

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

of the

August 25, 2022 Meeting

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

Meeting ID 823 2301 9351, Passcode 120503)

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82323019351?pwd=ZVMxUWxnaSt6NUFPNW16bHpzRTlxdz09>
(Call In Information 1-301-715-8592, 82323019351#, 120503#)

At 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY
Tim Tatum

PATRICK COUNTY
Jerry Adams
Denise Stirewalt

DANVILLE
Dr. Gary P. Miller
Kimberly Walker

ROCKY MOUNT
Ralph Casey
Tyler Lee
Lucas Tuning

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY
Jessie Barksdale
Vic Ingram
Greg Sides

MARTINSVILLE
Jennifer Bowles
Kathy Lawson, Treasurer

HENRY COUNTY
Jim Adams, Chairman
Tommy Slaughter

ABSENT

Wes George, Henry County
David Rotenizer, Franklin County
Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County
Lee Vogler, Vice Chairman, Danville

STAFF

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director
Kristie Eberly, Regional Programs Director

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.

The Chairman recognized the passing of Leland Mitchell, Franklin County Board of Supervisors and long time West Piedmont PDC Board member on July 30, 2022.

2. Regional Forum Opportunity – Comments from Public

There were no comments.

3. Consent Agenda

- a. Confirmation of Minutes of the May 26, 2022 Meeting***
- b. Treasurer's Report – April 30, 2022 and May 31, 2022***

- c. ***Register of Administrative Reviews under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process – June, July, August 2022***
- d. ***West Piedmont Planning District Commission Quarterly Report of Activities: State Data Affiliate Center and VEC Business & Industry Data Center Programs – Fourth Quarter, FY2022***

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

4. Consideration of Agritourism/Agribusiness Development Initiative Contracts

The Regional Programs Director stated that the three proposals were received for the Agritourism and Agribusiness Development Program RFP and all were under budget. The top two proposals were from Veridus Group and Destination by Design and Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement (VT), Arnett Muldrow & Associates and Ramble Type Digital. The proposal from VT, Arnett Muldrow and Ramble Type Digital was chosen by the reviewers. As the proposal is under the project budget, they are willing to work with the PDC to add items that will enhance the project. Staff is currently negotiating the additional items and the three contracts.

The project includes an Economic Impact Study, creation of a Steering Committee with two representatives from each member jurisdiction, regional asset data base, development of a brand, interactive website and marketing strategy and the creation of a sustainability plan. Being added to the project is the integration of the Life in SoVa website with the agritourism website and the development of website content. Staff recommends approval of the negotiation and execution of the contracts within project budget.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lawson, to authorize the Executive Director to execute contracts within project budget with Virginia Tech Center for Economic and Community Engagement, Arnett Muldrow & Associates and Ramble Type Digital for the Agritourism and Agribusiness program. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

5. Consideration of Resolution of Support for Danville-Pittsylvania MPO Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Application

The Executive Director stated that there is a new program through the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law that will provide \$5 billion over the next 5 years for road and transportation improvements. The goal of the program is to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes and includes improvements for pedestrian, multimodal transit, and road improvements. The first requirement is for the applicant's region to develop a Safety Action Plan and the program will fund the development of that plan. The MPO has voted to develop an application for the Safety Action Plan. As this is a Federal program the PDC would apply on behalf of the MPO. Once the Safety Action Plan is developed the City or the County would be eligible to apply for implementation funding. The MPO is working with Pittsylvania County and the City of Danville for the local match of \$40,000 for \$160,000 in grant funding. Staff is asking for a resolution of support that would allow the PDC to submit the application on behalf of the MPO.

Ms. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ingram, to adopt the resolution of support endorsing the Safe Streets for All grant application. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Approval of VATI 2022 Grant Agreements:

- a. ***WPPDC Patrick County Universal Broadband Project***
- b. ***WPPDC East Universal Broadband Project***
- c. ***WPPDC West Universal Broadband Project***

The Executive Director stated that due to the size of the VATI contracts, he is requesting Board approval to enter into these agreements and accept the grant funding.

