

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

September 27, 2021
GWRC Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair, Jeff Black (In-Person), **Caroline County**; Jason Graham & Matt Kelly (In-Person), **City of Fredericksburg**; Jeff Sili (In-Person), **Caroline County**; Cathy Binder & Annie Cupka (In-Person), **King George County**; Tim McLaughlin & Chris Yakabouski (In-Person), **Spotsylvania County**; & Tom Coen & Cindy Lamb, Alternate, (Virtual), **Stafford County**

MEMBERS ABSENT: Meg Bohmke, Stafford County

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: (All attending virtually except where noted): Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County; William Beale, GO Virginia; Meghann Cotter, Micah Ecumenical Ministries; Jamie Jackson, FRED; Ben Keddie, Coldwell Banker Commercial Elite (In-Person); Jill Norcross, Virginia Housing; Alex Owsiak, Stafford County; Kim Payne & Michael Zehner, Berkley Group

STAFF: Kate Gibson, Anne Marie Kluempfen, Ian Ollis & Sam Shoukas, (In-Person); Leigh Anderson, Michele Dooling, Adam Hager, Jennifer Morgan, & Todd Rump, (All attending virtually)

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

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA – Meeting September 27, 2021

Upon motion made by Mr. Kelly & seconded by Ms. Cupka, with all concurring, the September 27th GWRC meeting agenda was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a.) August 23, 2021 GWRC Meeting (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Cupka , with all concurring, the minutes of the August 23rd meeting were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

Mr. Cooper, CEO with the Thurman Brisben Shelter, provided an update to the committee in regard to activities at the Thurman Brisben Shelter. Mr. Cooper advised the shelter recently completed training for eight coaches/navigators. Mr. Cooper stated Thurman Brisben has had no COVID outbreaks and overall, the shelter continues to be functioning well. Mr. Cooper advised all units are at or near capacity and one room remains designated for positive tested COVID citizens.

Mr. McLaughlin expressed concern that the phone number for presenters to utilize via virtual access was still being given out to the public and it was his understanding that virtual access was no longer to be an option at either GWRC or FAMPO committee meetings. Mr. Black advised this is an agenda item that will be discussed later in tonight's meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

Ms. Gibson advised all ACH transfers and new business credit cards have been opened and activated with Carter Bank. Ms. Gibson stated the Atlantic Union bank account will remain open for the next sixty days to ensure no other transactions post before the final close-out occurs.

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

Ms. Dooling advised all financial reports to include: Balance Sheet, Agency-wide Income Statement, Dashboard & Cash Flow statement are all included in tonight's agenda packet. There were no questions asked of Ms. Dooling from the GWRC committee members. Ms. Dooling advised there is currently only one outstanding pay-roll due to Stafford County and this goal has been successfully maintained for the last nine months.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that all presenters should be attending the GWRC meeting in person rather than utilizing virtual meeting access.

PRESENTATIONS:

a.) GO Virginia Region 6 Growth & Diversification Plan Draft Priorities – G. William Beale, Chair, GO Virginia Region 6

Mr. Beale advised GO Virginia is required to provide a report to GWRC on its Growth and Diversification Plan that focuses on strategies and opportunities for Region 6 that they plan to pursue over the next two years. Mr. Beale advised the summary presented tonight is an Amendment to the FY2017 and FY2019 plans previously provided. Mr. Beale relayed the current report was prepared in August of 2021, during the height of the pandemic; however, still reiterates that the data and activities across the region reaffirm the industries targeted for Region 6.

Mr. Beale relayed the Region 6 targeted industries are as follows:

Aquaculture/Seafood/Commercial Fishing/Marine industry; Forestry/Wood Products and Paper industry; Manufacturing industry; Distribution/Logistics industry; Information/Data Center industry; and Professional/Scientific/Technical Services industry.

Mr. Beale advised Region 6 held seven stakeholder sessions with the designated partners to provide input on the current/future state of the region's economy. Session 1 provided the groundwork for establishing the importance of all three priority areas as fundamental tools towards successful economic development processes; to better understand the current status of assets of the priority areas for GO Virginia, Region 6; and to better understand the linkage of the three priority areas as they relate to the economic health to the entire region.

