

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GEORGE WASHINGTON REGIONAL COMMISSION**

February 22, 2016

The Robert C. Gibbons Conference Room
406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg Virginia

MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: Chair – Jim Howard **King George County; City of Fredericksburg:** Matt Kelly & Billy Withers; **Caroline County:** Jeff Black; **Stafford County:** Meg Bohmke & Laura Sellers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nancy Long, Caroline County; Ruby Brabo, King George County; & Paul Trampe & Chris Yakabouski, Spotsylvania County

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Ms. Laurel Collins, CCOA; Ms. Meghann Cotter, Micah; Rupert Farley, CTAG

STAFF: Tim Ware, Executive Director; Paul Agnello, Danny Reese, & Nick Quint, FAMPO; Diana Utz, GWRC; Kate Gibson, Danielle O’Leary & Wilfred Salas, CoC; & Leigh Anderson & JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Howard called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Quorum was present at 6:12 p.m.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Withers, with all in consensus, the agenda for the February 22nd meeting was approved as submitted with request from Mr. Ware to include update by Ms. Borst with the Farmer’s Market. Mr. Ware stated that the Farmer’s Market update will be included within his Executive Director’s report.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES (November 15, 2015) - (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Sellers, abstention by Ms. Bohmke, and all others in consensus, the minutes from the November 15th meeting were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that the Financial Report was included in tonight’s agenda packet. Mr. Ware stated that we are not only where we want to be but are already ahead and financially everything is in

the positive. Mr. Withers stated he was happy to see the Commission achieve such a positive financial position & thanked Mr. Ware for his efforts.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that we have long-time employee, Sandi Moore, who will be retiring due to health reasons effective March 1, 2016. Mr. Ware also stated that we have some position changes in our CoC department and turned the floor over to Ms. Kate Gibson for the introductions. Ms. Gibson advised that Mr. Wilfred Salas has been working with the CoC in a Vista position this past year. His tenure will end on Wednesday and taking his place is Ms. Danielle O'Leary.

Ms. Elizabeth Borst with the Farmer's Market advised that upcoming is a grant for the farmer's markets. Ms. Borst stated that the grant will allow for more markets and in more places. Ms. Borst stated that the farmer's market would also be applying for the MWHealth Care grant again this year and that last year the local farmer's market won the MWHealth Care's award. Ms. Borst stated that the food access program which is used at the farmer's markets that provides a \$10.00 match for fresh vegetables if the SNAP benefit are used for payment. Ms. Borst stated that this year the match has increased to \$20.00. Ms. Borst stated that Mary Washington Hospital's outreach goal this year is to combat obesity as this is now the number one health concern. Ms. Borst stated that they were moving ahead with completing and filing the non-status application and the application is due to be completed by March 16, 2016. Ms. Borst stated that a more formal report will be provided at the upcoming March Commission meeting.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS:

- a.) **Resolution No. 16-12, Recognizing dedicated service of Mr. Gary Snellings** – Mr. Tim Ware

Upon motion by Ms. Sellers and seconded by Mr. Kelly, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-12 was adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission.

- b.) **Resolution No. 16-13, Recognizing dedicated service of Mr. Dale Sisson** – Mr. Tim Ware

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly an seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-13 was adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission.

- c.) **Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Update** – Mr. Mark Stone, Stafford County Division of Emergency Management

Mr. Mark Stone advised that two years ago GWRC supported the formation of a regional Emergency Managers Committee (REPC) that would represent Planning District 16. Mr. Stone stated that the purpose of the committee was to track hazardous materials that were transported

through the region. Mr. Stone relayed that the committee was launched and supported by GWRC. Mr. Stone stated that the committee adopted by-laws, established membership requirements, etc. and this committee and its purpose were submitted to the State. Mr. Stone advised that the committee currently consists of 19 members and the State has granted temporary approval and will grant permanent approval when the VERC convenes at its upcoming annual meeting to be held later in 2016. Mr. Stone advised that both the counties of Caroline and King George have their own local emergency planning departments; however, they are also a member of the regional committee. Mr. Stone relayed that these 2 localities have brought a lot of ideas, scenarios, etc. to the table as they have already undertaken individually what the regional committee hopes to accomplish.

Mr. Stone advised that the committee is working on drafts that encompass larger REPC and the goal is to launch the expanded committee purpose in the spring of 2016. Mr. Stone stated that the efforts have been facilitated by and through Mr. Tim Ware and the committee is federally mandated and has representation from each locality.

d.) Supportive Housing Discussion – Ms. Meghann Cotter, Micah Ecumenical Ministries

Ms. Cotter advised in the supportive housing discussions that it focuses on those classified as “literal homeless”. This classification relates to those individuals who live on the streets, live in cars, live in abandoned buildings, etc. whereby these residences are not classified as a normal habitation. Normal habitation applies to those residents who live in homes, shelters, with family members, etc. Ms. Cotter relayed that this definition previously applied to those residents who resided in hotels and these residents represent a smaller population within the region. Ms. Cotter stated that the focus group is for the chronic homeless population who have been homeless for 12 months or longer; have been in a group home for up to 3 years; & per federal regulations also have been diagnosed with medical issues.

