

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

of the

October 27, 2022 Meeting

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

Meeting ID 844 0150 6332, Passcode 749862

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84401506332?pwd=MTFVYjhZNldUc1Zlc29TYk1jL1Vsdz09>

(Call In Information 1-301-715-8592, 84401506332#, 749862#)

At 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Tim Tatum

PATRICK COUNTY

Jerry Adams

Denise Stirewalt

DANVILLE

Dr. Gary P. Miller

Lee Vogler, Vice Chairman

Kimberly Walker

ROCKY MOUNT

Ralph Casey

Tyler Lee

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

Vic Ingram

Greg Sides

MARTINSVILLE

Jennifer Bowles

Kathy Lawson, Treasurer

HENRY COUNTY

Jim Adams, Chairman

Wes George

ABSENT

Tommy Slaughter, Henry County

David Rotenizer, Franklin County

Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County

Jessie Barksdale, Pittsylvania County

Lucas Tuning, Rocky Mount

STAFF

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director

Kristie Eberly, Regional Programs Director

Jacob Bullins, Finance Director

GUESTS

Robert Wood, Rocky Mount

Mark Rhodes, CPA, Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes

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 25, 2022 Meeting

b. Treasurer's Report – July 31, 2022 and August 31, 2022

c. Register of Administrative Reviews under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process – September and October 2022

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, 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

Mr. Rhodes stated that the audit report format has changed as Industry Standards now have the Opinion Letter in the front. It is a clean opinion for the audit with no finding or issues. Assets increased as there were more contracts and the local funding was higher due to the increased pass-thru contracts. The funding breakdown by program shows a 40% increase for the year and the net position increased by \$200,000.

The Executive Director recognized Jacob Bullins, Finance Director, for his work on the audit preparation.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lawson, to accept the auditor's report. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

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

The Executive Director stated that this is an annual grant to support the community and economic development work the WPPDC does as the Local Development District (LDD) for the ARC localities of Patrick County, Henry County and City of Martinsville. The PDC is anticipating this grant to be about \$52,000 for the next calendar year. Staff is recommending adoption of a resolution of intent to apply and approval of the Intergovernmental Review that will be submitted the application.

Mr. George made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tatum, to adopt the resolution of intent to apply and approve the Intergovernmental Review. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Economic Development Administration: Authorization for Annual Application for Planning Funds

The Executive Director stated that this is an annual grant to support the economic development work the WPPDC does as the EDA Economic Development District (EDD) for the all the localities in our region. EDA changed to a 3-year grant cycle a few years ago but the PDC still has to apply every year. This is year 2 of this cycle and level funding of \$70,000 with a dollar-to-dollar match is anticipated. Staff is recommending adoption of a resolution of intent to apply and approval of the Intergovernmental Review that will be submitted the application.

Ms. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Lee, to adopt the resolution of intent to apply and approve the Intergovernmental Review. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Rural Transportation Planning Assistance: Authorization for Annual Application for Planning Assistance Funds

The Executive Director stated that this is an annual grant from Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) which supports transportation planning work outside of the Danville MPO. The funding is used for rural transportation projects such as Smart Scale and small VDOT projects. Traditionally the grant has been \$58,000 for VDOT and matched with \$14,500 from the PDC's local funding. The funding is anticipated to be level for FY2024. Staff is recommending adoption of a resolution to apply for State Highway Planning and Research funds that will be submitted the application.

Mr. Ingram made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to adopt the resolution to apply for State Highway Planning and Research funds. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

8. On-Call Consultant Program New Term Contracts and Policy Update

The Executive Director stated that the On-Call Consultants Program, which was started in 2012, is a group of engineering and architectural consulting firms that the WPPDC procures and that the PDC, the Danville MPO and our localities can use. Typically, it has been a 5 year contract, with 4 renewals, and the contracts for the last renewal for these firms ended in September 2023. A new procurement began in July and ten proposals were received in response to the RFP. The proposals were reviewed and scored by representatives from our localities and VDOT and the five top scoring firms were interviewed. The review team and staff recommend that the PDC contract with all five firms. In the past the PDC has contracted with two firms but by having five firms this will give our localities more options, services and flexibility for projects.

The Executive Director discussed the staff recommended amendment to the On-Call Policy which changes the maximum amount for each project on-call contract to \$2.5 million and the total contact amount for 1 year to \$10 million. This change is consistent with the Code of Virginia and gives the PDC and our localities more flexibility. If the locality is using grant funds for a project, they will need to get approval from funding agency before they can use an on-call firm to ensure the procurement meets that agency's requirements.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the On-Call Consultant Program New Term Contracts and the Policy Update.

