

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

June 28, 2021  
GWRC Conference Room

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair, Cathy Binder (In-Person), **King George County**; Jason Graham & Matt Kelly (In-Person), **City of Fredericksburg**; Jeff Black (In-Person), **Caroline County**; Annie Cupka (In-Person), **King George County**; David Ross, Alternate (In-Person), **Spotsylvania County**; & Meg Bohmke (In-person) & Tom Coen (Virtual), **Stafford County**

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tim McLaughlin, Jeff Sili & Chris Yakabowski

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** (All attending virtually): Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County; Jeffrey Harvey, Stafford County; Jamie Jackson, FRED; Jill Norcross, Virginia Housing; Alex Owsiak, Stafford County; John Payne, Virginia Housing; Kimball Payne, The Berkley Group; Aidan Quirke, FRED; Brian Roberts; Jack Tuttle, The Berkley Group; & Rodney White, Spotsylvania

**STAFF:** Kate Gibson (In-Person), Leigh Anderson, Michele Dooling, Adam Hager, Jennifer Morgan, Ian Ollis, & Sam Shoukas (All attending virtually)

**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 June 28th 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 June 28, 2021**

Upon motion made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Cupka, with all concurring, the June 28th GWRC meeting agenda was approved as submitted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**a.) May 24, 2021 GWRC Meeting (Action Item)**

Ms. Bohmke requested edits and clarification be made on page four under COLA increases awarded by Stafford County to Stafford County Government employees. Ms. Gibson advised these edits would be made after conclusion of tonight's meeting.

Upon motion by Ms. Bohmke and seconded by Mr. Kelly, with Mr. Ross abstaining and all others concurring, the minutes of the May 24th meeting were approved with noted edits to be made after conclusion of tonight's meeting.

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:** None

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

**a.) Banking Services Update – Kate Gibson & Michele Dooling**

Ms. Gibson advised that all paperwork to the State in regard to the vendors for all of GWRC grants has been finalized and the final reconciliations with GWRC’s current banks are ongoing and should be completely finalized within the next several weeks.

**b.) Monthly Financial Report (May, 2021) – Michele Dooling**

Ms. Dooling advised all financial reports to include: Balance Sheet, Agency-wide Income Statement, Dashboard and Cash Flow statement are all included in tonight’s agenda packet. Ms. Dooling advised GWRC continues to move forward with project funding collections which helps maintain a positive cash flow. Ms. Dooling stated the accounts receivables and accounts payables have improved by 10% in comparison with last year. Ms. Dooling advised there is a 44% increase in cash balances since last year. There was a request to change the titles on the reports from those showing “profits” to “revenues vs. expenses”. Ms. Dooling stated she would make the adjustments accordingly.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**a.) Planning District Commission Housing Development Program – Jill Norcross, Community Outreach Regional Manager & John Payne, Officer for Strategic Housing and Program Implementation, Virginia Housing**

Ms. Norcross advised the Planning District Housing grant is a new opportunity this year for PDCs. PDCs can apply for a three-year grant program to produce the development of single-family and/or multifamily affordable housing units. Ms. Norcross advised the homes must remain affordable to those whose incomes do not exceed 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Ms. Norcross relayed the mixed-use developments must designate at least 60% of its total square footage for housing units and the housing units must meet the Virginia Housing designs and construction guidelines. Ms. Norcross advised that all 21 PDCs in the State have each submitted applications for the new program.

Ms. Norcross relayed that for PDC 16, the maximum award will be \$2,000,000 and will result in the development of 20 affordable housing units. Ms. Norcross stated the Fredericksburg region is assigned to Track 1 which is for PDCs with no current or previous housing development experience. Ms. Norcross stated Track 1 allows a PDC to establish its new project partners before developing the program analysis.

Mr. John Payne advised the consideration of grants to be awarded will occur in mid-July. An agreement begins after a grant is signed and then will need to be in compliance of the 36-month completion time frame. The housing grant provides for actual implementation and follow-through. Mr. John Payne stated that both himself and Ms. Norcross will be available to assist all of the PDCs with the entire application, construction and implementation process.

