

# WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION

## MINUTES

of the

### **February 26, 2026 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  
Clayton Kendrick, Patrick County  
James Tuner, Patrick County(V)  
Jonathan Wood, Patrick County  
Ralph Casey, Rocky Mount  
Fatemah Casey, Rocky Mount  
Tim Tatum, Vice-Chairman, Franklin County  
Ken Bowman, Pittsylvania County(V)  
Justin Brown, Pittsylvania County(V)  
Wes George, Henry County(V)  
Lee Vogler, Danville  
Jerry Adams, Patrick County  
Dr. Gary Miller, Danville(V)  
David Rotenizer, Franklin County  
Lucas Tuning, Rocky Mount  
Joe Martin, Martinsville

#### **STAFF**

Michael Armbrister, Executive Director  
Sean Campbell, Deputy Director  
Jacob Bullins, Finance Director

#### **ABSENT**

Aaron Rawls, Martinsville  
Dillard Jones, Pittsylvania County

#### **GUEST**

Kim Jackson, Creedle, Jones and Associates  
Danny Turner, Virginia 250 Car Project  
Chris Dorm, Virginia 250 Car Project

(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, Henry County-Personal Matter  
Dr. Gary Miller, Danville-Professional Conflict  
Ken Bowman, Pittsylvania County-Professional Conflict  
Justin Brown, Pittsylvania County-Professional Conflict  
James Tuner, Patrick County-Personal Matter

**1. Call to Order and Welcome**

The Chairman established a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

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

Dr. Pam Cobbler introduced Mr. Danny Turner and Mr. Chris Dorm who are involved with the VA 250 Car project with Mr. Joey Arrington and Arrington Engines. Mr. Arrington is out to beat the stock car world record of 244 miles per hour. Mr. Turner noted that some of the local representatives will be making a trip to Cape Canaveral in Florida to watch the attempt in person. Mr. Dorm proceeded to show the car in a slideshow presentation that the community has invested time and money in and handed out a book of history related to Virginia and to market help Southside Virginia and history. They have included UVA and their students in a Stem Project related to this project.

There were no other comments from the public.

**3. Consent Agenda**

- a. Confirmation of Minutes of the February 26, 2026 Meeting.
- b. Treasurer’s Report – June 30, 2025, July 31, 2025, August 31, 2025, September 30, 2025, October 31, 2025, and November 30, 2025.
- c. Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Under the Intergovernmental Review Process-December 2025 and January 2026.

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

**4. Presentation of the Auditor’s Report for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025-Creedle, Jones & Associates, P.C.**

Ms. Kim Jackson with Creedle, Jones & Associates explained their findings from the FY2025 Audit. They issued an unmodified or clean opinion of the statement of financial statements and statement of net position. Current assets decreased with cash and receivables representing the decrease. She detailed capital assets and balance sheet, the liabilities for accounts payable, accrued expenses and then the accrued payroll taxes withheld. The only liabilities and compensated absences are the accrued vacation that was paid out upon terminations. Ms. Jackson explained the statement of revenues, expenditures and changes in fund balance, which represents the end of year outs. The variance for your beginning has increased obviously, which always depends on funding and the projects that are currently in process. And the revenues were up \$12 million from last year with expenses also being up for the grant expenses. The budgetary to actual schedule which shows a breakdown of expenses by category or line item as opposed to just one lump sum in your statement of revenues and changes. There were zero significant deficiencies and zero material weaknesses reported in the current fiscal year and no evidence of non-compliance with federal regulations. The major program was the CS LFR funds which related to all the different VATI projects as you would expect. We did not have any findings and had a clean opinion on both the federal awards and the financial statements.

Mr. Wes George made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Kathy Lawson, to approve the Fiscal Year Audit for the West Piedmont Planning District. Upon vote, the motion was approved.

