

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

May 23, 2022

GWRC Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: All Attending In-Person: **Chair**, Jeff Black, **Caroline County**; Jason Graham & Matt Kelly, **City of Fredericksburg**; Cathy Binder & Annie Cupka, **King George County**; Tim McLaughlin, **Spotsylvania County**; Meg Bohmke, **Stafford County**

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jeff Sili, Caroline County; Lori Hayes (Alternate), David Ross (Alternate), & Chris Yakabouski, Spotsylvania County; Darrell English, Crystal Vanuch (Alternate) & Pamela Yeung (Alternate), Stafford County

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: (Attending In-Person): Jonathan Gerlach, (Alternate), City of Fredericksburg City Council; (Attending Virtually): Paul Agnello, Spotsylvania County

STAFF: (Attending In-Person): Chip Boyles, Michele Dooling, Kate Gibson, Ian Ollis, Kari Barber & Anne Marie Kluempfen

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Black called the GWRC meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with a quorum present; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA – Meeting May 23, 2022

Upon motion made by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Cupka, with all concurring, the May 23rd GWRC meeting agenda was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

a.) April 25, 2022 GWRC Meeting (Action Item)

Upon motion by Ms. Bohmke and seconded by Mr. Graham , with all other members concurring, the minutes of the April 25th meeting were approved as submitted.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

a.) Monthly Financial Report (April 2022) – Michele Dooling

Ms. Dooling presented monthly financial reports to include: Balance Sheet, Agency-wide Income Statement, Dashboard & Cash Flow statement for the month of April, 2022 as included in the agenda packet. There were no questions asked of Ms. Dooling from the GWRC committee members.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT: There were neither any written comments provided prior to tonight's meeting; nor, any verbal presentations made at the meeting.

PRESENTATIONS: FAMPO Activities – Ian Ollis, FAMPO Administrator

Mr. Ollis advised on FAMPO's FY2023 UPWP, which is FAMPO's required work plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The UPWP was approved by the FAMPO Executive Committee prior to tonight's GWRC meeting. Mr. Ollis relayed the UPWP includes the following key items: The Infrastructure & Investment Jobs Act (IIJA) requires a new emphasis on planning areas that stipulates transportation planning needs to be coordinated with housing/economic development planning; freight congestion planning/management and Mr. Ollis advised FAMPO and FRA are sponsoring a freight summit in September of this year; Phase II of the East/West mobility study; a VCR trail, tunnel bridge and culvert study; an update to the VDOT regional Travel Demand model; a review of the FAMPO metropolitan planning area as a result of the recent completed census counts; development of a FAMPO Vision document; and identification of possibilities for a transit oriented development program.

Mr. Ollis advised the East-West mobility study was divided into two phases and the study goals are to assess east-west movements of people and goods currently through FY2050 and to determine what accessibility and congestion shortcomings are in the region and to design solutions to complement work already underway on the north-south corridors. Mr. Ollis stated Phase I has been completed and included transit and connections to transit. For Phase II, this is to be a development plan for roadways and bike pedestrian access options and the FAMPO consultant has begun this task. Mr. Ollis advised the East-West mobility study to date has identified 13 roadway corridors for future accessibility and congestion concerns; has identified seven roadway projects that are ready to move forward for Smart Scale project application considerations; and has identified a high-level evaluation of I-95 access points. In regard to bicycle and pedestrian items, four bike/ped/multi-use path projects have been identified and have had connectivity and access components reviewed that are also in the Smart Scale readiness application consideration process, and includes identification of an access for the train station analysis data. For transit, Mr. Ollis stated two large transit projects have been recommended that will improve accessibility and congestion concerns within the region and these are the following: a high-capacity transit trunk route (BRT style) for the City of Fredericksburg and the County of Spotsylvania; development of a new transit transfer center in Stafford County; and an additional high-level transit corridor analysis for FRED Transit TSP access for train station analysis.

Mr. Ollis stated the VCR tunnel and bridge study will have a consultant to provide recommendations for evaluating options to cross over US Route 1, Route 3 and I-95. These recommendations could result in either/or bridges, tunnels or culverts being recommended. Mr. Ollis advised that as soon as federal approval has been granted, this study is expected to start immediately after the approval has been received.

Lastly, Mr. Ollis stated that FAMPO and FRA are co-sponsoring an upcoming freight summit which is scheduled to occur in September of 2022. Mr. Ollis stated the region's freight corridors have been identified as being the worst in the State of Virginia. Mr. Ollis advised the following

stakeholders will be asked to participate in the upcoming summit which include VDOT, the Office of Intermodal Planning, DRPT, PRTC, CSX, freight operators, FAMPO and locality staff, etc. Mr. Ollis stated that specific questions will be asked for identification of the existing difficult intersections; what causes the delays; what difficulties exist with freight; what are the environmental issues, where are the worst congestion problems; and are VTRAN needs capturing freight movement problems, etc. Mr. Ollis advised the summit results and findings will be provided to both the FAMPO and GWRC committees for their review.