**b.) Strategic Planning Update – Kimball Payne & Jack Tuttle, Berkley Group**

Mr. Kimball Payne and Mr. Jack Tuttle, representatives from Berkley Group, advised they have been hired to assist the George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC) in the development of its new regional strategic plan. The purpose of the presentation at the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting is to outline a process for the plan development and to obtain feedback and input from the commission members.

Berkley advised the plan start-up will begin in July and will conclude with an adoption of the newly revised regional strategic plan in January of 2022. Berkley's goals are to assist GWRC with the development of a new plan that is relevant, realistic, action-oriented and implementation-focused that addresses issues of significance to two or more to the five-member locality jurisdictions.

Berkley advised the last regional plan was adopted in 2014 and this plan will be used as the springboard for work on the new plan. However, Berkley will also take advantage of new opportunities to consider how the environment with its associated challenges and opportunities have evolved since 2014 and identify appropriate responses to the changes and what they may offer. Berkley advised that active involvement from GWRC staff is expected and anticipated and that currently, Interim Executive Director, Kate Gibson, has already provided input and will remain as the primary point of contact to the Berkley Group.

Berkley stated the following questions to GWRC need to be considered into the plan development and these are as follows:

- 1.) What are the goals, priorities and actions of a strategic plan that addresses regional issues and suggestions on a path for GWRC to move forward on?
- 2.) Are there internal issues in regard to organization, staffing, funding policies, procedures, etc. that need to be considered for the implementation of the plan to be successful?
- 3.) How will the strategic planning process be coordinated with the recruitment of GWRC's new Executive Director?
- 4.) To engage the Commission within the plan development process, will Berkley be working with the entire Commission or with a specific representative group?
- 5.) What additional regional stakeholders need to also have a voice within the plan development process?

Berkley advised the following timetable will be put into play and these are as follows:

- 1.) June 28, 2021 – Initial briefing to GWRC
- 2.) July/August, 2021 – Surveys to stakeholders, local governing bodies, CAO's, etc. to receive input
- 3.) August 23, 2021 – Presentation to GWRC on the input received from surveys distributed and decision by Commission on attendees for participation in a strategic plan retreat
- 4.) September/early October, 2021 – half-day retreat to review draft regional strategic plan that will include mission, vision, goals, values, objectives and strategies
- 5.) October 2021 – Berkley Group to refine draft plan and solicit feedback from GWRC stakeholders
- 6.) November 22, 2021 – presentation from Berkley Group to GWRC on the draft regional strategic plan for the Commission. With authorization, GWRC will post the plan for public comment and will submit the draft plan to the local governments and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for review and comments
- 7.) January 24, 2022 – GWRC to conduct public hearing on draft regional strategic plan and the Commission adopts the regional strategic plan is ready
- 8.) January 31, 2022 – GWRC submits the adopted plan to all local governments, to DHCD, and to VHDA

Mr. Kimball Payne advised the strategic planning process will be funded by Virginia Housing and will also be in compliance of meeting stated codes and requirements from Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### **a.) Executive Director Search Update – Chair Cathy Binder**

Ms. Binder advised the next Executive Director's search committee meeting will be held on July 6<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. with the Berkley Group. Mr. Kimball Payne stated a new GWRC Executive Director should be hired in October of 2021.

### **b.) FAMPO Community Engagement and Equity Plan Endorsement (Action Item) –**

Kate Gibson

#### **i. Presentation**

#### **ii. Final Plan**

Ms. Gibson advised she was presenting the Engagement and Equity Plan as an action item at tonight's meeting for Ms. Feindt who presented the draft plan at last month's meeting. Ms. Gibson advised the new plan now includes both the Public Participation Plan and the Title VI plan. Ms. Gibson stated the draft plan has been released for the 30-day public comment period and no

comments were received. Ms. Gibson also advised the plan in tonight's agenda packet has been endorsed by all three FAMPO committees.