Ms. Cotter stated that as with all programs and agencies there are always too many people who need services and never enough money to meet everyone’s needs. Ms. Cotter stated that the state is now targeting its financial resources to the chronic homeless populations.

Ms. Cotter advised that communities have 3 types of housing that occurs where funding is applied and these are:

- 1.) Minimal Assistance – these are residents who are looking for a place to live that is affordable & they may need financial assistance with security deposits, etc.
- 2.) Short-Term Assistance – these are residents who have someone walk them through home ownership; setting up a budget; establishing a checking/savings account, etc. and this program is designed for assistance to be administered for up to 24 months. However, most residents only end up utilizing the program assistance for a period of 3-6 months.
- 3.) Permanent Supportive Housing – This is the most intensive component of the program. These are for residents who require rental subsidy and housing that encompasses 30%

of their income. Ms. Cotter stated that there are no time limits assessed to the Permanent Support Housing category and these services could potentially be for life if necessary. Ms. Cotter advised that this region is very fortunate because there are 8 properties that are owned outright so the agencies have leverage on how much rent residents are charged. The homes are owned mortgage-free so financial obligations can be flexible. Ms. Cotter relayed that prior to having these 8 properties, that the waiting list at one point actually closed because they had some residents that had been on a wait list for permanent housing for periods of 10 years or more.

Ms. Cotter advised that the percentage of chronic homelessness is now down to 58% since 2010, with less than 10% being housed. Those returning to homelessness has decreased as well as services from the police departments, the hospitals, or the jails. Ms. Cotter relayed that the national trend has now shown that the largest group of people who are chronically homeless is the 18-24 age group.

Mr. Withers stated that as there is a lack of adequate funding needed state-wide to combat the homeless population's issues but is the money that is received in this area used first to help our own residents first. Ms. Cotter concurred that the residents get the benefits and services first.

Ms. Cotter advised that for the chronic homeless group that immediate assistance is expended; however, it also focuses on a stabilization system and a continual support system to keep one from becoming homeless again. Ms. Cotter stated that the support work includes re-building connectivity to a faith community; encourage usefulness; encouraging one to seek, find, & keep jobs; encourage them daily to stay on track; on-going follow-up with the agencies; etc. The question was asked "who" pays for these services to be administered. Ms. Cotter stated that these services are paid for by HUD; by the Housing/Community Development agency; by non-profits; by partnerships; etc.

e.) Migration & Refugee Services – Ms. Laurel Collins, Catholic Diocese of Arlington

Ms. Collins advised that in working with Mr. Ware on the United Way Assessments that it was determined that board members had expressed interest on the number of refugees that have come into the State and Mr. Ware asked that Ms. Collins provide an update accordingly.

Ms. Collins relayed that since 2005 23,000 refugees have settled in Virginia and there are 9 separate agencies that work with the refugee population. Ms. Collins stated that the definition of a refugee is one that has had to flee their homeland due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, etc. The refugees need to have filed for refugee status. Ms. Collins relayed that immigrants and refugees are different as immigrants come to the state by choice and refugees have no choice. Ms. Collins stated that refugees have 3 choices: 1 – to return to original country; 2 – to receive permanent status in a second country; & 3 – re-settlement into a 3rd country.

Ms. Collins relayed that the refugees who come to Virginia already have a tie here – i.e. family, support unit, and they are expected to find housing, jobs, etc. so they too become legal citizens – they are responsible for paying taxes, etc. The first 90 days is used for establishing housing,

enrolling for health care through the free and financially based medical facilities, participation in ESL classes, enrolled in schools, and locating jobs. Ms. Collins stated that with the federal matches from the federal grant program that within 180 days of arrival the refugees are self-sufficient.

Ms. Collins relayed that since October 1st, 43 refugees have been admitted and 98% of those received were from Afghanistan. The Commission members stated that they understood the reasons why refugees come to this region; however, at the same time, that in order for the schools to accommodate the language barrier needs, the socialization skills needed, the educational needs that are required that this is a program whereby federal or state funds need to be financially supporting as the local school districts do not have staff specifically hired and designated to help and aid the refugee school children and these are districts whereby funding is already stretched.

f.) Resolution No. 16-14, Authorizing Execution of Agreement with the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation – Ms. Diana Utz – GWRC

Ms. Utz advised that Resolution No. 16-14 is asking for endorsement of the continuation grant for FY2017 from the Department of Rail & Public Transportation. Ms. Utz stated that this grant has been operating since the 70's and is used to fund the GWRideConnect program and other TDM projects.

