

# WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## MINUTES

of the

### **October 26, 2023 Meeting**

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

#### **PRESENT**

Jim Adams, Chairman, Henry County  
Denise Stirewalt, Patrick County  
Jerry Adams, Patrick County  
Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County  
Kimberly Walker, Danville  
Lee Vogler, Vice Chairman, Danville  
Kathy Lawson, Treasurer, Martinsville  
Aaron Rawls, Martinsville  
Joe Martin, Martinsville  
David Rotenizer, Franklin County  
Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County  
Ralph Casey, Rocky Mount  
Tyler Lee, Rocky Mount (V)

#### **ABSENT**

Tommy Slaughter, Henry County  
Wes George, Henry County  
Lucas Tuning, Rocky Mount  
Dr. Gary Miller, Danville  
Tim Tatum, Franklin County  
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County  
Vic Ingram, Pittsylvania County

#### **STAFF**

Kristie Eberly, Interim Executive Director

(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:

Tyler Lee - 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.

#### **2. Regional Forum Opportunity – Comments from Public**

There were no comments.

#### **3. Consent Agenda**

***a. Confirmation of Minutes of the August 24, 2023 Meeting***

***b. Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process- August, September and October 2023***

***c. Quarterly Report of Activities: State Data Affiliate Center and VEC Business & Industry data Center Programs-Fourth Quarter-FY 2024***

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

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

The Interim Executive Director explained that every year the West Piedmont PDC applies to the Appalachian Regional Commission to be a Local Development District for Patrick County, Henry County and the City of Martinsville. This is an annual application requiring a Resolution and Intergovernmental Review. Staff recommends approval of the Resolution.

Mrs. Stirewalt made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Lawson, to recommend that the Board approve the Resolution for the Appalachian Regional Commission. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**5. Economic Development Administration: Authorization for Annual Application for Planning Funds**

The Interim Executive Director discussed briefly that the West Piedmont PDC annually applies to the Economic Development Administration for planning funds as the Economic Development District for our localities. The annual application requires a Resolution and staff recommends approval of the Resolution.

Ms. Walker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler to recommend that the West Piedmont Board pass and sign the Resolution. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**6. Rural Transportation Planning Assistance: Authorization for Annual Application for Planning Assistance Funds**

The Interim Executive Director explained that the West Piedmont PDC also annually applies for funding for Rural Transportation Planning and a Resolution is required with the application. This funding is expected to be level for FY2025. Staff recommends approval of the Resolution.

Mrs. Lawson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Vogler to recommend that the West Piedmont Board sign the Resolution. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**7. Interim Executive Director's Report**

**The Housing Program** – West Piedmont has requested the reimbursement of \$187,000 for each of the two houses being done by DRHA and that is expected within the next few weeks. These funds will be applied to the Virginia Community Capitol loan except for \$40,000 which will be held as a contingency. Most houses are on schedule and the Housing team is working to get the others back on schedule.

**Regional Broadband Projects** - There are now over 350 miles of cable installed in Pittsylvania and Charlotte counties. Connections to homes in Sandy Level have started with 114 serviceable passings and 13 current subscribers. West VATI is in full engineering with Appalachian Power and RiverStreet projects, starting construction in February 2024. Patrick County Charter is continuing to work through VDOT permitting issues. Pittsylvania VATI 2023 project has been released by DHCD. All pre-contract activities for the WPPDC East VATI have been completed and submitted to DHCD. The West project is still in the letter of intent phase. The Patrick County ARC Area Development application received state approval and all required materials were submitted to DHCD to send to ARC Washington for final approval. That grant will serve as match for Patrick VATI 2023 grant funding. DHCD has asked for Letters of Interest for VATI 2024. The WPPDC, along with some of our localities, have submitted Letters of Interest.

**Regional Tourism Initiatives** - Staff continues to develop the next component of the Regional Tourism Initiative -Outdoor Recreation. WPPDC has applied to the Virginia Tobacco Commission and Economic Administration for planning grants. The EDA application was not funded but staff will be re-working the application and apply again.

**Staff Projects & Activities** - WPPDC Senior Planner, Joe Bonanno and B.T. Fitzpatrick, Town Manager, of Boone Mill were awarded a 2023 NADO Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award for their work on Bonnes Mill 2040.

**Conferences and Trainings** - Staff participated in the Department of Housing and Community Development's Virginia Main Street Development Ready Workshop in Wytheville. Staff will be attending the VA1 Governor's Tourism Summit in Richmond and the Virginia Governor's Housing Conference in Hampton.

**Community Outreach** - Staff members participated in the Bassett Community Center Family Festival promoting Grown in SOVA program and the Martinsville Uptown Oktoberfest promoting Grown in SOVA and Ride Solutions programs.

**Danville MPO** – The Danville MPO will be meeting in January 2024 to kick off Safe-Streets For All Action Plan Project. The \$200,000 planning project has the goal of eliminating fatal and serious injury crashes.

**Southeast Crescent Regional Commission**- The SCRC's mission is to build sustainable communities and strengthen economic growth across the Southeast Region. As with ARC, DHCD is the state agency managing this program and SCRC has Local Development Districts (LDD) to provide technical assistance to eligible localities and non-profits. The WPPDC eligible localities are Franklin and Pittsylvania counties, City of Danville and the Town of Rocky Mount. The WPPDC applied to be a LDD which was awarded in September. The SCRC LDD grant for October 1, 2023-September 30, 2024 is \$33,000 with no matching funds. This funding will be used for staff salaries and travel.

The SCRC opened their first State Economic and Infrastructure Development (SEID) Grant Program in June. DHCD received 6 pre-applications from the WPPDC region and one application that covered localities in several PDCs.

**Open Positions**-Hannah Powell has joined the WPPDC Staff as a Community Development Specialist. Mrs. Powell will be working on Regional Broadband projects, VDH ARPA Grants and other community projects.

**Social Media**- WPPDC has a new Facebook Page, Life in SoVa. This is another way that our region's tourism partners can spread the word about local events, festivals and businesses.

#### **8. Other Business.**

The Chairman updated Board members on the status of the FY2023 audit which has been pushed out later than usual this year. Most years it is presented to the Board at the October meeting but as it is not completed there will be a need to have another Board meeting before the end of the year. With the busy holiday schedules in December, November 30, 2023 will be set for the next meeting.

#### **9. Comments from Commissioners**

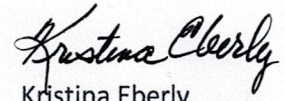
Board member Mr. Casey encouraged those that could attend to please come to the Blue Ridge Festival in Ferrum on October 28, 2023.

Board member Mr. Vogler announced the Danville Street Fair is November 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6 to 11pm.

Board member Mr. Rawls announced Ms. Aretha Ferrell-Benavides as the new Martinsville City Manager.

**10. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.



Kristina Eberly  
Interim Executive Director