

# WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## MINUTES

of the

### **October 28, 2021 Meeting**

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

or via

(Meeting ID 870 4570 0625, Passcode 459930)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87045700625?pwd=bXNhQnB5WHFuM2U2eVVwT3RpRHVSdz09>

(Call In Information 1-301-715-8592, 87045700625, 459930)

At 7:00 p.m.

#### PRESENT

##### FRANKLIN COUNTY

Leland Mitchell  
David Rotenizer

##### PATRICK COUNTY

Clayton Kendrick, Jr.  
Denise Stirewalt

##### DANVILLE

Lee Vogler

##### ROCKY MOUNT

Lucas Tuning

##### PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Ron Scarce, Vice Chairman  
Vic Ingram  
Greg Sides

##### MARTINSVILLE

Jennifer Bowles  
Kathy Lawson, Treasurer  
Ronikka Hannas

##### HENRY COUNTY

Jim Adams, Chairman  
Wes George

#### ABSENT

Tim Tatum, Franklin County  
James Buckner, Danville  
Kimberly Walker, Danville  
Tommy Slaughter, Henry County  
Jerry Adams, Patrick County

#### STAFF

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director  
Jacob Bullins, Finance Director

#### GUEST

Mark Rhodes, CPA, Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes PLC

#### **1. Call to Order and Welcome**

The Chairman established a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

#### **2. Regional Forum Opportunity – Comments from Public**

There were no comments.

#### **3. Consent Agenda**

***a. Confirmation of Minutes of the August 26, 2021 Meeting***

***b. Treasurer's Report – June 30, 2021***

***c. Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process – September and October 2021***

***d. West Piedmont Planning District Commission Quarterly Report of Activities: State Data Affiliate Center and VEC Business & Industry Data Center Programs – First Quarter, FY2022***

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

***4. Presentation of the Auditor's Report to the Commission for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021 – Mark Rhodes, CPA, Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC (Hardcopies will be mailed when available)***

Mr. Rhodes stated that he would briefly review sections of the audit. The Auditor's Report shows that no finding or issues were identified during the audit. The Management Discussion and Analysis, which summarizes the changes for the year, shows the revenue and expenses for the current year and increased over the prior year, mainly from pass-thru monies, and a loss had been anticipated. Assets and Liabilities did increase due to payables and receivables increasing with pass-thru funds. The Supplemental Information shows the revenue and expenses by project and compares the budget to actual revenue and expenses. The audit shows the finances are in compliance with government regulations.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Rhodes for presenting and explaining the audit to the Commission.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to accept the Auditor's Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2021. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

***5. Intergovernmental Review: Ferrum College USDA Community Facilities Loan Program Application***

The Executive Director stated that the WPPDC received notification from USDA that Ferrum College is applying for a \$16 million loan through the USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Loan Program. Ferrum College will use the loan to renovate Bassett Hall that will include interior renovations and exterior renovations tied to the interior renovations. There are no conflicts with existing local plans and staff recommends approval by the Commission.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rotenizer, to give favorable comment the Ferrum College USDA Community Facilities Loan Program application. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

***6. Appalachian Regional Commission: Authorization for Annual Application for Administrative Grant Funds and Intergovernmental Review***

The Executive Director stated that this is an annual application as the WPPDC is an Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Local Development District (LDD). Three jurisdictions, Martinsville, Henry County, and Patrick County are eligible for ARC funding and programs and as an LDD the PDC can work with these jurisdictions on community development projects, economic development projects, and other activities tied to ARC. The PDC can apply for an annual grant that supports these services. In FY2022, the annual grant was \$41,000 and that amount may increase for FY2023, but the level funding is being budgeted at this time. Local funds are used as match, which in the past has been 30%. Match is anticipated to be dollar-for-dollar this year due to the improving economic conditions in our ARC jurisdictions. Staff recommends adopting the resolution authorizing the annual application and approve the intergovernmental review.

Ms. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Mr. George, to authorize the WPPDC's annual application for ARC administrative grant funds and approve the intergovernmental review. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

***7. Economic Development Administration: Authorization for Annual Application for Planning Funds***

The Executive Director stated that the PDC is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the Economic Development Administration (EDA). As an EDD assistance with economic development projects is provided to all the jurisdictions in the district. The PDC can apply for a 3-

year planning grant of \$70,000 per year with a dollar-for-dollar match to support these services. Staff recommends adopting the resolution authorizing the annual application.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to authorize the WPPDC's annual application for EDA planning grant funds. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**8. Rural Transportation Planning Assistance: Authorization for Annual Application for Planning Assistance Funds for Fiscal Year 2023**

The Executive Director stated that the PDC applies annually to Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for Rural Transportation Planning Assistance funds. For FY2023 level funding of \$58,000 is anticipated with a local match of \$14,500. Staff recommends adopting the resolution authorizing the annual application.

Ms. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Mr. George, to authorize the WPPDC's annual application for VDOT Rural Transportation Planning Assistance funds. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**9. Consideration of the 2022 Annual Legislative Program**

The Executive Director stated that each year WPPDC adopts a legislative platform. Staff reviewed VML, VACO and VAPDC legislative platforms and talked with local administrator and managers for input on the platform. The document format has been updated to make it easier to read and there are three key changes this year: workforce housing was moved from economic development to a new housing section and affordable housing was added, economic development now includes infrastructure improvements for industrial sites to move the sites up the tiered ranking, and in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) section support for expanding electronic meetings flexibility for regional organizations. The format of the document has also been updated.

