

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

August 17, 2020
GWRC Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair, Cathy Binder, **County of King George**; Jason Graham & Matt Kelly, **City of Fredericksburg**; Jeff Black & Nancy Long, **Caroline County**; Annie Cupka, **King George County**; Tim McLaughlin, **Spotsylvania County** & Meg Bohmke & Tom Coen, **Stafford County**

MEMBERS ABSENT: Chris Yakabouski, Spotsylvania County

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Denise Nelson, Berkley Group; Todd Horsley, Ciara Williams & Kate Youngbluth, DRPT; Jamie Jackson, FRED; Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County; & Alex Owskiak, Stafford County

STAFF: Linda Millsaps; Leigh Anderson, Maria Cornett, Michele Dooling, Kate Gibson, Adam Hager, Jennifer Morgan & Sam Shoukas

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Binder called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. with a quorum present; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Binder read the Declaration in regard to the August 17th meeting being held in a virtual and remote setting.

*** Due to the nature of the Declaration of a State of Emergency due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pursuant to Code 2.2-3708.2, this meeting is to be held by electronic communications, via the web platform GoToMeeting. The catastrophic nature of this declared emergency makes it impossible and unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location and the purpose of this meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the public body.*

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA - Meeting August 17, 2020

Upon motion made by Mr. Kelly & seconded by Ms. Bohmke, with all concurring, the August 17th GWRC meeting agenda was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a.) June 24, 2020 GWRC Meeting (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Coen, with Ms. Cupka, Mr. Graham, & Ms. Long all abstaining and all others concurring, the June 24th GWRC minutes were approved as submitted at the August 17th GWRC meeting.

b.) July 20, 2020 GWRC Meeting (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Black, with all concurring, the July 20th GWRC minutes were approved as submitted at the August 17th GWRC meeting.

c.) August 10, 2020 GWRC Meeting (Action Item)

Ms. Bohmke advised there was a typographical error on page 3 of the August 10th minutes. Ms. Bohmke relayed the error was not content-related and GWRC staff advised the minutes would be amended after conclusion of tonight's meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Graham and seconded by Mr. Coen, with all concurring, the August 10th GWRC minutes were approved at the August 17th GWRC meeting.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: None

FINANCIAL REPORT: Michele Dooling, Director of Finance & Personnel

a.) Monthly Financial Report (June 2020)

b.) Year-to-Date Financial Report (July 2019 – June 2020)

Ms. Dooling provided updates to both the Monthly Financial Report for June, 2020 and the Year-to-Date Financial Report for July, 2019 to June, 2020. Ms. Dooling stated the reports are included in tonight's member agenda packet. There were no questions asked of Ms. Dooling from the GWRC committee members.

PRESENTATIONS:

a.) Environmental Strategic Plan – Denise Nelson, Berkley Group

Ms. Nelson advised the Berkley Group has been working with GWRC in the development of an Environmental Strategic Plan. Ms. Nelson stated a draft plan was completed on August 1, 2020 and a final plan is to be submitted by November 15th. Ms. Nelson relayed once completed, the final plan will be submitted to the GWRC committee members for review. Ms. Nelson stated the Environmental Strategic Plan looks at the region and its needs and then creates a coordinated scope of work to be completed within 10 years. Ms. Nelson relayed the development of the Environmental Strategic Plan is funded with various grants and includes impacts of DEQ guidelines, Chesapeake Bay Watershed compliance regulations, etc.

b.) GWRideConnect Presentation – Kate Gibson, GWRC

Ms. Gibson provided an update to the GWRC committee on the GWRideConnect program. Ms. Gibson stated GWRideConnect is a Transit Demand Management (TDM) program that is operated by GWRC and is one that serves the 5 regional localities. Ms. Gibson stated GWRideConnect has been in existence since 1974 and its purpose is to get daily cars off of the road by providing alternatives and options for commuters to get to work in lieu of using single occupancy vehicles.

Ms. Gibson advised the purpose of the GWRideConnect program is to reduce congestion, to improve air quality and to better enhance a higher quality of life. Ms. Gibson relayed the TDM perspective is to provide a connection to commuters for alternative modes of transit and the FAMPO component includes the Planning and Policy process.

