

# WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## MINUTES

of the

### **March 24, 2022 Meeting**

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

(Meeting ID 890 8770 6073, Passcode 188410)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89087706073?pwd=MFJxZ29qWjRlSjVvZU9tV2F4cjBqZz09>

(Call In Information 1-301-715-8592, 89087706073, 188410)

At 7:00 p.m.

#### PRESENT

##### FRANKLIN COUNTY

Leland Mitchell  
David Rotenizer

##### PATRICK COUNTY

Jerry Adams  
Clayton Kendrick, Jr.  
Denise Stirewalt

##### DANVILLE

James Buckner  
Lee Vogler  
Kimberly Walker

##### ROCKY MOUNT

##### PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Vic Ingram  
Greg Sides

##### MARTINSVILLE

Kathy Lawson, Treasurer

##### HENRY COUNTY

Jim Adams, Chairman  
Wes George

#### ABSENT

Tommy Slaughter, Henry County  
Tim Tatum, Franklin County  
Jessie Barksdale, Pittsylvania County  
Jennifer Bowles, Martinsville  
Ronikka Hannans, Martinsville  
Ralph Casey, Rocky Mount  
Tyler Lee, Rocky Mount  
Lucas Tuning, Rocky Mount

#### STAFF

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director  
Kristie Eberly, Regional Programs Director

#### **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 February 24, 2022 Meeting***
- b. Treasurer's Report – January 31, 2022***

***c. Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process – March 2022***

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

***4. Consideration of Resolution of Approval for Scope of Work for the Rural Transportation Planning Assistance Program for FY2023***

The Executive Director stated one of the significant activities for the PDC is providing transportation planning and the administration of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Danville/Pittsylvania County area. The Rural Transportation plan and work program guide the PDC's work in the areas outside of the MPO. The budget in the work plan is level funded for FY2023, \$58,000 from VDOT and a match funds of \$14,500 from the PDC. The work plan elements include GIS mapping for transportation, Smart Scale applications, VTRANS, work with VDOT on regional planning and starting the update of the Regional Bicycle Plan.

Ms. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lawson, to adopt the resolution of approval for the scope of work for the Rural Transportation Planning Assistance Program for FY2023. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

***5. Consideration of Approval of the 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the West Piedmont Planning District***

The Regional Programs Director discussed that since the WPPDC was changing to a 5-year CEDS a contractor, Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) who also developed the Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency Plan, was procured to develop the document and how the documents are different but work together for regional economic growth.

TPMA worked with CEDS Committee to update the vision and SWOT analysis and develop four broad focus areas: Economy & Innovation, Workforce & Education, Housing, Livability & Equity and Infrastructure. Several goals were developed for each focus area along with strategies to achieve the goals, action items, timelines and measurables. The Priority Projects, which are provided by the local governments, are now categorized by focus area and priority and WPPDC and transportation projects are included with the Priority Projects rather than in a separate section. The historical information from prior years' CEDS, is preserved as an Appendix of the current document.

The Executive Director thanked Ms. Bowles for her work on the CEDS Committee as Chair and her involvement in the development of the PRRP and Life in SoVa regional brand.

Mr. Rotenizer made a motion, seconded by Mr. George, to approve the 2022 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

***6. Consideration of Approval of the West Piedmont Pandemic Recovery & Economic Resiliency Plan (PRRP)***

The Executive Director stated that copies of the Pandemic Recovery & Economic Resiliency Plan (PRRP) were provided at the February meeting for review. The plan was also developed by Thomas P. Miller & Associates (TPMA) and a lot of the information in the PRRP was used to develop the CEDS. The two plans work together but they are designed to address different things. The PRRP is focused on successfully reviving the economy from the adverse effects of the pandemic. The plan was developed based on data, interviews with business and community leaders, a business survey and an active steering committee. The data was used to determine which industry sectors were the most impacted by the pandemic. Strategies and goals were designed to assist these seven sectors and are actionable, with timelines and partners listed, for implementation over the next few years. The Life in SoVa brand is the first goal of the Recreation & Tourism strategy and will be released in the coming months.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rotenizer, to approve the West Piedmont Pandemic Recovery & Economic Resiliency Plan. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**7. Consideration of Approval of the West Piedmont Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan**

The Executive Director stated that federal law requires each of our localities to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). As the regional organization the WPPDC can develop a regional plan for approval and implementation by each locality which saves time and money and allows for regional collaboration.

Dewberry was contracted to develop the plan update and worked with the PDC, local planning teams of emergency services, planners, county and city administrators and public works and a regional planning team of emergency management coordinators and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). The plan was funded by a FEMA grant through VDEM of \$112,500 which was matched by the localities and the PDC with \$37,500. Some strategic changes were made to the update including a dashboard to track the progress of implementation. The plan has been reviewed and approved by both VDEM and FEMA pending adoption by our localities. After the plan is adopted by our localities there will be an amendment to the high hazard dam section to include more information to benefit future projects. It is a large, technical document and it is available for viewing on the WPPDC website.

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stirewalt, to approve the West Piedmont Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**8. Executive Director's Report**

The Executive Director highlighted key items in the written report:

- The WPPDC Housing Initiative, received multiple applications for the housing production program. Following review and scoring, awards will be made to Danville Redevelopment & Housing Authority, Danville Pittsylvania Habitat for Humanity, Landmark Asset Services and City of Martinsville. There will be a press release in April in conjunction with Fair Housing Month. The goal of the Virginia Housing \$2 million grant was to develop 20 new affordable housing units but the project is on target for about 120 units.
- The Regional Housing Study was started in January 2022 with VT's Center for Housing Research beginning the first phase of the project, housing data trainings for planners.
- There is a new initiative that is not on the report. Tyler Lee and Lucas Tuning, Board members from Rocky Mount, are in healthcare and are interested in the PDC creating a health advisory committee. This initiative would align with the strategies of the Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency Plan (PRRP) and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The Executive Director will work with them to get the appropriate committee members.
- The list of PDC staff projects keeps increasing as the staff is doing a tremendous job writing new applications and administering grants and projects. This includes five applications submitted to FEMA/VDEM for Franklin and Boones Mills, working with Pittsylvania County on a potential CDBG project for later in the year, a contract with Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water to perform compliance assistance and new CDBG planning grants for Rocky Mount and Martinsville.
- SMART Scale Round 5 of transportation funding is open with pre-applications are due April 1. Joe Bonanno was the only person in the state to use the new SMART Scale Pre-Scoping Module. There will be four applications submitted, two from the MPO and two from the PDC, and all but one is a resubmittal.
- The Regional Programs Director reviewed the Economic Development Administration (EDA) ARPA grant programs, the program statics provided by EDA and the applications submitted from the region for each program. There were two Build Back Better Regional Challenge applications from the region and neither received funding. There was one Good Jobs Challenge application,

one Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation application and four Economic Adjustment Assistance applications and no award decisions have yet been made.

**9. Appointment of Nominating Committee for Fiscal Year 2023**

The Chairman stated that the Executive Committee has approved that the Executive Committee will be serve as the Nominating Committee as they have in the past. Any Board member that would like to serve in an officer capacity should contact an Executive Committee member.

**10. Other Business**

The Executive Director noted that the Executive Committee has approved the draft revised Employee Handbook for Board review and approval at the May meeting.

Mr. George discussed an article that he saw in the newspaper that the federal government is looking for "mega" projects and suggested that Interstate 73 would be a good candidate.

The Chairman noted that the Executive Committee only will meet on April 28 and the Board will meet on May 26.

**11. Comments from Commissioners**

There was none.

**12. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



Michael Armbrister  
Executive Director