

# WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

of the  
October 24, 2019 Meeting

held at  
the Commission Office  
1100 Madison Street, Martinsville, VA  
at 6:00 p.m.

## PRESENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY  
Leland Mitchell

HENRY COUNTY  
Jim Adams, Chairman

PATRICK COUNTY  
Jerry Adams

MARTINSVILLE  
Kathy Lawson, Treasurer  
Jennifer Bowles  
Ronikka Hannans

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY  
Ben Farmer  
Greg Sides

DANVILLE  
Fred Shanks  
Lee Vogler  
Kimberly Walker

ROCKY MOUNT  
Ralph Casey

## ABSENT

Tim Tatum, Franklin County  
Tommy Slaughter, Henry County  
Wes George, Henry County  
Rickie Fulcher, Vice-Chairman, Patrick County  
Karl Weiss, Patrick County  
Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County

## STAFF

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

## GUESTS

Delegate Charles Poindexter, Virginia's 9th District House of Delegates  
Mary Franklin, Representing Delegate Danny Marshall, Virginia's 14th District House of Delegates  
Mark Rhodes, CPA, Dunham, Aukamp, & Rhodes, PLC

**1. REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE DINNER**

The Legislative Dinner took place until 7:27 p.m. The Chairman and Board members welcomed Delegate Charles Poindexter, representing Virginia's 9<sup>th</sup> District, and Mary Franklin, representing Delegate Danny Marshall of Virginia's 14<sup>th</sup> District. Both provided informational discussions regarding legislative matters across the state and region, followed by a question/answer session and other comments exchanged between those present.

**2. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME TO GUESTS**

Following a brief break, the Chairman established a quorum was present and called the Board meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. He welcomed other guests who were present.

**6. PRESENTATION OF THE AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE COMMISSION FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2019—MARK RHODES, CPA, DUNHAM, AUKAMP, & RHODES, PLC—WPPDC/P(19)40**

This agenda item was moved to accommodate Mr. Rhodes' schedule and travel considerations. 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, 2019, 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. 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.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jerry Adams, 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 the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2019, as presented.

**3. REGIONAL FORUM OPPORTUNITY—COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC**

There were none.

**4. POINTS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

There were no points from previous meetings.

**5. CONSENT AGENDA****a. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 22, 2019 MEETING—WPPDC/M(19)4****b. TREASURER'S REPORT: JUNE 30, 2019—WPPDC/P(19)37****c. ACKNOWLEDGE REGISTER OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS UNDER THE VIRGINIA INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS – SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2019—WPPDC/P(19)38****d. WPPDC QUARTERLY REPORT OF ACTIVITIES: STATE DATA AFFILIATE CENTER & VEC BUSINESS & INDUSTRY DATA CENTER PROGRAMS - FIRST QUARTER, FY 2020—WPPDC/P(19)39**

Mr. Jerry Adams 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.

**7. CONSIDERATION OF YEAR 2020 DRAFT ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM—WPPDC/P(19)41**

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. The essential position elements of the program included Funding, Revenue & Taxation; Education; Regional Cooperation; Economic Development; Transportation; Workforce Development; Broadband; and Law Enforcement Funding. Additional items for consideration by the Board included new positions on housing, opioids, taxation, and the Comprehensive Services Act. Following discussion, the Board suggested revisions to reflect updates on the mega site certification program under "Economic Development." The Executive Director acknowledged these changes.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Shanks, to accept the 2020 Legislative Letter with the noted revisions. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to accept the WPPDC legislative package-letter for the 2020 Virginia General Assembly, with noted revisions. (Copy of final Legislative Letter attached.)

**8. CONSIDERATION OF RE-ADOPTION OF WPPDC DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2020—WPPDC/P(19)42**

As part of the Economic Development Administration planning grant anticipated for submission to EDA in 2020 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.

Mrs. Lawson 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 2020, as presented.

**9. CONSIDERATION OF RE-ADOPTION OF WPPDC AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN FOR 2020--WPPDC/P(19)43**

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. Jerry Adams made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, 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 2020 without modifications.