**5. Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan (Ride Solutions – West Piedmont)**

The Executive Director noted that this is a recurring grant that we apply for every year. One of the new requirements is a detailed CAP plan to commuter assistance plan to make sure that we have planned for the funding that we're going to get, how we are going to administer that, and the industries and businesses that we're going to work with. All of that is going to go into this plan now rather than just our annual application. Our staff, especially Joe Bonanno, worked on this considerably. We worked with DRPT, sending the plan back and forth several times. Worked on the comments that they gave to us to make sure that we had a good solid final plan that would be approved at their end. The goals and objectives have already been approved by the board.

A motion was made by Mr. Jerry Adams, seconded by Mr. Lee Vogler to approve the Commuter Assistance Program Strategic Plan. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**6. Resolution for the FY27 TDM Program Grant (Ride Solutions) through the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)**

The Executive Director noted that we completed the application, it was submitted in January, and the last piece that we need is approval from the board is a resolution to approve confirming that we will have the match and that we will administer the grant funds as written in the application. Staff recommendation is to approve this so we can continue the program.

A motion was made by Mr. Tim Tatum, seconded by Mrs. Kathy Lawson to approve the Resolution for the FY27 TDM Program Grant (Ride Solutions). Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**7. Continuation of Executive Management Agreement with STEP, Inc.**

The Executive Director noted that for the past six months, the PDC has had a partnership with STEP Incorporated which is Solutions That Empower People. It is one of the community action agencies that serve our region. There are 31 across the state of Virginia. In a way like PDC's, community action agencies are established by the Code of Virginia as our planning district commissions. I split my time between both organizations, and it has allowed us to really target the focus of the similar focus areas that we have. Specifically, housing, transportation, childcare, and economic development. Some that we know have been struggling in areas like childcare, and as we know, it is a very difficult situation across the country trying to locate adequate childcare. Affordable housing is another one and we have had some really good progress over just the first six months partnering together. Sean Campbell and I are wearing multiple hats while working on several projects. One that was notated at the last Executive Committee is that we have some preliminary plans to develop a housing development that's going to have childcare built into it. We are currently looking at looking at a 20-unit housing development that would also have a childcare center as part of that. That childcare center would not just serve those families living there, but also businesses and industries around uh around the site. We want that to be a pilot project, something that our housing staff saw. It has been a project in Richmond and some of the larger areas and we want to bring that here. It would alleviate some issues with transportation and other things that families face. The partnership there would be the that the PDC would be developing the housing, and the infrastructure and STEP, Inc. would be providing the childcare program. The PDC just

completed a planning grant that STEP had applied for and received from Virginia Housing to develop a program guide for some home improvements for families who have children and the quality of their home means that their children may go into the foster care system. We want to try to prevent that. The Department of Social Services reached out to STEP about a year and a half ago. Something that they saw in Patrick County because the population isn't as big in Patrick County, but they are still seeing this pretty significantly occur in the county. We have talked to some partners in Franklin County and that is apparently a problem in multiple areas. STEP is working on applying for some funding to help develop a pool of funds and we would work with rehab specialists here at the PDC and DSS to identify those homes, work with those families and make improvements needed to make sure their children do not go into the foster system. The final project is one where STEP would provide the service, but it's going to benefit the PDC. That is three great projects that have started in the first six months. The staff's recommendation is to continue this agreement for the next six months. Step pays PDC \$100,000 for these next 12 months for our services. After this 12-month period, the way that the agreement is written, the PDC and Step can negotiate a fee to increase as costs increase. STEP's board met last Thursday, and they approved it then as well. It would be ready to go once it is approved by the commission. Financially, it should help every uh everyone in our region. Staff recommendation is to approve this agreement for another 12 months.

The Chairman asked with that the continuation of this executive management agreement with STEP, Inc., what is the pleasure of the full commission? A motion was made by Mrs. Kathy Lawson, seconded by Mr. Ralph Casey to approve the continuation of Executive Agreement with STEP, Inc. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

## **8. Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Sean Campbell spoke on updates for the Housing department noting:

- \*That the regional housing development grant to this point, has expended \$650,000 of our \$1.2 million award.

