

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

March 20, 2017

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

MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: Chair – Jeff Black, Chair **Caroline County**; **City of Fredericksburg**: Billy Withers; **Caroline County**: Nancy Long; **Spotsylvania County**: Greg Benton & Paul Trampe; and **Stafford County**: Meg Bohmke

MEMBERS ABSENT: Matt Kelly, City of Fredericksburg; Jim Howard, County of King George & Laura Sellers, County of Stafford

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Dayna Klein, Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank; Randy Comer, Citizen; & Rupert Farley, CTAG

STAFF: Tim Ware, Executive Director; Paul Agnello & Nick Quint, FAMPO; Kate Gibson, CoC; and Diana Utz, Leigh Anderson & JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Black called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. with a quorum present; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA:

Upon motion by Ms. Brabo and seconded by Mr. Benton, with all concurring, the agenda was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 27, 2017: (Action Item)

Mrs. Bohmke advised that there was a typographical error on page 2. Staff advised the edit would be made after the conclusion of tonight's meeting.

Upon motion by Ms. Bohmke and seconded by Mr. Benton, with Ms. Brabo abstaining, and all others in consensus, the minutes from the February 27th meeting were approved as amended.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

None

DRAFT FINANCIAL REPORT:

Mr. Ware advised that the Financial Report is included in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Ware relayed that the total assets are \$275,659.06 and the total liabilities are \$133,499.62. Mr. Ware relayed that we are on schedule with our expenses and assets to date.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Ware advised that several months ago Mr. Eldon James, Legislative Aide, made a presentation to the Commission. As a result of request from that meeting, Mr. Ware advised that Mr. James is going to conduct a work session with the Commission for developing a 2018 legislative agenda. Mr. Ware stated the work session would occur in June and for the June meeting this will basically be the only agenda item to discuss that night.

Mr. Ware advised that the purpose of the work session meeting with Mr. James will be for him to receive locality input, comments, questions, feedback etc. from a regional perspective before appearing at each individual Board of Supervisors/City Council meeting to receive individual input as a regional legislative agenda. Mr. Ware stated that the Commission annually approves the legislative agenda that Mr. James is asked to present to the General Assembly and the work session meeting and the locality meetings will be included in his report.

Mr. Ware advised that at the last meeting staff was asked to proceed with pursuing regional cable franchise agreements from the five localities. Mr. Ware stated that individual locality cable commission contracts, agreements, start-up/end dates, etc. have been requested. Mr. Ware relayed that a committee is formed, comprised of both FAMPO staff and locality staff and that a regional meeting is upcoming in early April.

Mr. Ware advised the "Go Virginia" Fredericksburg region has been approved. Mr. Ware stated that all 9 regions state-wide were approved. Mr. Ware stated that the Fredericksburg region is on fast track with its strategic plans to be completed by the fall of 2017.

Mr. Ware distributed handouts from the Presidential Budget release provided by NADO (National Association of Development Organizations). Mr. Ware relayed that one handout is the President's FY2018 Budget Blueprint which includes elimination of Community and Economic Development programs as well as other programs. The second handout reflects the impacts of the President's FY2018 Budget Blueprint to regional development organizations.

Mr. Ware stated the first handout is the blueprint that recommends \$1.1 trillion in federal investment, with a \$54 billion increase in military spending that will be offset by cuts to domestic programs. Mr. Ware advised the blueprint is not a full budget request nor is it a mandate and that Congress is charged with crafting the annual appropriation bills that fund the federal agencies. Mr. Ware stated that hearings on oversight and spending will be set in the coming weeks. Mr. Ware stated that NADO is committed to advancing legislation and spending packages which will continue investment in the regional economies. NADO believes the budget cuts will negatively impact communities throughout the country and will be working with stakeholders to communicate the importance of the programs and will continue to advocate for the programs. Mr. Ware stated that

GWRC committee members can help by having their voices heard by contacting your congressional offices expressing concern over how local communities will be affected by the proposed budget cuts.

Mr. Ware advised that the second handout details the regional development organizations that would be affected if the proposed budget is approved by Congress. Locally, for GWRC, reductions to HUD could have impacts on the CoC program and reductions in Transportation could affect FAMPO. Mr. Ware stated that the moral of the story is that if cuts to programs are enforced then it will fall onto the local government agencies to subsidize the losses. Mr. Ware reiterated that the time is now to make local voices known.