OLD BUSINESS:

a.) GWRC Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget– Chip Boyles

Mr. Boyles advised that the GWRC FY2023 Operational budget is being presented to the committee for review and approval. Mr. Boyles stated the FY2023 budget has previously been reviewed by GWRC's Executive Committee. Mr. Boyles advised that the GWRC budget is a component in the UPWP, which needs endorsement prior to final budget approval as well. Mr. Boyles relayed the UPWP was approved by FAMPO's Executive Committee prior to tonight's GWRC meeting beginning. Mr. Boyles stated the summary of the GWRC Strategic Plan for FY2022-2027 is included in tonight's agenda packet for member review. Mr. Boyles stated the FY2023 budget request needs to be adopted by July 1st. Mr. Boyles stated the budget request is a collaborative component to the newly developed GWRC Strategic Plan. Mr. Boyles stated the three key financial components for the FY2023 budget include the following: a 4.5% cost of living salary adjustment to all GWRC employees that will be effective beginning July 1, 2022; a new CoC/Housing Planner's position request; and a new Environmental Planner's position to also be filled. Mr. Boyles stated the per capita local government contribution of \$0.64 remained the same rate that has been implemented over the last several years. Mr. Boyles also relayed that each respective locality to include: the City of Fredericksburg and the Counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford are fully funding the budgeted amount for FY2023. Mr. Boyles stated the salary for the Executive Director is now based on a full-year and the Deputy Director's position will now reflect more charges to indirect costs, and not to programs, as her duties/assignments have been re-allocated to increased executive level responsibilities.

i. Review of Recommended FY23 GWRC Budget

Mr. Boyles reviewed the budget and asked for member questions/comments. In regard to the GWRideConnect program, Chairman, Mr. Black, asked if participation numbers, etc. could be provided at each monthly GWRC meeting so comparisons can be made on pre-COVID participation; COVID participation; and after COVID numbers so members can review data on a consistent basis. Ms. Gibson advised the data numbers/calculations, etc. are comprised monthly for grant requirements so can also be provided to GWRC members for review.

ii. Resolution 22-17: GWRC FY2023 Annual Operating Budget (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Bohmke, with all members concurring, the GWRC FY2023 operating budget was approved as recommended at the May 23rd GWRC meeting.

b.) Update on GWRC Affordable Housing Preliminary Grant Applications – Chip Boyles

Mr. Boyles advised information was submitted at the last GWRC meeting in regard to submittal of preliminary housing grant applications. Mr. Boyles advised that invitations for applications have been submitted to the four non-profit/governmental entities. Mr. Boyles relayed to-date, two applications have been received for review. Mr. Boyles stated the two application requests are similar in nature and each is asking for financial consideration of \$90,000 per house. Mr. Boyles advised an Advisory Board will be meeting to review each application and make recommendations to GWRC whether the application meets the grant criteria and whether it should be moved forward for further review/endorsement. Mr. Boyles stated more information and a recommendation would be forthcoming to the committee at the upcoming June 27th GWRC meeting. Ms. Bohmke asked if a list of the advisory board committee members could be forwarded to GWRC members and Mr. Boyles advised staff would send this out.

c.) Update on VDOT Smart Scale Projects for GWRC – Ian Ollis & Kari Barber, FAMPO

Ms. Barber provided an update on the VDOT Smart Scale project process. Ms. Barber stated the preliminary FAMPO project list has been completed and the top four of the five projects submitted have been endorsed by both the FAMPO Technical Committee and the FAMPO Policy committee. This project list will be reviewed for a final time by FAMPO staff and then submitted to VDOT for project consideration and endorsement. Ms. Barber stated there are still five projects remaining for consideration from GWRC. The five GWRC projects include three projects from Stafford County, one project from the City of Fredericksburg, and one combined project for the City of Fredericksburg and the County of Spotsylvania. Ms. Barber stated GWRC will need to endorse which of the four from the list of five that will be submitted to VDOT for project consideration and endorsement. Ms. Barber advised the GWRC list would need to be finalized by the upcoming June 27th GWRC meeting. Ms. Barber stated the final application deadline is August 1st for VDOT consideration.

