

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

March 23, 2023

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

Meeting ID 839 2147 4120, Passcode 968427

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83921474120?pwd=QQJoSmhNWlc1TDlCaEwS2xQSzVHZz09>

(Call In Information 1-301-715-8592, 83921474120#, 968427#)

At 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Jim Adams, Chairman, Henry County
Lee Vogler, Vice Chairman, Danville
Jerry Adams, Patrick County
Jennifer Bowles, Martinsville
Ralph Casey, Rocky Mount
Wes George, Henry County (V)
Vic Ingram, Pittsylvania County
Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County
Dr. Gary Miller, Danville (V)
Aaron Rawls, Martinsville
David Rotenizer, Franklin County (V)
Ron Scarce, Pittsylvania County (V)
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County (V)
Tommy Slaughter, Henry County
Lucas Tuning, Rocky Mount (V)

ABSENT

Kathy Lawson, Treasurer, Martinsville
Tyler Lee, Rocky Mount
Denise Stirewalt, Patrick County
Tim Tatum, Franklin County
Kimberly Walker, Danville

Staff

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director
Kristie Eberly, Regional Programs Director
Kathleen McEvoy, Community Development Specialist

(V) = Virtual Attendance

In accordance with the ***West Piedmont PDC Remote Electronic Participation and All-Virtual Meeting Policy***, members attended virtually for the following reasons:

Wes George – attended from home due to a medical condition.
Dr. Gary Miller – attended from home due to a personal matter.
David Rotenizer – attended from his office due to a personal matter.
Ron Scarce – attended from home due to a personal matter.
Greg Sides – attended from home due to a personal matter.
Lucas Tuning – attended from home due to a personal matter.

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 welcomed Mr. Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County, and Ms. Jennifer Bowles, City of Martinsville, who both had previously served on the Commission, and have been reappointed. He also welcomed Mr. Aaron Rawls, City of Martinsville, who is newly appointed to the Commission.

2. Regional Forum Opportunity – Comments from Public

There were no comments.

3. Consent Agenda

a. Confirmation of Minutes of the February 23, 2023 Meeting

b. Treasurer’s Report – January 31, 2023

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

4. Staff Spotlight: Kathleen McEvoy

The Executive Director stated that for Board members to get better acquainted with staff members and the work they are doing he will be asking each staff member to give a short presentation at upcoming Board meetings.

Ms. McEvoy, Community Development Specialist, works mostly with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) programs such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Planning Grants and Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) Planning Grants. Recently an IRF for Patrick County was awarded and there is a pending IRF planning grant for the Bassett Community Center. She has been working with Franklin County and Ferrum College on flood mitigation funding with an application to FEMA. She also provides grant assistance for non-profits such as writing a T-Mobile application for playground equipment for DeHart Park in Stuart, which was awarded. She manages the weekly Opportunity Tracker newsletter, which lists grant opportunities, webinars and conferences on a variety of needs and topics. She also serves on several community and project oriented committees. She discussed in more detail the CDBG Covid-19 projects in Franklin, Patrick and Henry counties that in conjunction with several local partners provided hot meals, fresh food boxes, cleaning supplies, school supplies and baby supplies to seniors and families in need and the CDBG downtown planning grants in Stuart, Boones Mill, Martinsville and Rocky Mount.

5. Consideration of Amended FY2023 Administrative Budget

The Executive Director noted that before the end of the fiscal year some adjustments are needed to the adopted FY2023 Budget due to some new projects, project delays and other changes during the year.

Revenues:

- Under Commonwealth of Virginia, item (4) VDEM there is a decrease of \$6,270 that was staff time charged to the grant but was determined as unallowable when the grant was closed out. Item (6) VDH (Water) this is a contract with Virginia Department of Health Office of Drinking Water to provide grant compliance and the project has been delayed due to VDH approvals and the income will be moved to FY2024.
- Under Local Governments, item (14) Martinsville Pine Hall CDBG Housing Rehab is delayed due to just recently hiring a rehab specialist and problems with finding contractors so the income will be moved to FY2024. Item (16) WPPDC West VATI Grant had the project start delayed due to contract negotiations and is now waiting for regulatory approval and item (17) WPPDC Patrick VATI Grant is delayed due to permitting for crossing the Blue Ridge Parkway. The income for both VATI projects will be earned in FY2023. Items (18) Martinsville Uptown CDBG Planning Grant and

(19) Rocky Mount CDBG Planning Grant were possible projects in the approved FY2023 budget and are now actual projects, so this recognizes the income for FY2023.

- Under Federal, item (7) USDA Rural Development and item (8) Patrick Business Development Center ARC Grant were possible projects in the approved F2023 budget and are now actual projects, so this recognizes the income for FY2023.
- Under Other, item (2) VA Housing – PDC Housing Development Program the income has been adjusted to reflect a more accurate amount. Item (5) VA Housing – Regional Housing Study the income will be received at the end of the project and will be moved to FY2024.