**10. CONSIDERATION OF THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION (PDM) GRANT FUNDS THROUGH THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT--WPPDC/P(19)44**

The Executive Director advised that the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) had contacted PDC staff in regard to available pre-disaster mitigation funding to assist with the West Piedmont Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan update, required every five years. He acknowledged the last update was approved in late 2016, but the update process would take about two years to complete. The \$150,000 project would require \$112,500 in federal/state funding with a \$37,500 local in-kind match - \$17,490 from the PDC and \$3,335 from each county/city in the planning district.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to apply for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant funds to update the West Piedmont Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to apply for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant funds for the Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan update.

**11. OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION:**

**a. APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION**

**• AUTHORIZATION FOR ANNUAL APPLICATION FOR ADMINISTRATIVE GRANT FUNDS FROM THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION--WPPDC/P(19)45, RESOLUTION WPPDC 2019-6**

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, 2020, through December 31, 2020, with approximately \$40,000 in ARC funding.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jerry Adams, to adopt Resolution 2019-6 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(19)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 2020, the Planning District Commission would submit its annual grant application to the ARC requesting approximately \$40,000. 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. Farmer made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, 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(19)47, RESOLUTION WPPDC 2019-7**

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.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to adopt Resolution 2019-7, as presented, to apply for EDA funds for the period from April 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021, 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, 2020, through March 31, 2021, 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 2021—WPPDC/P(19)48, RESOLUTION WPPDC 2019-8**

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 2021 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 2021 WPPDC budget and work program for personnel, indirect costs, and direct costs related to personnel costs in carrying out the program preparations.

Mr. Vogler made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to adopt Resolution 2019-8, as presented, and to allocate the matching funds for the Rural Transportation Planning Grant Assistance for Fiscal Year 2021 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 2021 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 2021—WPPDC/P(19)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.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jerry Adams, 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 2021. 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 2021.

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

**a. REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY/CEDS INPUT SESSION**

The Deputy Director provided background information regarding the CEDS and indicated that PDC staff and the CEDS Committee would once again make the document more concise, incorporate more elements of resiliency throughout the document, and develop a regional "spotlight" to replace the current supplement to highlight the primary components of the CEDS. She reported that the CEDS Committee would meet on October 31st to kick-off the update of the annual CEDS document. She further noted that staff would meet with the Working Committee in early November to review Chapter 2 and findings from the October CEDS Input Session. She added that staff had solicited project priority lists from each locality and the PDC requested only those projects that would consist of grant/funding applications or realize progress during the five-year period to be included in the 2020 CEDS; each locality would select their top three projects for inclusion in the regional spotlight.

The Deputy Director recapped the recent CEDS Input Session held at New College Institute on October 3rd. She noted Doug Jackson with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development facilitated the event with about 30 key stakeholders from the region attending. She mentioned that the primary goal of the session

was to gain regional stakeholders' input to better align the goals and strategies with the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis – all used to formulate the plan to advance the region's economic vitality. In addition, three new CEDS Committee members joined.

**b. DANVILLE MPO**

The Executive Director reported two ongoing projects with the Danville MPO. The first was the update of the Long-Range Transportation Plan. The core of the Long-Range Plan, having a planning horizon of Year 2045, would be the development of a priority list for potential funding and a vision list of projects. The second project was the U.S. Route 58 West Access Management Study, from just west of Piedmont Drive to Long Circle Drive in the Brosville area. When completed, the study would provide a number of recommendations for future Smart Scale applications.

Further, he reminded the Board of the MPO Smart Scale funding for the U.S. Route 58/Berry Hill intersection improvements. As an update, he stated that construction for the project would be advertised December 10<sup>th</sup>, with completion expected next year.

**c. U.S. 220 ARTERIAL PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

The Executive Director provided an overview of VDOT's Arterial Preservation Program in regard to U.S. Route 220, from Roanoke to the NC state line. He specified such recommendations as 3-phase traffic signals to reduce wait time with no through traffic, innovative intersections, and other measures to improve traffic flow along the Corridor of Statewide Significance. He mentioned upcoming public meetings at Rocky Mount on November 13<sup>th</sup> and Henry County on November 14<sup>th</sup> to garner more information.