There was an initial motion made to accept the plan as presented by Mr. Graham with Ms. Bohmke seconding the motion. However, there were discrepancies in the Appendences section as well as significant member comments and questions. There was also a request from GWRC members to be in receipt of both the draft plan and the plan with the tracked changes so both copies could be reviewed. Due to the fact that there were concerns and unanswered questions, with more information and clarification requested, Ms. Bohmke rescinded her second to the motion, with a request that was concurred unanimously by the Commission, to table this item for it to be on the upcoming August 23<sup>rd</sup> GWRC meeting for adoption.

- c.) FY22 GWRC Budget Approval (Action Item) – Kate Gibson & Michele Dooling**
  - i. Final Draft FY22 GWRC Budget**
  - ii. Tracked Changes from May 24, 2021 Draft Budget**

Ms. Gibson advised the FY2022 budget was presented for review by GWRC members at the May meeting. Ms. Gibson stated that both a draft budget and the red-line version are included in tonight's agenda packet. Ms. Gibson advised the FY2022 budget does need to be adopted by July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Black stated he did have a concern with the locality dues contribution that is included within the plan. Mr. Black stated that each locality within GWRC needs to pay its full amount of dues and the current and local matches should be met by all jurisdictions. As Spotsylvania County is the only jurisdiction that is not paying completely the amount of local dues designated, it was requested by Chair Binder that for the August meeting Spotsylvania County provide the Commission on the reasons why Spotsylvania County did not pay its entire funding this year and also why they have not paid in full over the last several years.

As the FY2022 budget needs to be adopted and in place by July 1<sup>st</sup>, a motion was made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Black, with Mr. Ross voting no and all other GWRC members voting yes to approve the FY2022 budget as submitted.

- d.) Vanpool Alliance Section 5307 CARES Act Funding – Kate Gibson**

Ms. Gibson advised more information would be provided at the upcoming August meeting. However, Ms. Gibson stated the next phase for GWRC will be for the Commission to actually allocate the CARES Act funding monies to one of the three eligible transit agencies who qualify and these three agencies are: FRED, PRTC, and VRE. Ms. Gibson advised the region will be in receipt of \$3.6m that will need to be allocated.

Ms. Gibson advised that other entities such as Healthy Generations, etc. do not qualify for 5307 funds; however, they do qualify for 5310 funding. Ms. Gibson stated the 5307 funding needs to accommodate the general population and not a specific population. Ms. Bohmke requested staff to

confirm whether or not the United Way could qualify as an entity to also be a recipient of the CARES Act funding resource. Both Mr. Graham and Mr. Kelly stated they would prefer the CARES Act funding be allocated to FRED to ensure the monies remain within the region and not ultimately be dispersed to transit agencies that predominantly operate in the Northern Virginia regions.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**a.) Letter of Support for the Spotsylvania County 2021 RAISE Grant Application (Action Item)**

A letter of support submitted by Spotsylvania County for GWRC endorsement as well for the locality's 2021 RAISE Grant Application was presented. Mr. Kelly stated that as Spotsylvania County has not fully paid its local dues contributions to GWRC for the last three years and also voted against approval at tonight's GWRC meeting of the FY2022 GWRC budget request that he would not support a regional-wide effort to endorse an application request that was of benefit to a specific locality and not benefit region-wide.

Upon motion by Mr. Ross and seconded by Ms. Cupka, with Mr. Kelly voting no, and all other members concurring, GWRC endorsed the letter of support for Spotsylvania County's 2021 RAISE Grant application request.

**b.) Legislative Services Discussion – Kate Gibson**

Ms. Gibson advised there is a \$20,000 place-holder amount in the FY22 budget for legislative services. Ms. Gibson advised this was previously a budgeted line item in the GWRC budget; however, these activities were discontinued in FY21. Ms. Gibson advised GWRC would need to determine if the place-holder monies would be re-purposed or whether be allocated for the purpose of re-establishing new legislative services.

Mr. Ross stated he thought it was GWRC consent that supporting legislative services was not a worthwhile investment as each locality now has its own legislative liaison in place. The other three county jurisdictions seemed to concur that it was felt it is not a worthwhile regional item to support. However, the City of Fredericksburg stated they do support having monies designated for legislative services and this has proven to be of value to the city. Mr. Graham stated he felt it would also be a valuable asset regionally.