Sessions 2 and 3 divided the stakeholders into priority investment areas for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development; Site Development; and Workforce Development. Mr. Beale relayed additional individual meetings with stakeholders occurred to discuss the gaps within the region and to develop actionable strategies for recommendation to the Council on how the gaps can be resolved.

Mr. Beale relayed each project brought before the Council needs to have support from at least two localities and the four priorities for the region are as follows:

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem – what activities can be undertaken to foster this development and how can we enhance the opportunities for existing and new businesses to grow

Site Development – how can the region continue to collaborate to increase the inventory of shovel-ready sites to attract new prospects

Workforce Development – how can the region solve the three on-going challenges of aligning Virginia talent with current/prospective job opportunities; how to adapt the education/training programs to meet the business needs; and how to attract/retain talent available from outside Virginia.

Mr. Beale advised the next step in the Growth and Diversification Plan development is to obtain comments and feedback from GWRC and that similar requests are being conducted with all of the other GO Virginia counterparts. Mr. Beale stated the final Growth and Diversification Plan will be submitted to each respective counterpart in December for approval.

OLD BUSINESS:

a.) FY21 GWRC Annual Report (Action Item) – Kate Gibson

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Binder, with all members concurring, the FY21 GWRC Annual Report was adopted as submitted.

b.) Planning District Commission Housing Development Program

- i. Program Update** – Jill Norcross, Community Outreach Regional Manager and John Payne, Officer for Strategic Housing and Program Implementation, Virginia Housing
- ii. GWRC Program Plan** – Kate Gibson
 - 1. Grant Handbook**
 - 2. Grant Q&A Documents**
 - 3. GWRC 2020 Housing Affordability Study and Action Plan**
- iii. Approval of Grantee Agreement (Action Item)**

Ms. Norcross advised the Planning District Commission Housing Development grant that is a new grant available to all PDC's in Virginia was presented to GWRC at the August meeting. There was a request at that meeting from GWRC for additional information and questions to be answered for further discussion at tonight's meeting.

Ms. Gibson advised included in tonight's agenda packet is GWRC's Program Plan; the Grant Handbook; the Grant Question/Answer documents; the GWRC 2020 Housing Affordability Study and Action Plan; and the Grantee Agreement which is being asked for endorsement on tonight by the GWRC committee.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Graham, with all others voting no, the Housing Development Grantee Agreement was not endorsed by GWRC at the September 27th meeting. Mr. Kelly requested that his original motion be rescinded in asking that additional information be provided to GWRC on revising existing text document in regard to project descriptions and for more clarification/comparison as to how other Virginia PDC's are utilizing the grant monies. There was discussion from committee members as to whether according to Robert's Rules of Orders if Mr. Kelly could in fact make this recommendation. A substitute motion was then made by Mr. Sili and seconded by Mr. McLaughlin, with Ms. Binder, Ms. Cupka, and Mr. Yakabouski concurring to reject approval of the 2020 Housing Affordability Grantee agreement. The substitute motion was not endorsed by Mr. Black, Mr. Coen, Mr. Graham, Mr. Kelly and Ms. Lamb which resulted in a 5-5 tie so the substitute motion failed. Mr. Black advised the item would be deferred for further discussion at the upcoming October 25th GWRC meeting.

c.) Vanpool Alliance Section 5307 CARES Act Funding – Kate Gibson

Ms. Gibson advised GWRC is the recipient of 5307 CARES Act funding in the amount of \$3.6m that needs to be allocated to any of the three entities, who are eligible to utilize this funding for operational expenses only. Ms. Gibson stated the three eligible entities are: FRED, PRTC, and VRE. Ms. Gibson advised this item is on tonight's agenda as discussion only and does not require endorsement from GWRC at this time. Ms. Gibson advised that every dollar received and allocated will result in a dollar return to each of the three localities to include the City of Fredericksburg and the Counties of Spotsylvania and Stafford.

Even though endorsement was not requested at the September 27th meeting, a motion was made by Mr. McLaughlin and seconded by Ms. Lamb, with all other members concurring, to allocate CARES Act Section 5307 funding in the amounts of \$269,800 to OmniRide and \$2.2 million to FREdericksburg Regional Transit to offset FY23 jurisdictional subsidies, with the allocations per locality based on the jurisdictional breakouts. There was also request for any additional funding remaining after these allocations to be held so that they can be allocated in the future to offset

FY2024 locality subsidy requirements (City of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania County, and Stafford County).

