

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

of the

May 26, 2022 Meeting

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

(Meeting ID 836 9850 3573, Passcode 952152)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83698503573?pwd=R1d4Ti81QW9RTGhSYXZEdVZsVHoxdz09>

(Call In Information 1-301-715-8592, 83698503573#, 952152#)

At 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY

David Rotenizer
Tim Tatum

PATRICK COUNTY

Jerry Adams
Clayton Kendrick, Jr.

DANVILLE

Lee Vogler, Vice Chair
Kimberly Walker

ROCKY MOUNT

Ralph Casey
Tyler Lee
Lucas Tuning

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Jessie Barksdale
Vic Ingram

MARTINSVILLE

Kathy Lawson, Treasurer

HENRY COUNTY

Jim Adams, Chairman
Wes George

ABSENT

Tommy Slaughter, Henry County
Leland Mitchell, Franklin County
Denise Stirewalt, Patrick County
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County
Jennifer Bowles, Martinsville
Ronikka Hannans, Martinsville
James Buckner, Danville

STAFF

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director
Kristie Eberly, Regional Programs Director
Jacob Bullins, Finance Director
Joe Bonanno, Senior Planner - Transportation

GUESTS

Robert Wood, Rocky Mount

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 March 24, 2022 Meeting

b. Treasurer's Report – February 28, 2022 and March 31, 2022

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

4. Intergovernmental Review: Town of Boones Mill Application to USDA RD Community Facilities Program

The Regional Programs Director stated that the Town of Boones Mill is applying for USDA Rural Development Communities Facilities Program for funding to purchase a new police vehicle. The amount of funding requested is \$5,250.

Mr. Tatum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to give the Town of Boones Mill's application to USDA Rural Development a favorable review. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Consideration of Amended Fiscal Year 2022 Administrative Budget

The Executive Director noted that before the end of the fiscal year some adjustments are needed to the adopted FY2022 Budget due to some new projects and other changes during the year.

Revenues:

- Under Commonwealth of Virginia, item 6 VDH (Water) is a new contract with Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water to provide grant compliance.
- Under Local Governments, item 8 Patrick County CDBG Planning Grant and item 9 Boones Mill CDBG Planning Grant the full administration amount was budgeted but \$2,000 will be earned in the FY2023 and FY2022 is reduced by that amount. Item 13 Henry County/Regional CDBG-CV was increased \$4,600 due to an error when the budget was created. Item 14 Martinsville Pine Hall CDBG Housing Rehab was an estimate and has been reduced to the actual amount of \$16,500.
- Under Federal, item 2 Economic Development Administration CARES \$40,000 was moved to the Pass-Thru Budget to pay for the CEDS update. Under item 4 is EDA Agritourism/Agribusiness which was a possible project for FY2022 and will be moved to FY2023 as it has not been funded.

Operating Expenditures:

- Salaries, Employee Benefits, and Payroll Taxes increased due to the addition of a housing program director position mid-year.
- Contract fees were reviewed and this resulted in a \$3,373 reduction.
- Added \$2,500 from CARES grant to Travel.

After the adjustments to Revenue and Operating Expenditures, there is a balance of \$116,633 which will be added to the Reserve Fund.

The Amended Fiscal Year 2022 Budget was recommended for adoption by the Executive Committee at their meeting in April.

Mr. George made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tatum, to adopt the Amended Fiscal Year 2022 Administrative Budget. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Consideration of Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Administrative Budget

The Executive Director reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Budget and noted changes from the FY2022 budget.

Revenues:

- Under Commonwealth of Virginia, item 1 DHCD there is a \$14,000 decrease as the General Assembly last year provided a one-time increase for all PDCs due to Covid. Item 4 VDEM is zero as this was a grant for the Hazard Mitigation planning process which will be completed in FY2022. Item 5 VDRPT (Rideshare) is increased as the funding has returned to near pre-Covid levels. Item 6 VDH (Water), a new contract with Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water to

provide grant compliance, is budgeted for \$40,000 but could increase depending on the amount of work.