The three VATI applications cover the PDC region and extend beyond it. DHCD is pleased that the PDC has reached outside of its region to help other counties with their broadband coverage. The projects are fiber to the home which will create universal broadband. The projects ready to go under contract are the East Project with River Street Networks and the Patrick County Project with Charter. The West Project negotiations with River Street Networks and APCO are almost complete. Staff is recommending approval of all three agreements at this time.

Mr. Tatum made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to approve the VATI 2022 grant agreements for the three projects, authorize staff to sign the agreements, and accept the VATI grant funding on behalf of the partnering localities and ISPs in each project. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director highlighted key items in the written report:

- Regional Broadband – VATI has changed the definition of coverage from a speed of 25/3 to 100/20. There are now areas that met the prior definition of coverage but do not meet the new definition. The PDC has submitted three new application for VATI 2023, partnering with River Street Networks, to fill those gaps.
- Bi-State Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund Project - The EPA application, which was a partnership of two North Carolina regional councils and the WPPDC, was approved for \$1 million in revolving loan fund funding. A site in Pittsylvania County has been selected for the first project in the PDC region and the two NC regional councils have each selected a site in their regions.
- Virginia Department of Health, Office of Drinking Water Agreement – The first task order from ODW for the Town of Chatham has been completed. The PDC has a new staff member who will be working with ODW and Chatham on that project.
- WPPDC 2023 Legislative Program – Staff will begin compiling the information for the legislative program in September. If any Board member or their locality has items that the PDC should consider, they should contact Mr. Armbrister.
- Housing Summit – There was a regional Housing Summit in the City of Danville on August 18 with about 200 attendees and Sean Campbell, WPPDC Housing Programs Director, was a speaker. Mr. Campbell was able to speak with several of the PDC housing program funding agencies and they are pleased with the housing work being done in the region.
- The WPPDC Grant-Awarded Funds for Affordable Housing Units Use and Flow of Funds Report chart was created at the request of the Board to show when and for what the housing revolving loan fund was used. The closing costs are included in the loan and along with the interest are paid by Virginia Housing. Virginia Housing allows only one reimbursement request per quarter and the line of credit will be paid back at that time.
- Region CDBG-CV Baby/Toddler Supply Project – Kathleen McEvoy is working to finishing up these three projects. The projects in Franklin County and Patrick County have closed out. There were some extra funds in the regional project which could be used for school supplies for low-income Pre-K and kindergarten students and all the elementaries in the region were contacted for their needs. In conjunction with the local DSS offices several diaper and baby supplies drive-thru events are schedule over the next few months. Kathleen and Tracy Meade have done an outstanding job on this program.
- New Staff Positions – This week two new staff members joined the PDC. Olivia Garrett is a Regional Programs Specialist and will be working with Regional Health Committee, the VDH ODW program and tourism initiative. Elizabeth Prillaman is a Finance Technician and will be working on the broadband projects and financial processes.
- Staff Project List
 - The Boones Mill Comp Plan update has been completed and is now in VDOT review.

- The Stuart Comp Plan will be starting in September in conjunction with the downtown revitalization work.
- The EDA ARPA application for \$2.4 million for Pittsylvania County's wastewater improvements was approved. This will have a big impact on economic development in the county.
- The Town of Boones Mill was awarded a \$5,250 USDA grant for a new police vehicle.
- Transportation - The MPO has completed the Piney Forest Road Corridor Study and GAP project which provides a tool to identify studies that are important based on quantitative methods.
- Smart Scale – Joe Bonanno submitted three Smart Scale applications from the PDC and MPO and supported several localities with questions and research.
- Audit – The audit will take place in September and Jacob has almost all items completed. It is anticipated that the audit will be presented to the Board in October.
- On-Call Consultant Program – The current contracts end this year and procurement for the next 5-year contracts was initiated in July with 10 proposals were received. There are currently two firms under contract and staff is hoping to expand that number for additional options. It is anticipated that some contracts will be on the October Board meeting agenda for approval.

8. Other Business

There was none.

9. Comments from Commissioners

There was none.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.



Michael R. Armbrister
Executive Director