NEW BUSINESS:

a.) SMART SCALE Round 5 Initial Project Selection – Ian Ollis, Director of Transportation/FAMPO Administrator

Mr. Ollis advised staff is continuing to finalize the upcoming projects for submission by both GWRC/FAMPO for Round 5 of the Smart Scale process. Currently, staff is continuing work with VDOT to finalize the draft format of preliminary pre-application data; project descriptions; project cost estimates; etc. Mr. Ollis relayed staff has worked on consolidating individual projects into one larger project so that smaller projects can also be considered for approval and this consolidation listing has come from input from locality staff. Mr. Ollis stated that each locality is still eligible to submit on their own up to five additional projects not included in either the GWRC/FAMPO project listing. Mr. Ollis relayed those projects for both Caroline and King George counties have not been consolidated as neither locality submitted more than five individual projects for consideration. Mr. Ollis advised that all preliminary project requests need to be submitted to staff by October 15th. Mr. Ollis relayed the preliminary project application requests will be approved in November of 2021 and staff will submit final project applications in March of 2022 to meet the April 1st project deadline date by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB).

b.) FY23 Dues Structure – Kate Gibson

Ms. Gibson advised that annually GWRC requests local funding allocations from the five member localities. The FY2023 Intergovernmental Funding application is due for submittal on November 5th and GWRC will be asked for endorsement on the requested dues structure at the upcoming October 25th GWRC meeting.

Ms. Gibson relayed the locality contributions and annual dues are core funds that are utilized to match state, federal and other grant funding for GWRC. The three categories for locality funding are: Per Capita dues; Fund Balance contributions; and Legislative Services.

Ms. Gibson advised in regard to Per Capita dues, from FY2009 to FY2019 the annual dues were set at \$0.6433. Beginning in FY2020, the per capita rate was transposed to reflect a \$0.6344 per capita cost. This error has resulted in GWRC under-requesting annual dues by \$9,874 over a three-year period. Ms. Gibson relayed staff is not proposing in the FY2023 funding request to recapture any funds from FY2020-FY2022; however, are submitting request of returning to the previously approved per capita rating of \$0.6433 in F2023.

For the Fund Balance contributions, in both FY2021 and FY2022, staff recommended including within the local dues request \$20,000, to be distributed across member localities on a per capita

basis, to be applied to GWRC's fund balance as per recommendation from GWRC's auditor. As the majority of GWRC's non-local funding allocations are reimbursement-based, funds must be expended, cancelled checks received, and reimbursements submitted/processed by the funding agency before the requested work has been completed. The GWRC auditor has suggested that a three-month fund balance reserve be designated. Ms. Gibson advised the recommendation for the \$20,000 reserve balance contributions for each locality are included in tonight's agenda packet for GWRC committee review.

Lastly, in regard to Legislative Services, in past years each GWRC member locality contributed \$5,000 toward a joint legislative program between GWRC and the Rappahannock Rapidan Regional Commission for the purpose of contracting with a locally-focused lobbyist. This lobbyist was to be an advocate on behalf of the Commission for direct representation to the Virginia General Assembly. In November, 2020, GWRC voted to discontinue participation in the Legislative Services funding allocations. Ms. Gibson advised the Legislative Services funding category has been included in the draft FY2023 budget request. Staff is seeking feedback from GWRC as to whether the funding request for Legislative Services should be reinstated. Mr. McLaughlin advised this has been voted down before by him and he would also not endorse this budgeted item for the FY2023 budget request.