Ms. Utz stated that this year, for the first time in 5 years, that a 5% increase is requested. Ms. Utz stated that the grant is an 80/20 match with DRPT providing 80% of the funding and the localities providing the additional 20%. Ms. Utz stated that the local match, with the requested 5% percent increase, will be \$4,447 and would provide an additional \$22,000 of funding. Ms. Utz stated that the increased funding would be applied to marketing expenses and administration salaries.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all in concurrence, Resolution No. 16-14 was adopted.

g.) Resolution No. 16-15, Approving the Slate of Officers to Serve In Fiscal Year 2016 - Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that as a result of Mr. Snellings from Stafford County no longer serving as a committee member to GWRC, that Resolution No. 16-15 is requesting the appointment of Ms. Sellers to serve as secretary for the remainder of the 2016 year.

Upon motion by Ms. Bohmke and seconded by Mr. Withers, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-15 was adopted.

h.) Resolution No. 16-16, Support by the George Washington Regional Commission for GO Virginia Initiative – Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that the Commission has received a presentation at a previous meeting in regard to the GO VIRGINIA initiative. As a result of the economic recovery and job creations largely due to government cutbacks in defense and other federal programs that for the first time in a half – century, Virginia is trailing the nation. So for the purpose of planning for current and future generations to be able to enjoy the opportunities that have been experienced, Virginia needs strong private-sector growth and a more diversified economy.

Mr. Ware advised that Resolution No. 16-16 will be utilizing planning districts in Virginia to become key partners in developing, reviewing and potentially administering regional projects that qualify for assistance from GO VIRGINIA.

Upon motion by Mr. Black and seconded by Mr. Kelly, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-16 was adopted.

i.) Virginia’s Urban Crescent – Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that a meeting was held at the University of Mary Washington on December 11, 2015. The Virginia Urban Crescent members met to discuss the following concerns regarding the Commonwealth’s share of funding for public education:

- 1.) Since FY2009, the Commonwealth has reduced its share of funding for public education by more than \$1 billion dollars
- 2.) The State funding per pupil inflation adjustment has decreased from \$4,275 per student in FY2009 to \$3,655 per student in FY2015
- 3.) Virginia’s local governments are now contributing double the amount needed under the current statute for public education
- 4.) In comparison with other states, Virginia is in the top 10 in both per capita and median household incomes but in the bottom 10 for its public education funding

Mr. Ware advised that a copy is included in tonight’s agenda packet that shows those who are in support of forwarding a request to the 2016 Virginia General Assembly and Governor. The request is that consideration be given to the Commonwealth increasing the required share of funding to ensure the State has a high quality public education system.

j.) Resolution No. 16-17, Amending the Joint GWRC/FAMPO Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan – Mr. Paul Agnello, FAMPO

Mr. Agnello advised that every 3 years, per federal regulations, the MPO's & FAMPO are required to update its Title VI NonDiscrimination Plan. Mr. Agnello relayed that this year's update resulted in only minimal administrative amendments and did not require a 30-day comment period.

Mr. Agnello relayed that a copy of the Title VI Plan is included in tonight's agenda packet and Resolution No. 16-17 is asking that it be adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission.

Upon motion by Mr. Withers, seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all concurring, Resolution

No. 16-17 was adopted. Ms. Sellers did ask that for future plan amendments that consideration be given to sexual gender references within the plan and that they be updated accordingly to either reflect a specific gender and/or to refer to the genders as being generic in nature.

k.) House Bill 2 Recommended Project Funding Scenario – Mr. Paul Agnello, FAMPO

Mr. Agnello provided an update on the HB2. Mr. Agnello advised that staff recommendations from the Secretary's Office, VDOT & DRPT were released in draft form on January 19, 2016. Mr. Agnello stated that the draft can be potentially changed by the CTB between now and May, 2016. Mr. Agnello stated that one change this year is that if a project is selected and approved for funding then it will be an "all or nothing" approach & no more partial funding will be allocated to a specific project.

Mr. Agnello stated that overall GWRC's projects did well. Three of the five regional projects submitted by GWRC were selected; all eight of the GWRC district grant projects were selected; and overall 11 of 13 projects in the GWRC region were selected. Mr. Agnello stated that district-wide, 19 of 22 projects submitted by the Fredericksburg District were selected.

Mr. Agnello relayed that a copy of the handout is included within tonight's agenda packet and the specific projects submitted and selected are listed for review as members choose. Mr. Agnello stated that the observations from round 1 of the HB2 process is that the smaller projects scored better than larger projects; projects leveraging some non HB2 funding scored better than those projects that did not have any funding allocated towards them; large highway widening projects scored poorly; & multimodal projects overall scored well – bicycle & TDM projects scored high; however, rail projects did not score as well.

Mr. Agnello advised that round 2 of HB2 is now beginning as the State has recommended that the PDC's & MPO's start the development of their project list now. July 1st is the pre-application coordination start-up date. August 1st is the date that the open period begins for applications to be submitted. September 30th is the last day that applications will be accepted.

1.) Other New Business (if any) - None

The February 22nd meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m. The next meeting will be held on March 21, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Timothy Ware, Executive Director
(Draft minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)