Mr. Black requested that legislators from the region be asked to come to a GWRC meeting where additional and future discussions could occur. Mr. Kelly stated that local delegates, senators, and representatives have been asked to participate previously in GWRC meetings and presentations and a limited number or no members attended. Mr. Kelly stated he felt having a liaison with experience and expertise to represent GWRC as a region is a worthwhile investment of a \$5,000 cost per jurisdiction. Ms. Bohmke also advised that Stafford County now has its own lobbyist and legislative committee who meets every Friday and she recommended this item be re-addressed next year after

the completion of the strategic plan is finalized. It was requested that staff still make efforts for local representatives to attend a GWRC meeting in either the September/October time frame.

**c.) Office Lease Update – Kate Gibson**

Ms. Gibson advised the current lease for GWRC expires on June 30, 2022 and staff is beginning the process of exploring options. Ms. Gibson advised this will be a closed session agenda item at the upcoming August GWRC meeting.

**d.) Meeting Format Update – Kate Gibson**

Ms. Gibson advised the June meeting is the last meeting for hybrid quorum requirements and in-person quorum eligibility will be in place beginning with the August 23<sup>rd</sup> GWRC meeting.

**e.) Executive Director's Report – Kate Gibson**

Ms. Gibson advised that Sam Shoukas is back from maternity leave. The CoC summer intern position ended last week and the CoC AmeriCorps VISTA position ends the first week of August. Position postings for a new VISTA is underway. The CoC received an additional \$486,000 in funding from HUD for non-emergency shelter care that will be available until March of 2022.

In regard to GO Virginia, the State approved \$215,000 for a project in Stafford County for CIT entrepreneur program within the region. This project was also a collaboration between the City of Fredericksburg and King George County.

For Environmental, work is underway for the drafting of a GWRC resiliency plan for flood planning opportunities and the Greenway Study for a trail connection project in the region. For GWRideConnect, 40% more applications have been processed in comparison to this time last year.

For GWRideConnect, Ms. Gibson advised an RFP for marketing proposals has been underway and proposal bids are due by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Gibson stated this RFP will be re-bid every two years. There were a total of five proposals received and these are currently being reviewed with a bid acceptance to be finalized over the next several weeks.

Ms. Gibson advised for Rural Transportation, the King George County transit report has been completed and a presentation will be upcoming to the King George County Board of Supervisors. For FAMPO, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the initial Smart Scale plans/projects list have both been completed. Ms. Gibson stated the recent transportation survey completed by FAMPO resulted in over 1,060 responses being received and this is the largest survey results received in FAMPO history. The responses were received from citizens in the FAMPO district and from the rural areas of the GWRC district. Mr. Black asked if staff could provide an informational sheet to be distributed to all of the Board of Supervisors and to City Council that promotes all of the GWRC programs to include: GWRideConnect, FAMPO, GWRC, etc. that

would define the purposes of each program; provide general information about the programs; provide electronic links, etc. Ms. Gibson advised this is something staff can provide.

**f.) Resolution 21-18: Approving the Slate of Officers to Serve in FY22 (Action Item)**

Ms. Gibson advised Resolution 21-18 is for approval of the GWRC Slate of Officers to serve in FY22. Mr. Kelly requested that Mr. Graham be the Vice-Chair in lieu of himself. Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Ross, with all GWRC members concurring, Resolution 21-18 was adopted at the June 28<sup>th</sup> GWRC meeting.

**g.) Resolution 21-19: Recognizing the Dedicated Service of Cathy Binder (Action Item)**

Ms. Gibson advised Resolution 21-19 was recognition of dedicated service of Ms. Binder who has served as the Chair to GWRC for FY2021. Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Bohmke, with Ms. Binder abstaining and all others concurring, Resolution 21-19 was adopted by GWRC at the June 28<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Ms. Gibson advised that correspondence was included in tonight's agenda packet for board member information and review.

**ADJOURN GWRC MEETING** – The June 28th George Washington Regional Commission meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m. The next scheduled GWRC meeting will be held on August 23, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Kate Gibson, Interim Executive Director  
(Draft Minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)