminded the Board of the dedicated work performed by the former Deputy Director, Leah Manning, who will officially retire on October 31, 2020. He also recommended a letter commending Ms. Manning's service to the region be sent with the resolution.

Mr. Rotenizer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to adopt the resolution honoring former WPPDC Deputy Director Leah Manning. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to adopt resolution honoring former WPPDC Deputy Director Leah Manning.

15. APPOINTMENT OF NEW WPPDC DEPUTY DIRECTOR

The Executive Director informed the Committee that he was pleased with the work of the Associate Director and recommended the planned appointment of Mr. Ambrister to the Deputy Director position effective November 1, 2020.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board appoint Mr. Ambrister to the Deputy Director position effective November 1, 2020.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rotenizer, to appoint Mr. Ambrister to the Deputy Director position effective November 1, 2020. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Ambrister to the Deputy Director position effective November 1, 2020..

16. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation in recognition of Mr. Joe Martin and his dedicated service.

17. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Mr. George stated he had surpassed 1,650 miles on his bicycle in the last 104 days.

Mr. Rotenizer reported that Franklin County received preliminary approval for a National Park Service grant that would be processed through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. He stated the application was a "Hail Mary" attempt, and he was extremely pleased to have received preliminary approval. The grant funding was available under the major distater declarations from Hurricanes Michael and Florance in 2018 and would allow the county to complete an architechural survey of all structures 50 years old and older. There was no match requirement for this grant, which was rare.

Ms. Bowles thanked the Associate Director for his work on the CEDS update and stated she was excited to chair the CEDS Strategy Committee this year. Ms. Bowles also requested the WPPDC consider adding language to the Affirmative Action plan approved earlier in the meeting to specify the WPPDC would not discriminate based on physical traits like hair texture. Ms. Bowles told the Board about her experience being called a derogatory, racist term related to her hair when she campaigned for Martinsville City Council. Ms. Bowles advised the Executive Director that sample language could be found in the Crown Act passed in California. The Executive Director state the language would be added to the plan.

18. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.


David R. Hoback
Executive Director