FREDERICKSBURG REGIONAL FOOD BANK – Ms. Dayna Klein

Ms. Klein advised that the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank is one of a nationwide network of 200 Feeding America food banks. Ms. Klein stated that the Feeding America program is one of 73 partner agencies and 93 program partners working together to reclaim millions of pounds of food to feed the 34,000 people in the community that are hungry.

Ms. Klein stated that there are 347,000 residents in Planning District 16. Of this number, 34,700 residents are in need of food assistance and the Fredericksburg Regional Food Bank fills a vital role in meeting these needs.

Ms. Klein explained how the Food Bank works: it receives food donations from growers and producers; they hold food drives within the community and the food bank serves as the distribution point for the food to be distributed to the citizens. The Food Bank's staff and volunteers collect, repack, sort, store and distribute the food that is given. The Food bank serves as a community information and pantry reference site and offers programs on education and training. The Food Bank provides food to the 73 partnering agencies and food is distributed within the region to the shelters, to senior citizens, to children, to families, etc.

Ms. Klein stated that the value of a donated dollar provides 2 meals to the community. Ms. Klein advised that of a 100% budget, 93.4% is used for program expenses; 2.5% for administrative expenses; & 4.1% for fundraising expenses.

Ms. Klein stated that the hungry living at or below 185% of the USDA nutrition program poverty threshold for the State of Virginia translates to a family of 4 with an income earning of less than \$24,600. These people are classified as the Food Insecure population.

The Working Poor population classification applies to those citizens who are working and making minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. However, even though meeting the minimum wage amount, when the minimum wage is compared to the living wage standards, which ranges regionally from \$12.34 an hour to \$15.70 an hour, those earning \$7.25 per hour but less than the living wage in each locality are classified as the working poor from the community.

Ms. Klein stated that in 2010, Feeding American undertook the Map the Meal Gap project to learn more about the face of hunger at the local community levels. The Meal Gap is the difference between the amount of the supplemental food assistance that is available to meet the weekly needs of the food insecure vs. the number of food insecure residents living at or below 185% of the nutrition program poverty threshold, as well as the working poor who are not eligible for supplemental federal nutrition programs.

Ms. Klein advised that the Food Bank provides and sponsors the following programs: the pantry distribution program; the mobile pantry program; the Food for Families School Pantry program; the Kids on the Go summer feeding program; & the Food for Life – Senior feeding and Brown Box program.

Ms. Bohmke stated that in Stafford County the school band programs have been undertaking food drive fundraisers for many years with the understanding that food collected during fundraisers was being given to SERVE, which is a food resource agency that specifically services Stafford County. Ms. Bohmke stated that even though the food donated was still given to those less fortunate, it was disturbing to find out that they were not actually being given to the agency Stafford County thought they were supporting. Ms. Bohmke asked for an explanation on how this occurred.

Ms. Klein stated that the Food Bank had been asked by the Stafford School Band Development Committee to give two presentations at an annual meeting. Ms. Klein relayed that it was the decision of the committee to have the food drives and food fundraisers have the Food Bank be the actual recipient instead of it going directly to SERVE. Ms. Klein relayed that the committee wanted to make this an intra-county event and not just an inter-county effort. Ms. Klein stated that SERVE is one of the partnering agencies affiliated with the Food Bank. Ms. Bohmke asked if the Food Bank is the contact point for other schools, agencies, organizations within Planning District 16 who would also like to participate in fundraiser events accordingly. Ms. Klein concurred this is correct.

Mr. Black asked if Ms. Klein would forward to GWRC the current programs in place; the resource centers and distribution pick-up locations within the Planning District; information on how a school organization or local business could participate in a fundraiser; etc. so that GWRC staff can provide this information to each member as well as have it relayed to the local county administrators and city council. Ms. Klein stated that she would provide Mr. Ware with this information.

Old Business:

a.) Opioid Addiction Priority – Mr. Time Ware

Mr. Ware stated this is a follow-up request from the Commission in regard to discussing an Opioid Addiction Priority regional program that has been implemented in the Winchester area. Mr. Ware stated staff was tasked with obtaining feedback on how the program got started; what resources were needed to get it up and place; to potentially schedule a meeting with our members and those in the Winchester area; etc.