NEW BUSINESS:

a.) Support for Spotsylvania County 2022 RAISE Grant Application for I-95 Exit 126/Route 1 Transportation Improvements– Chip Boyles

i. RAISE Grant Application Support Request

Mr. Boyles advised Spotsylvania County is seeking GWRC support for a federal grant application for the I-95 Exit 126/US Route 1 revitalization project. Mr. Boyles stated the request from the county is for letters of support from the community and involves no financial responsibility from the supporting agencies. Mr. Boyles advised the funding, if awarded, will come from the US Department of Transportation's FY2022 National Infrastructure Investments RAISE Grant program.

ii. RAISE Grant Application GWRC Support Letter (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. McLaughlin, with all other members concurring, the GWRC Commission members endorsed a letter of support to be submitted on Spotsylvania County's behalf.

b.) Request for Proposals for GWRC Financial Auditing Services – Chip Boyles

Mr. Boyles advised proposals for GWRC financial auditing services have been conducted and GWRC received two proposals for consideration for the FY2023 audit from two companies. Mr. Boyles stated the current auditing firm has been utilized since 2010. The current firm has submitted one of the bids and a previous auditing firm that had been hired prior to 2010 submitted the second bid. Mr. Boyles stated staff would be meeting with both firms to secure pricing, auditing time frames, etc. from both companies and a recommendation will be presented to GWRC for endorsement at the upcoming June 27th GWRC meeting. Mr. Boyles stated that industry standards recommend that every five years a new auditing firm be engaged or a new partner within the existing auditing firm be utilized.

c.) Executive Director's Report – Chip Boyles

i. June Agenda – Election of Officers

Mr. Boyles advised on the upcoming June 27th GWRC agenda will be the election of officers for the upcoming year. Mr. Boyles stated this election process will continue as the flow process dictates per the GWRC By-laws. Mr. Boyles stated the rotation cycle for the upcoming year will be as follows: Chairman – Jason Graham; First Vice-Chair – Meg Bohmke; Second-Vice-Chair – Tim McLaughlin; Treasurer, Cathy Binder; and Secretary – Jeff Black.

ii. Staffing Updates –

Mr. Boyles advised the Executive Director’s staffing updates are included in tonight’s agenda packet for member review. Mr. Boyles advised the next GWRC meeting will be held on June 27th and there will be no GWRC meeting for the month of July. Mr. Boyles stated that at an upcoming meeting, a presentation will be given to the committee from RIVERE. RIVERE is a regional non-profit agency who is seeking to lease a portion of a park in Stafford County for development of an ecological learning, research and meeting center. Ms. Bohmke stated RIVERE has made a presentation to Stafford County which was quite lengthy and she asked that the presenters be asked to keep their presentation within a five-to-ten-minute time frame. Ms. Bohmke stated the initial presentation to Stafford County was not overly positive and left many unanswered questions from board members. Mr. McLaughlin asked, as this is a non-profit entity, if GWRC staff would determine entity legitimacy, background information, success-rate projects, etc. prior to them being scheduled for a presentation at an upcoming GWRC meeting.

iii. Program Updates

i. Regional Housing Initiative

Mr. Boyles advised staff has been participating with the Region 16 Health Department in their Community Health Improvement Plan. As one of the priority strategies that have emerged from the plan is a facilitation of a regional convening and facilitation of stakeholders for housing supply and its coordination for health, transportation, economic and social services. Mr. Boyles stated GWRC has been identified as a pivotal agency who is centered in each of the categories listed above. Mr. Boyles relayed GWRC will be looking into applying for two Mary Washington Health System Foundation grants that would be used to fund a capacity building program to develop the framework for providing a regional housing facilitation program and a grant to implement the developed framework. Mr. Boyles stated grant applications will become available in June and the GWRC committee will be updated at the August or September GWRC meetings.

ii. Intent to apply for Regional Septic/Water System Improvement Grants

Mr. Boyles stated GWRC has been working with the Virginia Department of Health and Environmental consultants and the Berkley Group for consideration of a state initiative to form a regional septic/water system improvement grant for Planning District 16. Mr. Boyles stated that currently there is no regional or local entity providing this grant service to residents in this region who have failing septic or water systems on their properties. Mr. Boyles stated Virginia Department of Health provides assistance from Richmond and to date, they have seen very few applications submitted from our region. Mr. Boyles relayed other PDC’s within the state have participated in the grant program and do provide services to their respective residents for system upgrades to either/or a failing septic or water system. Mr. Boyles stated staff would report back

to GWRC with a recommendation on whether this could be something Planning District 16 would wish to pursue.

CORRESPONDENCE: Link for Intergovernmental Review Documents provided to GWRC committee members for member review as desired

ADJOURN GWRC MEETING – The May 23rd George Washington Regional Commission meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m. The next scheduled GWRC meeting will be held on June 27, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Chip Boyles, Executive Director
(Draft Minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)