- Under Local Governments, items 1-7 will be changing as the local government members approve their local shares. Item 8 Patrick County CDBG Planning Grant and item 9 Boones Mill CDBG Planning Grant shows the \$2,000 each which was moved from FY2022 to FY2023. Item 10 Martinsville CDBG Planning Grant, item 11 Patrick County CDBG-CV, item 12 Franklin County CDBG-CV Item 13 Henry County/Regional CDBG-CV will be completed in FY2022. Item 14 Martinsville Pine Hall CDBG Housing Rehab is a two-year project and the budget reflects the year two allocation. Item 15 WPPDC East VATI Grant, item 16 WPPDC West VATI Grant and item 17 WPPDC Patrick VATI are new three-year projects that will start in FY2023. Three potential CDBG Planning Grants are listed with the anticipated income if approved but are not added in the total.
- Under Federal, item 2 Economic Development Administration CARES will be finished in FY2022. Item 3 Appalachian Regional Commission has increased \$11,340 and now has a 1:1 match rate. Three potential projects, two EDA and one ARC, are listed with the anticipated income if approved but are not added in the total.
- Under Other, item 1 Danville Regional Foundation – Housing Initiative and item 4 Harvest Foundation – Housing Initiative are both three-year grants that decrease \$10,000 each year of the grant period. Item 2 VA Housing – PDC Housing Development Program is has increased to \$133,333. Item 5 VA Housing – Regional Housing Study was added for FY2023.

Operating Expenditures:

- The increase in Salaries, Employee Benefits, and Payroll Taxes includes a 5% increase for staff and two new staff positions, a Regional Planner and a part-time Finance Assistant.
- Employee Benefits are also increased by the addition of two proposed new benefits. A cellphone allowance of \$35 per month will be paid if the employee has their office phone forwarded to their personal cellphone and the PDC will pay 75% of the health insurance premiums for an employee's family, which now are paid entirely by the employee. If the new benefits are approved in the FY2023 budget, then the draft Employee Handbook will be amended but will be subject annual budget review.
- The increases in Printing/Advertising and Travel/Workshops/Conferences/Training are due increased funding for Ride Solutions.

The proposed budget projects Revenues of \$1,004,200 and Operating Expenditures of \$891,998 with a remaining balance of \$112,202 for the Reserve Fund.

The Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Budget was recommended for adoption by the Executive Committee at their meeting in April.

Mr. George commented that there wasn't a budgeted amount for facility maintenance and asked the condition of the building. The Executive Director noted that the building is in good condition. At some point in the next few years one of the HVAC units will need to be replaced and possibly some areas in the parking lot that will need resurfacing.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rotenizer, to recommend that the Board approve the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Consideration of Proposed Work Program for Fiscal Year 2023

The Executive Director stated that the Work Program, which connects to the budget, is presented to the Board before the start of each fiscal year and defines the activities and proposed activities for the year. There are not many changes for FY2023 as most of the new programs were added last year.

The key changes for FY2023 are:

- Under Program Category 7.0: Economic Development, sub-categories 7.8 and 7.9, which were EDA CARES Act grants, are removed as the projects are completed.
- Under Program Category 10.0 Public Services, Health, Education and Cultural Opportunity, sub-category 10.2: Health Related Technical Assistance was added as part of a new regional health leadership committee initiative.
- Under Program Category 14.0: Grant Administration several new projects have been added.

The Proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Work Program was recommended for adoption by the Executive Committee at their meeting in April.

Mr. Lee made a motion, seconded by Mr. J. Adams, to adopt the Proposed Work Program for Fiscal Year 2023. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

8. Consideration of Updated WPPDC Employee Handbook

The Executive Director stated that the Employee Handbook had last been updated in 2016. Since that update some of the language had become outdated and some new policies were not included.

The key changes include:

- reorganizing the document
- eliminating the use of the term “Permanent” employee
- changes the term for initial employment period from “probationary period” to “introductory period”
- adds the policy for background check and drug test requirement for new employees
- increases the Annual Leave from 5 days during the 1st year and 10 days for years 2-4 to 12 days a year for years 1-4
- changes Annual Leave accruals for all employees to monthly rather than annually
- simplified sick leave policy and added a policy for sick leave donations
- adds information for employees to know how to report concerns of fraud
- outlines termination policies
- adds updated benefit policies
- includes a staffing chart

The updated Employee Handbook has been reviewed by our insurance provider and their feedback was incorporated. It was also reviewed by the Executive Committee and recommended that it be given to the Board for review.