**d. MARTINSVILLE SOUTHERN CONNECTOR UPDATE**

The Executive Director reminded the Board about the public meeting held in August regarding the Martinsville Southern Connector, VDOT's study to improve that section of U.S. Route 220 from the VA/NC line to the U.S. Route 58 Bypass, south of Martinsville. He noted that, based on three alternatives studied, VDOT had made a final recommendation for Alternative C since it would have the lowest cost and the least environmental impact, and would be the only alternative the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and EPA would approve. He added that there would be consideration of a final draft Environmental Impact Statement in early 2020, which would proceed to the FHWA, the Corps of Engineers, and EPA for final approval and permitting in February 2021. Included in the meeting materials, the Executive Director referenced a letter of support for the project solicited by Henry County in September.

**e. RIDE SOLUTIONS PROGRAM**

The Executive Director provided a brief update of the Ride Solutions Program for car/van pooling, public transit, and other transportation alternatives in the region. He indicated that staff had recently conducted more outreach efforts, attending the Patrick Henry Community College Career Fair and meetings with Results in Stuart, Ameristaff, and People Ready. Further, he noted this was an ongoing effort to be continued.

**f. COMMONWEALTH TRANSPORTATION BOARD – FALL MEETINGS**

The Executive Director mentioned the upcoming fall CTB meetings in the region – the meeting for the VDOT Salem District would be held October 30<sup>th</sup> in Roanoke and the VDOT Lynchburg District meeting would be November 4<sup>th</sup> in Lynchburg. He advised PDC staff would be attending both meetings and would gladly relay any comments from the Board regarding particular issues or positions.

**g. MARTINSVILLE-HENRY COUNTY CENSUS PROGRAM**

The Executive Director noted that Henry County had submitted an application to the Harvest Foundation on behalf of Martinsville and the County to assist with public outreach and promotion of the upcoming 2020 Census count. In particular, this would support efforts for a complete count and help address undercounted populations in the area, which could result in losing as much as \$2,000 per person over the 10-year (decennial Census) period. He recognized that the PDC may be asked to help support the marketing campaign.

**h. OPPORTUNITY ZONES UPDATE**

The Executive Director informed the Board that staff had attended the recent launch of Opportunity Virginia and provided an overview of the Opportunity Zone program, with Virginia having 212 designated zones across the state. The program was created to encourage investment and provide tax breaks based on the length of the investment – basically from 5 to 10 years. He advised the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development offered a technical assistance grant (up to \$15,000) to potentially hire a consultant to develop a business perspective or other efforts to promote/market the Zones. Further, he referenced an article from Virginia Business which explained Opportunity Zones and revealed that 25% of the 150 potential opportunity zone projects in Virginia were in Danville and Martinsville. He provided the website – [www.opportunityva.org](http://www.opportunityva.org) for more information.

**i. USDA BROADBAND & HOUSING SUMMIT**

The Executive Director advised that staff attended a recent USDA Rural Development Summit in Bassett that provided a broad overview of available programs through the agency. He acknowledged that it was well attended and that the PDC would like to invite USDA staff to hold an event in the region targeted in depth toward broadband, housing, and infrastructure.

**j. VIRGINIA OUTDOORS PLAN REGIONAL MEETING**

Referencing handouts provided, the Executive Director reported a Virginia Outdoors Plan regional meeting would be held November 4<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Conservation. Input would be sought from regional stakeholders to provide updates for the Plan.

**THE BOARD:**

Noted these informational reports.

**13. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES:**

- **BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAM COMMITTEE**
- **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.

Ms. Bowles moved to appoint the Executive Committee to serve in the capacity of Budget and Work Program Committee for the upcoming year; this motion was seconded by Mr. Vogler. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jerry Adams moved to appoint the Executive Committee to serve in the capacity of Regional Block Grant Priorities Committee; this motion was seconded by Ms. Bowles. 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.

**14. ESTABLISH DATE FOR NOVEMBER-DECEMBER BOARD MEETING**

Following discussion, Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, for the Board to hold its combined November-December meeting on Thursday, December 5, 2019.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to hold the combined November-December meeting on December 5, 2019.

**15. OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman presented a Resolution of Appreciation in recognition of Mr. Joe Martin and his dedicated service to the West Piedmont Planning District Commission, serving as the Citizen-Appointed Representative for the City of Martinsville since February 2017.

Mr. Jerry Adams made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to adopt the resolution in appreciation of Mr. Martin's devoted service to the Commission.

**THE BOARD:**

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

**16. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

There were none.

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

David R. Hoback  
Executive Director

Attachments