Ms. Gibson stated that the programs under the umbrella of the GWRideConnect program include the following: Commuter Assistance Program; Commuter Parking Program; the Vanpool Connections Program; & the AdVantage Vanpool Self-Insurance Program.

OLD BUSINESS:

a.) Broadband Working Group Appointments (Action Item)

Dr. Millsaps advised the Broadband Regional Working Group is a follow-up to a request made by Mr. Black. Mr. Black stated that even though each locality has its own staff member with expertise working on expanding broadband options that having a regional group will allow for regional collaboration and potential financial benefits.

Dr. Millsaps advised that GWRC will serve as the regional point of contact for establishing meeting times, meeting missions, regional grant application requests, etc. Dr. Millsaps stated this discussion item has been addressed with all of the County Administrators and the City Manager and all localities concur with moving forward.

Dr. Millsaps stated there should be no more than 2 representatives serving on the committee from each locality and outside committee representation will come from the regional private sectors to possibly including representatives from Dominion Power, Rappahannock Electric, etc. Dr. Millsaps asked for committee member feedback on a representative to serve from a specific locality be forwarded to her attention by close of business on Friday, August 21st. Dr. Millsaps stated if GWRC concurs, follow-up will be made to locality officials for names of city/county staff who will be asked to serve on the committee. Dr. Millsaps advised that the list of member representatives will be provided to GWRC at the upcoming September 21st meeting. Dr. Millsaps stated that if scheduling allows, it is hopeful the regional committee can have its first meeting to establish goals, mission, specific areas of interest, etc. prior to the upcoming September 21st GWRC meeting so this information can be shared with committee members as well.

There was no official motion made; however, there was concurrence from all 5 GWRC localities to move forward with the committee formation process stated above.

b.) 5307 Funding Update – Dr. Linda Millsaps

Dr. Millsaps advised there is discussion in regard to 5307 regional funding allocations from GWRC committee members. Dr. Millsaps stated that the 5307 funding allocation requirements will be discussed briefly at tonight's meeting and will be an agenda item at the upcoming September 21st meeting for further

i. 5307 Funding and Vanpool Alliance

Dr. Millsaps advised there is committee discussion on van pool alliance; how funds are generated; how funding can be used; how to approach funding allocations for the future; etc.

Dr. Millsaps advised the Van Pool Alliance program is an established private/public partnership between PRTC, NVRTA, GWRC, private van pool operators; & Federal Transit Administration. Dr. Millsaps stated the van pool alliance funding the region receives is not distributed directly to GWRC; however, is allocated to PRTC and then disbursed by them. Dr. Millsaps stated that van pool operators report monthly data to the Vanpool Alliance NTD data base that reports route, miles, & number of passengers. The region then receives allocations based on the data transmitted. Once the funding allocation is received from PRTC, then GWRC commission determines how the funding received is utilized.

Dr. Millsaps stated that the program began in FY2017 and that there are specific project criteria that stipulates how the funding can be used throughout the region. Dr. Millsaps relayed that there are specific projects that are always eligible; other projects that are sometimes eligible; and another list of projects that are rarely eligible. Dr. Millsaps advised that for FY2021, the GWRC region received \$1,460,397 in funding from the Vanpool Alliance program.

As there is still confusion and different interpretations of how 5307 funding can be applied, it was requested for the upcoming September 21st GWRC meeting that the following occur: representative from PRTC to attend September 21st meeting; specific list of written federal regulations in regard to 5307 allocations be outlined and forwarded to all commission members; specific federal laws forwarded to all commission members; & any specific match requirements needed for distribution of funds for eligible projects also be provided.

ii. 5307 Reprogramming Request from FRED

Dr. Millsaps advised that Resolution 18-18, dated June 18, 2018, approved by the GWRC committee in regard to the allocation of \$1.3m that was generated from the Vanpool Alliance program that came back to the region be awarded to FRED. The 5307 funds were to be used by FRED for the following items:

Preventive maintenance -	\$625,000
Replacement buses -	\$225,000
Electronic fareboxes -	\$350,000

Dr. Millsaps advised that since Resolution 18-18 was approved, additional sources of federal funding have now become available to FRED. This additional funding source primarily came from the CARES ACT funding allocations as a result of COVID-19.