Mr. George asked if the WPPDC’s telework policy was affected by the changes to State of Virginia telework policy. The Executive Director noted that PDC employees are not State employees and the changes the State made do not apply to the PDC.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ingram, to adopt the updated WPPDC Employee Handbook. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

9. Consideration of Fiscal Year 2023 Calendar

The Executive Director stated that as part of the preparation for the new fiscal year he has develop a calendar of Board meeting dates and the closing of the office for the Christmas Holiday so that Board members know the schedule in advance. He noted that the December 8, 2022, is the November/December meeting and will only be held if there is business. The PDC office traditionally closes for a week at Christmas, December 27-30 in 2022, and staff generally take annual leave that week or work for home.

Mr. Tatum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to adopt the Fiscal Year 2023 Calendar. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

10. Consideration of Resolutions of Support for Round 5 Smart Scale Transportation Project

Applications

The Transportation Senior Planner briefly reviewed the Smart Scale projects that both the MPO and the PDC are submitting. All the projects were submitted as pre-applications and are being reviewed by VDOT. VDOT was very involved in the development of these projects.

Mr. Ingram made a motion, seconded by Mr. George, to adopt all the Resolutions of Support for Round 5 Smart Scale Transportation Project Applications. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

11. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director highlighted key items in the written report:

- The application to EDA for the Regional Agritourism and Agribusiness Program has finally been reviewed and was awarded. This program is also funded with a grant from the Tobacco Commission and WPPDC in-kind. The project kick-off will be during this summer.
- The WPPDC Housing Production Program, which is funded through a \$2 million grant from Virginia Housing, has awarded 11 projects and another one will be awarded soon. The Virginia Housing grant is a reimbursement grant and reimbursements can only be requested quarterly. So that project invoices can be paid timely between reimbursements requests, the WPPDC has applied for and was approved for a \$500,000 line of credit through Virginia Community Capital. The line of credit was discussed at the April Executive Committee meeting and it was recommended a report be prepared for each Board meeting to show when funds were drawn down and repaid to the line of credit. The interest accrued on the line of credit is an allowable expense for the Virginia Housing grant.
- The Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan had been approved by FEMA pending adoption. The plan has been adopted by several localities, so it is now officially approved. All localities must adopt the plan to be eligible for VDEM and FEMA funding.
- The CDBG Covid projects will be completed soon. Kathleen McEvoy has done a great job with the projects which have greatly impacted the community.
- The two new staff positions for a Regional Planner and a Finance Technician are still open. It has been difficult to find qualified applicants.
- In the list of PDC staff projects, the Bi-State Brownfields RLF application for \$1 million, which will help fund brownfields projects in the region, was approved by EPA. The WPPDC partnered with two North Carolina Council of Governments to develop the program and apply for funding.
- The Piney Forrest Road Corridor study is in the final phase which is a public input. The public survey is available on the Danville MPO website and is open until May 31st.
- The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation financial compliance review was completed in April and there were no findings. Jacob Bullins, the Finance Director, does great work handling the PDC finances and audit and along with various audits from funding agencies throughout the year.

12. Report of Nominating Committee for Fiscal Year 2023 & Election of Officers

The Chairman stated that the Executive Committee, which served as the Nominating Committee, has nominated the following slate of officers:

Chairman – Jim Adams
 Vice Chairman – Lee Vogler
 Treasurer – Kathy Lawson

There were no other nominations from the members.

Mr. Tatum made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ingram, to close the nominations and move by acclamation to adopt the recommended slate of officers for fiscal year 2023. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

13. Other Business

Virginia Community Capital (VCC) Line of Credit – The Executive Director stated that as part of the closing WPPDC needs to provide meeting minutes showing Board authorization of the signatories for the line of credit. As is consistent with other PDC bank accounts, the Board is asked to authorize the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Executive Director as signatories.

Mr. George made a motion, seconded by Mr. Kendrick, to approve the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Executive Director as signatories on the Line of Credit with Virginia Community Capital. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Tatum stated that Ferrum College has been having some difficulties since Covid. He asked that if PDC staff or Board members become aware of grant opportunities that would assist the College, please let him know.

14. Comments from Commissioners

There was none.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.



Michael R. Armbrister
Executive Director