Mr. Ware advised that the Winchester program has been in place since 2014 and that representatives from the Winchester region will be coming to meet with PD16 representatives for a work session

meeting scheduled for April 4th. Mr. Ware stated that a word of warning that it is important to keep our ears to the ground for other initiatives that may be occurring in the region to prevent duplication.

b.) **Regional Broadband Priority** – Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware stated that there have been no new updates on the Regional Broadband Priority that was approved at the last meeting. Mr. Ware relayed that PD16 localities have been contacted with a request to forward GWRC the current cable commission contracts in place so they can be reviewed.

c.) **Other New Business** - None

NEW BUSINESS:

a.) **Continuum of Care (CoC) Update**– Ms. Kate Gibson, GWRC

Ms. Gibson gave a presentation on the CoC program that GWRC oversees. Ms. Gibson advised that a CoC is a federally-mandated network of organizations that work together to prevent and end homelessness within a given region through a strategic planning process. Ms. Gibson advised that the Fredericksburg Regional CoC covers the jurisdictions in PD16.

Ms. Gibson stated that GWRC's role is serving as the Lead CoC agency. With this role, comes the coordination of meetings; maintaining records; keeping CoC informed of best practices and national or state-wide goals and initiatives; submission of collaborative grant applications on behalf of the CoC members; conducting annual point-in-time counts; and coordinating special initiatives. Ms. Gibson advised that as the HMIS Lead Agency, GWRC oversees the regional database and submits data to both the state and federal funders (DHCD/HUD).

Ms. Gibson stated that the CoC serves the following citizens:

- 1.) Literally Homeless (these are citizens who are sleeping outside; sleeping in cars, tents, abandoned buildings or in emergency shelters)
- 2.) At imminent Risk of Homelessness (these are citizens who have no where else to go and are fleeing domestic violence, temporarily staying in a hotel, (* Ms. Gibson advised that HUD does not consider those living in hotels as being homeless, even though the Department of Education does), temporarily staying with family/friends, exiting hospital, jail or other institutions, or facing eviction within a two-week period

Ms. Gibson advised that on any given day there are 209 persons experiencing literal homelessness and this number includes 57 children & 152 adults being affected. Ms. Gibson advised that on any given day 553 persons are served and this number equates to 152 children & 401 adults.

Ms. Gibson advised that the Homelessness Response System works in the following ways

A request for assistance is received
Community Resources are utilized
Diversion Outreach begins (DV Outreach, Coordinated Assessments, Street Outreach)
Homelessness Prevention & Emergency Shelters are secured
Rapid Re-Housing Program goes into effect
Permanent Housing, Mainstream of services and support system ongoing & Permanent Supportive Housing is ultimate outcome

Ms. Gibson advised that all requests for assistance go through Coordinated Assessment. Street Outreach and Domestic Violence Outreach programs connect with individuals who would otherwise not interact with the system.

All persons requesting assistance are diverted from the Homelessness Response System whenever possible by being connected to other community resources. Those who cannot be diverted are connected to either Homelessness Prevention or Emergency Shelter. Prevention is for those who are at imminent risk of homelessness but not yet homeless. Emergency Shelter is for those who are literally homeless and need a safe place to stay.

Some households are able to self-resolve and move from shelter into permanent housing without additional support. Rapid Re-Housing helps households who need additional support to move back into permanent housing quickly. Permanent Supportive Housing is for those who are not able to sustain housing on their own and need ongoing housing subsidy and case management.

Ms. Gibson stated that the Homelessness Response System's annual funding comes from the following resources and 33% of the total amount is generated through collaborative applications:

State Government –	29%
Federal Government –	23%
Private Donors -	22%
Local Governments -	11%
Private Foundations -	06%
United Way -	06%
Churches -	02%
Other -	01%

Ms. Bohmke asked with the new president in place what impacts budget cuts would have on the CoC program here. Ms. Gibson stated that HUD could be affected but locally it does not appear at this time that the budget cuts will affect any major sources of the CoC's funding (Specifically Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant funding).

Mr. Withers asked what percentage of those persons receiving assistance are from the region. Ms. Gibson stated she did not have exact numbers tonight but did state that the majority of those who are served are in fact from Planning District 16. Ms. Gibson stated that she would obtain this information and forward it to Mr. Ware so it can be distributed to the GWRC members.

Mr. Withers also asked for those who are being served that are recently out of prison, how many of these citizens are staying in local hotels. Ms. Gibson stated that this population is not counted as part of the point-in-time counts and she does not have this number.

Mr. Benton stated that in Spotsylvania County, the homeless number is higher than Ms. Gibson cited because those citizens living in hotels are classified as being homeless. Ms. Gibson concurred that the definition of homelessness varies between agencies and the schools are eligible for different funding sources that are applicable for families who are in fact residing in local hotels.

b.) **Other New Business**— None

Upon motion by Mr. Withers and seconded by Ms. Brabo, the March 20th meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m. The next meeting will be held on April 17, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

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