

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

of the

February 27, 2025 Meeting

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

PRESENT

Jim Adams, Chairman, Henry County
Pam Cobler, Henry County
Wes George, Henry County (V)
Kathy Lawson, Treasurer, Martinsville
Joe Martin, Martinsville
Jerry Adams, Patrick County
Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County
Jonathan Wood, Patrick County
Lucas Tuning, Rocky Mount
Tyler Lee, Rocky Mount
Nick Mitchell, Franklin County(V)
David Rotenizer, Franklin County
Tim Tatum, Vice-Chairman, Franklin County
Ken Bowman, Pittsylvania County
Dillard Jones, Pittsylvania County
Lee Vogler, Danville
Dr. Gary Miller, Danville

ABSENT

Aaron Rawls, Martinsville
Eddie Hite, Pittsylvania Count

STAFF

Kristie Eberly, Executive Director
Sean Campbell, Housing Program Director
(V) = Virtual Attendance

GUEST

Steve Marshall, Patrick County

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

Wes George, Henry County-Personal matter
Nick Mitchell, Franklin County-Personal matter

1. Call to Order and Welcome

The Chairman established a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

2. Regional Forum Opportunity – Comments from Public

There were no comments.

3. Consent Agenda

a. Confirmation of Minutes of the December 5, 2024 Meeting.

b. Treasurer's Report –September 30, 2024, October 31, 2024, and November 30, 2024

Mr. David Rotenizer made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kathy Lawson, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

4. Intergovernmental Review: Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program Application for Danville-Pittsylvania Community Services and Edwards Adult Day Care

The Executive Director noted that as the Intergovernmental Review Agency for the area, the PDC receives applications at times for other agencies that are applying for federal funding. Danville Pittsylvania Community Services and Edwards Adult Day Care both applied to the Federal Transit Administration for vehicles with wheelchair ramps.

Mrs. Kathy Lawson made a motion, seconded by Dr. Gary Miller to support the applications to the Federal Transit Administration to purchase of handicapped accessible vans for Danville-Pittsylvania County Community Services and Edwards Adult Day Care. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Support Resolution for Participation in FY26 TDM Program Grant (Ride Solutions) through the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation (DRPT)

The Executive Director noted that each year the PDC applies to the Department of Rail and Public Transportation for funding for the Ride Solution Program. This year, they are expecting level funding making the grant amount of \$59,000, with the West Piedmont PDC required to provide a 20% match of \$11,800 and we would receive \$47,200 in state funding.

A motion was made by Mr. Lee Vogler, seconded by Mrs. Kathy Lawson to support the Resolution for Participation in FY26 TDM Program through the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

5a. Appalachian Regional Commission Area Development Program Application for Expanding Opportunity for Minority-Owned Businesses in Martinsville and Henry County

The Executive Director explained that the Minority Business Consortium in Martinsville had spoken to DHCD about applying for funding through ARC to support their new strategic plan. DHCD was very supportive of them submitting a grant application, but since they are non-profit and they do not have many staff, DHCD suggested that they speak with the PDC to be the applicant, fiscal agent and grant administrator. Ms. Natalie Hodges is the lead on this project and has been working with Ms. Catherine Van Noy on funding applications. They will also be applying to the Harvest Foundation for funding, but currently, we do not know how much that will be. This program would help our local minority businesses get started and give them support to grow. There will be no financial commitment on part of the PDC and PDC staff member Rebekah Morgan will be handling the grant administration. The Board of Commissioner's would like to invite Ms. Hodges to come and give a presentation at a future meeting. The Executive Director mentioned that the PDC normally does not apply on behalf of localities or entities and therefore would like the Board of Commissioner's approval before submitting an application. Mrs. Kathy Lawson, who knows Ms. Hodges, spoke about Ms. Hodges and of the contributions she has made to the community.

A motion was made by Mr. Tyler Lee, seconded by Ms. Jerry Adams, for the PDC to be the applicant, fiscal agent and grant administrator for the ARC Area Development Program Grant. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director noted project updates:

- * Housing initiative-two projects to be completed with one scheduled to be completed in March and the other pushed out to the end of the year.
- *Regional Broadband projects-over 1,090 miles of fiber installed in Pittsylvania County, Bedford, Charlotte, Patrick, Henry and Franklin Counties with construction starting soon in the rest of the counties. Homes in Pittsylvania, Charlotte, Bedford and Patrick Counties have also started over 7,287 serviceable passing and over 715 current subscribers. Appalachian Power and River Street are continuing to work closely to finish the engineering for the full build and construction continues the Patrick County Charter project with over 91 miles of underground and aerial fiber installed, 620 serviceable passing and 194 subscribers with that number steadily going up and moving along on schedule. DHCD has been down to do site visits, is very happy with the progress on all the projects and that homes are being connected.
- *The Outdoor Recreation project is three quarters of being completed, anticipated time of completion is May or June and then will be brought back to board for review.
- *The Franklin County Summit View Sewer Capacity upgrades application was not awarded by the Tobacco Commission.
- *The Boones Mill CDBG Downtown Revitalization Implementation Grant was awarded in January and is over \$700,000 for the town to use to improve facades and streetscapes in the downtown area.
- *The Bassett Community Center has received a Virginia Brownfields grant for the asbestos in the amount of \$50,000 and will be moving forward on asbestos removal in the coming months.
- *The I.C. Dehart Memorial Park Trail improvements application that the PDC did through the Community Foundation for Western Virginia on behalf of I.C. Dehart Park was awarded \$20,000 for benches, ADA compliant restroom upgrades and \$880 for a shower and a bike wash.
- *Piedmont Community Services had applied for an ARC INSPIRE grant for their Community Response program but the application was not awarded. They were then offered the opportunity to apply for an ARC Co-Chairman's grant for the same project. The application was re-submitted to this grant program and they were awarded.
- *The mobile home parks rehabilitation application to HUD for a PRICE grant was not awarded and the PDC will be looking at submitting again next year.
- *The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) project has been completed and will go before the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors and the Danville City Council for approval. Once approved the MPO will be able to apply for implementation funding.
- *The Danville MPO 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan is scheduled for update this year. The MPO will be using one of the WPPDC On-Call Consultants to do the update and that firm will be chosen within the next few months.
- *West Piedmont staff member Ms. Rebecca Morgan was promoted to Community Development Director on January 1, 2025.
- *The PDC has hired Mrs. Jennifer Denton as a Community Development Specialist, and she will be focusing on the Broadband projects with Mr. Michael Armbrister's support. The

announcement also included the other Community Development Specialist position has been filled and the new hire is scheduled to start March 17, 2025.

*The PDC will have a booth at Martinsville Fast Track on March 4-5, 2025.

*At the upcoming March 27th meeting, Hamilton Lombard from the Weldon Cooper Center will be joining via zoom to discuss regional population numbers.

Mr. Sean Campbell, Housing Director, noted that the Town of Chatham reached out and they would like to do a site plan for a piece of property the town owns. The PDC is currently working on their application. Mr. Campbell noted that the second round of what was the PDC Development grant is now the Regional Housing Development grant from Virginia Housing and the application will go out on Thursday. It is \$1.5 million available for development and the PDC can take \$200,000 of that for administrative funds if awarded. In the past, the PDC has been in the top performers. The performance period being 2 years. Mr. Campbell noted that the PDC Housing Department is on schedule to have all but one project completed by deadline, which is the Aaron Mills project, in Martinsville with expected completion by December 2025.

Mr. Ken Bowman questioned Mr. Campbell if he had heard from Mr. Nick Morris about a project with an assisted living facility or a nursing home in Chatham. Mr. Campbell's response was that he had heard from him, and that Mr. Morris's thoughts were that it could be Senior Housing, but it is an open lot. Mr. Campbell added that the site plan was completed so they possibly go ahead and apply for more grants for predevelopment work.

Mr. Bowman questioned the Executive Director about the Southern Virginia Regional Plan. The Executive Director explained that it was an application submitted to the Tobacco Commission about 2 years ago by the former Director. EDA funding was applied for as match, but the funding was not received. The Tobacco Commission has not rescinded the grant, but the PDC has not moved forward with it because the PDC still is attempting to locate matching funds.

Mr. Tim Tatum questioned the Executive Director about the status of the Ferrum Community Revitalization Project. The Executive Director noted that they were still working on the pre-contract items which are taking some time to complete.

7. Other Business

There was no other business.

8. Comments from Commissioners

Mr. Tim Tatum announced that the Franklin County Board of Supervisors has created a scholarship with Ferrum College to help recruit and offset tuition for Franklin County students in an attempt to keep Franklin County students in the region.

Mr. Ken Bowman mentioned that on March 18th Pittsylvania County will be voting on a data center.

The Chairman introduced Mr. Jonathan Wood, Patrick County's newest board member and guest Mr. Steve Marshall with the Patrick County Board of Supervisors.

There were no other comments from the Commissioners.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Kristina Eberly
Executive Director