Ms. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Mr. Adams, to approve the On-Call Consultant Program New Term Contracts and the Policy Update. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

9. Piedmont Triangle Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund MOU

The Executive Director noted that the WPPDC has partnered with two North Carolina Council of Governments, Triangle J Council of Governments and Piedmont Triangle Regional Council, on an EPA application that would set up a Revolving Loan Fund for brownfields remediation. This funding will allow owners of vacant commercial or industrial structures to clean up environmental hazards so that the structure can be revitalized. The funding can be used by private developers or local governments and provides another option to a direct EPA application or Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) funding.

The funding is not yet under contract with EPA but is expected to be completed in December 2022. In anticipation of this Piedmont Triangle Regional Council developed draft program guidelines and will create MOUs between the partners based on these guidelines. Staff recommendation is to authorize staff to sign the MOU when it is prepared.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sides, to authorize staff to sign the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund MOU with the Triangle J Council of Governments and the Piedmont Triangle Regional Council when it is prepared. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

10. Southern Virginia Regional Branding and marketing Plan TRRC Application

The Executive Director stated that the PDC was contacted by the Southern Virginia Region Director of the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission (TRRC) about branding Southern Virginia similar to what has been done in Southwest Virginia. The WPPDC started a similar branding project during the development of the Pandemic Recovery and Resiliency Plan with the creation of the Life in SoVA brand and campaign. He has talked with the TRRC, Southside PDC and Commonwealth Regional Council and they believe this is a great opportunity to develop a tourism, economic development and quality of life brand. WPPDC agreed to be the applicant and submitted an application to TRRC last week. The project scope of work outlined in the application includes hiring a consultant to build on the commonalties among the partners to develop the Life in SoVa brand.

Staff recommendation is to adopt a resolution authorizing the Executive Director to submit the TRRC application and certifying the Executive Director as the authorizing agent for the grant if awarded.

Mr. Lee made a motion, seconded by Ms. Stirewalt, to authorize the Executive Director to submit the TRRC application and certifying the Executive Director as the authorizing agent for the grant if awarded. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

11. 2023 Annual Legislative Program

The Executive Director discussed the 2023 Annual Legislative Program handout which was developed by new staff member Olivia Garrett. Olivia comes to the PDC with 10 years of experience working in the General Assembly and will be keeping the information on our website regarding the Legislative Program up to date.

Ms. Bowles asked that Operation Ceasefire, which covers only Martinsville and Danville, be added to the program

Mr. Adams made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to adopt the 2023 Annual Legislative Program with the addition of Operation Ceasefire. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

12. Per Capita Contribution Rate for Fiscal Year 2024

The Executive Director noted that last year staff recommended the Board consider increasing the Per Capita Contribution Rate which had been levelly funded at .55 cents for 14 years. The rate was increased to .60 cents per capita in FY2023. The WPPDC continues to have a lower local assessment rate than surrounding PDCs. In FY2023 the Board adopted a formula to calculate the annual Per Capita Contribution rate based on the change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from July of the previous year to July of the current year. The CPI increase for this year is 8.525% which would calculate to a .05 cents increase to .65 cents per capita. This increase will add about \$11,000 to the PDC annual budget. Staff recommendation is to increase the FY2024 Per Capita Contribution rate .05 cents to .65 per capita.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the FY2024 Per Capita Contribution Rate.

Mr. George commented that he approved of the increase but from his perspective this just keeps adding to the localities burden.

Mr. Lee commented that the increase puts the WPPDC closer to the same level as surrounding PDCs to compete with other jurisdictions.

Ms. Bowles commented that the local contribution leverages almost a million dollars from other sources. This formula may need to be reconsidered in the future, but we are not at that point yet.

Ms. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to adopt the 2023 Annual Legislative Program with the addition of Operation Ceasefire. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

13. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director stated that an opportunity through the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) called Ready LDD has just become available. ARC has heard from the LDDs that there is quite a bit of federal funding available or soon to be available and they are at maximum capacity. The Ready LDD program provides up to \$100,000 in funding for additional staff to write and administer grants in our ARC communities of Henry and Patrick counties and the City of Martinsville. The WPPDC has submitted an application for \$100,000 and awarded should be announced about the end of the year.

There was a staffing change this week as a housing program staff member resigned for personal reasons. That position will be advertised soon.

The Executive Director then highlighted some key items from his written report.

14. Other Business

The Executive Director noted that there is a Board meeting scheduled for December but if there is no business then the meeting will be canceled.

15. Comments from Commissioners

There was none.

16. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.



Michael R. Armbrister
Executive Director