As a result of the new revenue developments, FRED is proposing to remove the current preventive maintenance project from the Vanpool Alliance funding source and fund this under CARES ACT. FRED is requesting the previously programmed 5307 funds be re-programmed to the following 3 high priority projects to include the following:

Transit Strategic Plan (TSP) – this is required by DRPT and this plan will improve the provision of transit service throughout the region. FRED will also include a comprehensive operational analysis that will include passenger counts & on-board surveys – estimated project cost is: \$225,000

Upgrade FRED’s Operations & Maintenance Facility- this would update current broadband to more secure fiber connectivity – estimated project cost is: \$120,000

Acquisition of related infrastructure for FRED to Connect to Stafford County’s Radio System – estimated project cost is \$350,000

Dr. Millsaps stated the 3 projects noted above are not eligible for CARES ACT funding; however, as capital/planning projects they do qualify for funding through the Vanpool Alliance funding source. Dr. Millsaps relayed the re-programming of the previous Vanpool Alliance funding would permit all 3 projects to be 100% funded without the need for a local match.

Dr. Millsaps relayed the total estimated price costs for the above-referenced 3 projects is \$695,000 and the current allotment for preventive maintenance is \$625,000. This would result in a \$70,000 authorization requirement from the Vanpool Alliance funding source that FRED would request as a future year allocation consideration. Dr. Millsaps stated that if re-programming request is approved, then all 3 projects can proceed.

There was concurrence from majority of GWRC committee members that all current projects that are eligible for Vanpool Alliance funds need to now be re-prioritized as other projects within the region may have more urgency. Concerns were also expressed in the time limit on when CARES ACT funding needs to be spent by & how COVID-19 funds can actually be utilized. More information on the process was requested for presentation at the upcoming September 21st GWRC meeting. Also requested for the September 21st meeting is a 5307 fact sheet submitted to all members prior to the September 21st meeting; a request for FRED to re-define the re-programming monies; a list of eligible projects Vanpool Alliance funding can be used for from PRTC; & a request for a representative from PRTC attend the upcoming September 21st meeting so the Vanpool Alliance program can be explained in greater detail.

c.) Executive Director’s Report – Dr. Linda Millsaps

Dr. Millsaps advised staff has developed a policy/plan in regard to a reporting back to work plan. This plan is not going to be implemented immediately but will be available for future re-opening. The plan details staggered employee/department office utilization; insurance of social distancing protocol; review of infectious disease plan, etc.

i. Grants Update

Dr. Millsaps updated on current GWRC grants/actions/etc. Ms. Long requested that a print-out-fact sheet be compiled for submission to committee members that details current grants/cost of grant/locality match requirements/purpose of grant, etc. for review at the upcoming September 21st meeting.

ii. **Staffing Update**

Dr. Millsaps advised GWRC has 2 new employees who will be assisting Ms. Shoukas with the CoC program. One is a year-long Vista employee who is paid from Vista funds. The Vista employee will continue to work with the homeless service providers to ensure state/federal regulations are being met. The other new employee is an intern who will be providing administrative assistant duties to Ms. Shoukas. Dr. Millsaps advised the 2nd round of interviews will be held next week for the part-time, 20-hour administrative assistant position who also will be working with the CoC program.

Dr. Millsaps advised postings/re-postings for the following FAMPO positions that include: the FAMPO Administrator, the Title VI Coordinator & a Transportation Planner are all active and applications have been received for each position. The applications are being reviewed by staff with the intent that interviews will begin over the next several weeks.

iii. **Banking RFP**

Dr. Millsaps advised that at the September meeting a new & updated banking RFP for GWRC will be submitted to the committee for review and approval.

iv. **FOIA Training**

Dr. Millsaps advised she is a FOIA Training facilitator. Dr. Millsaps relayed she just completed her personal FOIA training re-certification and that FOIA training will be provided to all GWRC employees next week.

NEW BUSINESS:

a.) Transit Funding – Dr. Linda Millsaps

Dr. Millsaps advised a packet of information was included in the August 17th agenda packet that highlights the various Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding sources that are available to MPO's and other entities. The packet was for informational purposes only and required no action.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Included in August 17th agenda packet for member review – required no action from the committee.

ADJOURN GWRC MEETING – The August 17th George Washington Regional Commission meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m. The next scheduled GWRC meeting will be held on September 21st at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Dr. Linda Millsaps, Executive Director
(Draft Minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)