Operating Expenditures:

- Contract Fees increased \$12,755 due to the cost of subscriptions for software such as Office 365 and Adobe along with copier expenses.
- Printing/Advertising decreased \$2,000 as more of this can be done digitally.

After the adjustments to Revenue and Operating Expenditures, there is a balance of \$24,657 which will be added to the Reserve Fund.

Mr. Vogler made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to adopt the Amended Fiscal Year 2023 Administrative Budget. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Consideration of Amended FY2023 Annual Work Program

The Executive Director stated that the Work Program connects to the budget and the project categories are the same in both. There are two newly funded projects, sub-category 14.13 ARC – Patrick County Business Development Center Project and sub-category 14.14 WPPDC Regional USDA Development Planning Grant. These are the only changes to the Work Program but Board approval is needed so that staff can charge time to these projects.

Mr. George made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to approve the amended FY2023 Annual Work Program. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Consideration of Resolution of Approval for Scope of Work for the Rural Transportation Planning Assistance Program for FY2024

The Executive Director stated the Rural Transportation Planning Assistance Program is an annual grant for work the WPPDC does in the areas outside of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). In October 2022 the Board approved staff working with VDOT to develop the application and the scope of work goes with that application. The FY2024 scope of work is consistent with the FY2023 scope of work as the work plan includes GIS mapping, working the localities on the development of Smart Scale projects, participation in VTrans and initiating an update of the Regional Bike Plan and the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan. The scope of work was presented to the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and there were no comments.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler, to adopt the Resolution of Approval for the Scope of Work for the Rural Transportation Planning Assistance Program for FY2024. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Bowles asked how the Ride Solutions program was doing. The Executive Director stated that it is doing well as Mr. Bonanno has been doing outreach. He worked with Tyson Foods in Pittsylvania for transportation to training and has also done outreach to some larger employers such as the casino. He has been talking with the Community Services Board about transportation for clients in substance abuse rehab that are going to workforce training programs. He had a Ride Solutions booth at the Martinsville/Henry County Chamber of Commerce Trade Show for more exposure of the program.

8. Approval of the West Piedmont 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Report

The Regional Programs Director stated that in 2022 the WPPDC changed from an annual to a 5-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and as a result, a report on the progress made on the goals and strategies is now submitted to the Economic Development Administration (EDA) annually. The activities of the PDC, local jurisdictions and partner organizations are included in the report as contributing to advancing the regional goals. The local jurisdictions choose their top priority projects for the upcoming year and those projects are included as part of the report.

Mr. George asked in regard to the broadband projects, who will sell the internet access to consumers. The Executive Director stated that there are two internet service providers involved in the projects. For the two multi-county projects, the PDC is working with RiverStreet Networks and the Patrick County project is with Charter Communications and these companies will be providing service to residents.

Mr. George also asked if the funding for the road between the Danville bypass and the industrial park was for additional lanes. The Executive Director stated that the WPPDC worked on a Smart Scale application for the project last year that was not approved. He believes that VDOT, Danville and Pittsylvania are working together on the funding of additional capacity for the road.

Mr. Casey made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowles, to approve the West Piedmont 2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Annual Report. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Bowles thanked the Regional Programs Director for her work on the CEDS. She also noted her appreciation for the WPPDC changing to a 5-year plan as the progress can now be more clearly seen in the annual report.

The Regional Programs Director thanked Ms. Bowles for chairing the CEDS Committee. The Chair also thanked Ms. Bowles for her leadership of the CEDS Committee.

9. Authorize Executive Committee to adopt the 2023 Regional Priorities for the Virginia Community Development Block Grant Program

The Executive Director stated that normally at the March meeting the draft of the regional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) priorities are presented to the Board for adoption. This year the DHCD decided to change their funding round from April to June and they have not yet requested the regional priorities. The WPPDC asks the localities for any CDBG applications they are planning to submit as well as any applications the WPPDC will be submitting on behalf of our localities. The project types are ranked and prioritized to determine the regional priorities and this is presented to the Board for approval. Part of the scoring for the applications is based on the regional priorities. It is anticipated that DHCD will need the priorities by May 15, which is prior to the May Board meeting, therefore staff is requesting that the Board authorize the Executive Committee to approve the regional priorities at their April meeting.

Ms. Bowles made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to authorize the Executive Committee to adopt the 2023 Regional Priorities for the Virginia Community Development Block Grant Program. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

10. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director reviewed the Housing Production Project Line of Credit Use Report and highlighted some projects in the written report provided in the Board meeting packet.

He announced that Tamika Royal will be joining the staff as the Housing Programs Specialist in April.

11. Appointment of Nominating Committee for Fiscal Year 2024

The Chairman stated that in the past the Executive Committee has served as the Nominating Committee. He asked if there were any objections to the Executive Committee serving as the Nominating Committee for FY2024. There were no objections. Any Board member that would like to serve in an officer capacity should contact an Executive Committee member or the Executive Director.

12. Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Comments from Commissioners

Mr. Rotenizer recognized Ms. McEvoy's work on the Opportunity Tracker newsletter.

14. Adjournment

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



Michael R. Armbrister
Executive Director