As Spotsylvania County has not over the last several years contributed its total designated funding, there was discussion from other member locality representatives as to the county's intent for the upcoming FY2023 budget approval. Mr. McLaughlin stated that Spotsylvania County would continue approval of funding allocations to GWRC in an amount that is less than the designated per capita formulas until such time that existing by-laws are revised and approved. Mr. McLaughlin stated that it is the county's decision that if full amounts are paid then this would require that member votes become weighted as those localities who pay higher dues would also receive an additional number of board member votes that coincide with the per capita locality allocations.

c.) Meeting Format Discussion – Chair, Jeff Black

Mr. Black advised that the existing meeting format has resulted in board members being authorized to miss two in-person GWRC meetings with advance notice to the GWRC Chair. This allowance has offered board members the opportunity of participating virtually if unable to attend in person. Mr. Black asked for member feedback on what the meeting expectations should be from this point on. There was committee consent for the following to occur for upcoming meetings beginning with the October 25th meeting to include:

- Board Members attending in-person (a board member can access virtually for two meetings as long as advance notification as been provided to GWRC Chair)

- Presenters (whether GWRC staff or presenters from outside GWRC) that all presenters appear in-person and the virtual meeting option not be authorized
- Public to be allowed to continue participating virtually

d.) Executive Director’s Report – Kate Gibson

i. Upcoming Events

1. Unsheltered Homelessness Summit – September 29, 2021 – 8AM-12PM

Ms. Gibson advised the CoC will be participating in collaboration with the City of Fredericksburg in an Unsheltered Homelessness summit on September 29th from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon which will be held at the University of Mary Washington.

2. GWRC Strategic Planning Retreat – October 1, 2021 – 1-5PM

Ms. Gibson advised that designated GWRC staff and member locality representatives will be meeting with Berkley Group for discussion, comments, and feedback on GWRC’s Strategic Planning process. Ms. Gibson stated the Strategic Planning retreat is scheduled to occur in the GWRC conference room on October 1st from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

ii. Staffing Updates

Ms. Gibson advised that GWRC has hired two VCU interns. One of these interns will be assisting with CoC and the other will be assisting with GO Virginia. Ms. Gibson also relayed that GWRideConnect has hired a new Transportation Assistant who will begin working with GWRC on October 4th. Ms. Gibson stated this position fills the vacant position with GWRideConnect that has been open since March. Ms. Gibson stated that FAMPO is also looking to hire an intern for program/project assistance.

iii. Program Updates

Ms. Gibson stated that in regard to GO Virginia, presentation was already provided earlier in tonight’s meeting from Chair, Billy Beale. In regard to Environmental, the completion for the Greenway feasibility study is underway with a GWRC vote to occur in October and State adoption in November. For Coastal Management, for the Aquia/Dahlgren areas within the region, an outreach meeting with the State of Virginia is scheduled for October 15th. Phase 1 of the Coastal Management plan will be discussed and will focus on stormwater/river preservation. For GWRC, its draft resilient plan will be presented to the committee for review and approval. CoC has completed its first annual report and this has been submitted to localities for review. This report will then be finalized and presented to GWRC for approval. For GWRideConnect, we have seen a 15% increase in commuting options utilized from August 2020 to August 2021. The trend for commuting continues to become more prevalent for commuters who leave this region to work sites

outside of the region when commuting was essentially shut-down and non-existent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms. Gibson advised that rural transportation projects for both the counties of Caroline and King George are on-going. In King George County, FAMPO staff has completed survey/data for potential re-instatement of FRED bus services. The survey results have been presented to the King George Board of Supervisors for their review. In Caroline County, the first phase of the Ladysmith Bike/Ped plan has been completed and staff continues to work with locality staffing to keep the progress moving forward. FAMPO highlights are that all new consulting contracts have been signed and are ready to be utilized when needed. Ms. Gibson advised FAMPO has completed the first steps for the Air Quality Conformity updates and these revisions will be incorporated into the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Enter Closed Session (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Graham, with all concurring, the George Washington Regional Commission convened to Closed Meeting for the purpose of discussion on the following two items:

1. Discussion or consideration of the potential acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the potential disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect GWRC's bargaining position or negotiating strategy; and
2. Discussion and consideration of a personnel matter concerning the Executive Director's position

CLOSED SESSION

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

Upon motion by Mr. Graham and seconded by Mr. Sili, with all concurring, the George Washington Regional Commission returned to open session.

CORRESPONDENCE: Included in tonight's agenda packet for board member information and review.

ADJOURN GWRC MEETING – The September 27th George Washington Regional Commission meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m. The next scheduled GWRC meeting will be held on October 25, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

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