Ms. Bowles commented that she really liked the new format of the document as it is easy to understand and will help to get our point across.

Ms. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to approve the 2022 Annual Legislative Program and forward to our state legislative members. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**10. Establishment of Per Capita Contribution Rate for Fiscal Year 20223**

The Executive Director stated that when the per capita contribution rate was adopted for 2022 the previous Executive Director mentioned that an increase for FY2023 may need to be considered as it was anticipated that the population would increase and the 2020 census shows that most jurisdiction did increase. Also, the PDC has added staff that is EDA CARES grant funded through June 30, 2022. Increasing the per capita rate will help to continue to fund that position and some other capacity that has been added.

The current rate of \$0.55 has been in effect for 15 years and is the lowest when compared to neighboring PDCs. The per capita contribution accounts for about 21% of the annual budget and this funding leverages about \$600,000. It is used to match grants such as EDA CARES and is used for staff time to develop projects and write applications for localities where there is no other grant funding. Staff is recommending that the per capita contribution rate be increased \$0.05 to \$0.60 for FY2023 and in following years use a standard formula that is based on the most recent population data and the change in the Consumer Price Index.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the Per Capita Contribution Rate for Fiscal Year 2023 as presented.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rotenizer, to approve the Per Capita Contribution Rate for Fiscal Year 2023 and forward this to the local administrators to include in their budget planning process. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**11. Consideration of Contract for CEDS Facilitation Services**

The Executive Director stated that the EDA CARES grant has some extra funds, as the Grant Coordinator was not hired until several months into the grant period, that need to be expended before June 30, 2022. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 5-year update is scheduled for this year and hiring a consultant to do the CEDS would be an eligible expense for the CARES grant. By hiring a consultant to do the update, staff time can be used to work on grant applications and other projects. The WPPDC received three proposals in response to the Request for Proposal (RFP) which were reviewed by Ms. Jennifer Bowles, CEDS Committee Chair, and staff. The proposal from Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA), who is currently working on the WPPDC's Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (PRRP) scored the highest. Staff negotiated changes to the Scope of Work to reduce project cost to \$40,000 of which the CARES grant will fund \$35,000 and the WPPDC will fund \$5,000.

Ms. Bowles thanked staff for negotiating a lower project cost while not diminishing the quality of the project overall.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the contract with Thomas P. Miller & Associates to facilitate the CEDS 5-year update.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sides, to approve the contract with Thomas P. Miller & Associates to facilitate the CEDS 5-year update. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**12. Executive Director's Report**

The Executive Director stated that he would like to thank Jacob Bullins for his outstanding work on the audit and the great job he does to keep the financial work on schedule.

The Executive Director then highlighted some key items in the report:

- A Harvest Foundation grant has been secured to fully fund the housing planner position the first year, fund it at 50% the second year and fund it at 30% the third year. The Harvest Foundation grant is matched with a grant from the Danville Regional Foundation.
- A grant has been received from Virginia Housing for a regional housing assessment and plan. The PDC will be working with VT's Center for Housing Research on this project which will start in November.
- A new Housing Program Director, Sean Campbell, has been hired. He comes to WPPDC from the City of Danville's Community Development Department.
- The PDC submitted three regional Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) applications. Two are with RiverStreet Networks and the other is with Charter Communications. All three applications include counties outside of WPPDC and staff discussed the projects with those PDCs prior to applying.
- The final draft of the Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (PRRP) has been received. It will be sent to Board members for review and will be on the next meeting agenda for adoption.
- The Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan has been reviewed by VDEM and Dewberry has incorporated the comments from VDEM into the plan. The plan will now go to FEMA for review.
- Kathleen McEvoy has been working on three non-traditional CDBG-CV projects. Henry County is the lead on the regional project which brings hot meals from local restaurants and fresh food bags from farmers markets to seniors. During the first two weeks 445 senior meals were provided which positively impacted the local restaurants.

- Three Build Back Better Regional Challenge Phase 1 proposals were submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) from the region.
- Under staff projects, the Martinsville CDBG Planning Grant, which is a citywide housing assessment, just received notice for the award of the second phase. The Boones Mill and Franklin County VDEM pre-applications have both been approved so staff is working on the full applications.
- Joe Bonanno has been doing additional projects for the localities including a Walkability Initiative for the City of Martinsville and a potential commuter bus service in Franklin County.

**13. Christmas Office Schedule**

The Executive Director stated that traditionally the office is closed between Christmas and New Year's Day. The majority of staff takes annual leave and a few staff work from home and provide a list of activities that they worked on during that time. Staff recommends that the office be closed that week.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to approve the Christmas office schedule. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**14. Establish Date for Next Board Meeting: Thursday, December 9, 2021**

The Chairman stated that there will not be a meeting in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday and the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 9.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stirewalt, to establish a date for the next Board meeting of December 9, 2021. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**15. Other Business**

There was none.

**16. Comments from Commissioners**

Mr. Rotenizer stated that Nancy Bell with the Franklin County Health Department wanted to express her gratitude and acknowledge the work that David Rakes has done in providing her maps during COVID.

The Chairman introduced Lucas Tuning who is Rocky Mount's citizen appointment to the Board replacing Ralph Casey.

**17. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.



Michael Armbrister  
Executive Director