- \*The Habitat project in Danville is now underway.

- \*The planning grant administration is underway for the Franklin County West Lake project.

- \*The PDC was today, just awarded a planning grant for a project in Martinsville.

Fleetwood Homes developed a duplex, the first manufactured home duplex that's been approved by HUD. Nice units starting at the mid-level and up with 2x4 frame drywall walls with no striping. Virginia Housing was extremely excited because since these were built, there have been about 40 of them sold but there's never been an actual development done with them. Currently, there are none in our region. If we can get this innovative housing grant, that will offset the cost of all the infrastructure. That is a \$500,000 grant, \$450,000 would go to the project and \$50,000 would go to the PDC for administration. Those units will sell somewhere right now, rough numbers about \$130,000.

- \*Danville Regional Foundation and Harvest Centers. Put together an advisory committee. I'm on the advisory committee. Our goal is to come up with solutions that will help not only offset the cost of building in the region, but increase the opportunities and stimulate economic development. The advisory committee was really put together to just set up the goals and put together the larger group. Virginia Funders Network is behind this and so is Local Bank.

\*Once this innovative housing grant is done and we construct these units, the PDC is putting together a whole study as part of this grant. It will lay out the road map to use these units for construction because on this project we went from being able to put 5 units to being able to put 10.

The Executive Director continued with a summary of the Executive Report.

- \*River Street has been invited to the March Board meeting and will explain how the Broadband is going and hopefully will give a better timeframe on completion. I do anticipate we will start to see connections in our West project, which is Henry, Franklin and Patrick Counties next quarter. It will start in March, but starting in next quarter, we will start to see those connections really ramp up and then through the rest of the year, you will start to see really good progress.
- \*The Patrick County ARC project, which is tied to Vati, and is part of the county's match is now under contract
- \*We anticipate the city of Martinsville, their MyNet project that's ARC funded, will get under contract by the end of this month or early next month.
- \*Franklin and Henry County are working with their soil and water conservation district.
- \*We received funding over \$350,000 to study storm water flooding across the region.
- \*Hazard Mitigation Update
- \*Multi-Jurisdictional generator grant
- \*Long-Range Transportation plan
- \*The state budget updates, VA PDC and all the PDCs across the state worked on some advocacy issues around some budget amendments. PDCs came together and asked that the General Assembly will consider additional funding for all PDCs. \$360,000 was requested per PDC across the state.
- \* PDC is partnering on two larger regional economic development initiatives. One is Tech Hub out of Virginia Tech, led by Virginia Tech and River Valley Regional Commission. Looking at additive manufacturing and advanced materials and how do we develop the workforce for those industries? How do we make it easier to recruit those industries? What do we need?

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

## **9. Other Business**

The Executive Director noted that the staff is seeking funding to expand the Life in SOVA website and brand. We have been, as staff, talking about what we do with our Life in SOVA brand and the website that we have built. That initiative came out of some of the COVID money that we received. We have a plan and are going to apply to Virginia Tobacco Commission for funding to be able to expand the website and continue to build that brand. This resolution is needed for the Tobacco Commission application. It authorizes the staff to submit the application on behalf of VTC.

A motion was made by Mrs. Kathy Lawson, seconded by Mr. Lee Vogler to adopt a resolution for Authorizing the Submission of a Virginia Tobacco Commission Region Revitalization Commission Grant Application for the West Piedmont Regional Life in SOVA: Growth and Expansion Initiative. Upon the vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The Executive Director asked the Board of Commissioners if a 6pm meeting start time is a better start time versus 7pm and the Commissioners agreed that the 6pm start time worked better for the month of March.

*There was no other business.*

**10. Comments from Commissioners**

There were no other comments.

**11. Adjournment**

A motion was made by Mrs. Kathy Lawson, seconded by Mr. Ralph Casey to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:57p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Armbrister', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Mr. Michael Armbrister  
Executive Director