

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

MINUTES

of the

October 23, 2025 Meeting

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

PRESENT

Jim Adams, Chairman, Henry County
Pam Cobler, Henry County
Nick Mitchell, Franklin County
Kathy Lawson, Treasurer, Martinsville(V)
Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County
James Tuner, Patrick County
Jonathan Wood, Patrick County
Tyler Lee, Rocky Mount (V)
Fatemah Casey, Rocky Mount
Tim Tatum, Vice-Chairman, Franklin County
Ken Bowman, Pittsylvania County
Dillard Jones, Pittsylvania County
Joe Martin, Martinsville
Wes George, Henry County(V)

ABSENT

Lee Vogler, Danville
Eddie Hite, Pittsylvania County
Dr. Gary Miller, Danville
Jerry Adams, Patrick County
Aaron Rawls, Martinsville
Lucas Tuning, Rocky Mount
David Rotenizer, Franklin County

STAFF

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director
Sean Campbell, Deputy Director
(V) = Virtual Attendance

GUEST

Chris Thompson, Virginia Housing
Amy Swartz, Virginia Housing

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

Tyler Lee-Rocky Mount (V)-Personal matter
Wes George, Henry County (V)-Personal matter
Kathy Lawson, City of Martinsville (V)-Personal matter

1. Call to Order and Welcome

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

2. Regional Forum Opportunity – Comments from Public

There were no comments from the public.

3. Presentation: Virginia Housing, Chris Thompson & Amy Swartz

Chris Thompson and Amy Schwarts from Virginia Housing presented.

Amy discussed mortgage opportunities such as downpayment assistance, closing cost assistance, and reduced interest rate for using the local loan originator.

Chris discussed outstanding progress that WPPDC has made in housing. He also discussed the grants that are available from Virginia Housing for planning and construction.

4. Consent Agenda

a. Confirmation of Minutes of the August 28, 2025 Meeting.

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

5. Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan Goals and Strategies (Ride Solutions-West Piedmont)

The Executive Director noted that each year the West Piedmont PDC applies for funding to maintain the Ride Solutions Program. This year the Department of Rail and Public Transportation is requiring a strategic plan to be able to qualify and be eligible for funding that we have used for many years. Transportation Senior Planner Joe Bonanno has been working on this strategic plan for review and approval, and the final plans should be brought to the board for the December meeting.

Mr. Tim Tatum made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kathy Lawson, to approve the goals and strategies for the Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan. Upon vote, the motion was approved.

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

The Executive Director noted that the West Piedmont PDC applies for this annual program each year and the funding is requested through Rural Transportation Planning Assistant program allowing the PDC to complete the duties that we have for transportation in our entire region outside of the MPO footprint. Anticipated level funding is \$58,000 in grant funds that will be matched with \$14,500 of PDC funds.

A motion was made by Mr. Ken Bowman, seconded by Mr. Tim Tatum to approve Rural Transportation Planning Assistance authorization for Annual Application for Planning Assistance Funds. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

The Executive Director noted that the West Piedmont PDC applies for the ARC annually and it allows us to work with our local governments, member jurisdictions, provide grant writing, grant management, planning, project development and anything that we do not have other revenue for.

A motion was made by Mr. Joey Martin, seconded by James Turner to approve Authorization for Annual Application for Administrative Grant Funds and Intergovernmental Review. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Executive Director's Report

Housing Director, Mr. Sean Campbell, noted several projects that the Housing Department is currently involved with.

- *Workforce Housing Investment Grant from Virginia Housing for a project in Franklin County.
- *Planning Grant application in with Virginia Housing for a prospective project in Martinsville.
- *Housing awareness grant that ties in with the Villa Heights project in Henry County.
- *There are currently 2 homes in the Villa Heights project that had their COs issued and the other 2 homes are expected to be completed by the end of November and ready for market in December.

The Executive Director highlighted a few project updates.

- *Broadband now has over 1,590 miles of fiber installed, construction on West VATI continues, Patrick County ARC contract has been released, and the City of Martinsville is still in pre-contract phase
- *Tourism is moving forward with the Foothills of the Blue Ridge Outdoor recreation plan with Friends of South West Virginia
- *The PDC has been researching the possibility of becoming a regional DMO (Destination Marketing Organization)
- *The PDC is working on an application for Regional Stormwater Assessment which was listed in the previous Hazard Mitigation plan as a potential need
- *The PDC staff is working with EPR on an update of the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (5-year extension plan)
- *Updating the Rural Long Range Transportation Plan

All other projects are moving forward unless that have been already completed by deadline. These projects are listed in the Executive Director's Report Board paper.

The Executive Director noted that the PDC has a new Economic Development Specialist staff member, Kiana Dillard. She was formerly with the Institute for Learning and Research and brings with her a wealth of knowledge in workforce development.

9. Other Business

Fatemah Casey noted that she had reached out to the Rocky Mount Fire Department about equipment needs and would be passing that information to the Executive Director.

There was discussion from board members who were attending the Regional Housing Summit in Danville highlighting

- *Danville-several new business ribbon cutting ceremonies, new city owned properties owners for housing
- *Halifax-facing high demand and low vacancies with major job announcements
- *Martinsville-experiencing population growth and with high demand for diverse housing, numerous redevelopment and new construction opportunities, streamlining processes and utility support for developers
- *Patrick-limited zoning outside of town, high home prices, multi-family and affordable Housing
- *Henry-aging population, shortage of new housing especially for multifamily, conversion of old schools and properties into apartments, workforce housing using innovative

partnerships and land trust

*Pittsylvania -largest Virginia county area with most new construction focused near the lakes.

*Gretna and Danville-large scale mixed use and residential developments, Broadband and zoning requirements

There was no other business.

10. Comments from Commissioners

A reminder that Saturday is the Ferrum Folklife Festival.

There were no other comments.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.



Michael Armbrister
Executive Director