



Central Virginia Planning  
District Commission  
828 Main Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lynchburg, VA 24504  
Office: (434) 845-3491  
cvpdc.org

**Central Virginia Planning District Commission  
Executive Committee Meeting – Draft Minutes  
July 18, 2024; 5:00 PM**

**Meeting Location - CVPDC Offices  
828 Main Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Lynchburg, VA 24504**

**Members Present:**

Chairman Richard Conner, Appomattox Town  
Frank Rogers, Campbell County  
Tom Lawton, Campbell County  
Greg Patrick, City of Lynchburg, Proxy for Wynter Benda  
Jeremy Bryant, Amherst County  
Drew Wade, Amherst County  
Sara McGuffin, Town of Amherst  
Dwayne Tuggle, Town of Amherst  
Terry McGhee, Appomattox Town  
Reggie Bennett, Altavista Town  
Gary Shanaberger, Altavista Town  
Bruce Johannessen, Town of Bedford  
John Sharp, Bedford County  
Ken Wolfskill, Appomattox County

**Member Joining Virtually:**

John Spencer, Appomattox County

**Staff Present:**

Alec Brebner  
Sandy Dobyns  
Kelly Hitchcock  
Mariel Fowler  
Patti Lassiter  
Kelly Hitchcock  
Traci Blido

### **Others Present:**

Jerry Silva, VA Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission  
Energy Ingenuity Fund - Guest Speaker  
Kim Soerensen, United Way of CV – Childcare and Workforce  
Development Center – Guest Speaker  
Kate Jones, Berkley Group – CVA Flood Resilience Plan  
Kim Gregory - CVCC

### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Richard Conner welcomed the Board and guests. The meeting started at 5:01PM.

### **2. Consideration of Requests for Electronic Participation**

John Spencer joined the meeting virtually. Richard entertained a motion to approve the electronic participation. Sara made the motion, and it was seconded by Drew. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

### **3. Special Guests: Responding to Economic Development in the Region**

- a. Jerry Silva virtually joined the meeting to discuss a new opportunity called the Energy Ingenuity Fund that the Tobacco Commission has recently launched. Jerry gave a brief overview of the Energy Ingenuity Funds primary focus being in the south and southwest regions of Virginia. They have been focusing on all types of energy projects, EV Chargers, solar battery storage, as well as environmental planning components for waste to energy.

After finishing the first round of applications, there is still an allocation of 6,000,000 for each region. After speaking with Alec, Jerry feels that there is more of an opportunity for stakeholder engagement if he goes into the districts and communities to communicate with the people who know their needs. He can then discuss what opportunities may be available at the local level. Jerry stated that they're not necessarily looking for big projects but projects that are creative in nature to help with the challenges of bringing businesses and workers to the regions. Jerry explained that sometimes the requirements to meet the energy and reliability for a new business are just not there in a particular region. The Tobacco Commission is looking for ways to assist with additional economic development in some areas. Currently, Jerry is looking at lots that have been vacant for some time to make a connection for a natural gas line. These are the type of projects the Tobacco Commission is looking for. Discussion ensued regarding different opportunities, current applications, and specific projects being requested. In closing, Jerry mentioned that applications can be submitted even during a non-open period. It just won't be considered until the next Tobacco Commission meeting.

- b. Alec introduced the next guest speakers, Kim Soerenson, United Way of CVA and Kim Gregory, CV Community College, to speak with the Board about the work they are doing with childcare and workforce development in our region. Kim Soerenson presented a PowerPoint highlighting the lack of childcare facilities and what impact that has on the workforce. With this being such a big reality in our regions, Kim Soerenson along with a

group of people and companies started pitching the idea, “What if we create a childcare facility center?” – a center that is not only a childcare facility but also a workforce center. This original idea came from the United Way of Southwest VA, specifically Abingdon. They revitalized an old Kmart into a childcare and workforce facility for over 300 children. This has gotten the approval of the Governor. The Abingdon group partnered with a grocery store who made an investment of \$4 million dollars. Following their example, Kim found partners to help get the project started. Partners like Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, BWXT, CVA Community College, Lynchburg Economic Development and Tourism Department, and Virginia Career Works in AmeriCorps. Each of these partners plays a critical role in getting this project started.

This facility will offer childcare from birth to four. Finding affordable childcare is very difficult. It can cost a minimum of 10% of your income. What was discovered during the pandemic is there is a real need for childcare for workers in the region, but companies don’t want to be in the childcare business. A recent study by Ready Regions in 2023 stated the lack of high-quality and affordable childcare is costing the US economy \$122 billion in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.

The plan is to have a childcare center where 1/3 of the slots go to lower-income working families. This would be funded by the state and federal programs. The next 1/3 of the slots are reserved for BWXT and other corporate partners that have already made a commitment. The last 1/3 slots will be open to the public. Kim Soerensen went on to discuss the corporate benefits of a childcare center. The cost of onboarding a new employee could have this benefit included to provide free or reduced cost for childcare. With the State of Virginia and the Federal governments offering tax credits, this should be appealing to employers. An employer that offers childcare has more productive, happy, and loyal employees. Kim is currently looking at locations on Wards Road. She is hopeful that by the end of this year or the beginning of next, the location will be secured.

#### **4. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes, May 16, 2024**

Richard asked if there were any changes to the minutes of the May 16 meeting. No discussion or other changes were made. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Sara and seconded by Drew. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

#### **5. Position Reclassification: Deputy Director of Workforce Development**

Alec presented the request from Traci Blido, Executive Director of Virginia Career Works-Central Region that Tim Saunder’s position be reclassified to Assistant Director. Alec stated that due to budget constraints, staffing changes have been made within the organization. Three full-time employees have been reduced to two full-time employees within the organization. This has caused some shifting of duties to Tim. At its last meeting, the Workforce Development Board approved this title change and it’s asking that the PDC consider it as well. This would also align the pay range to match the newly assigned duties.

Frank asked if the Commission was being asked to give any funding for a pay increase. Alec answered no. “Is the Board just being asked to look structurally at Tim’s job description and title?” Alec answered yes. Frank said he appreciated all Tim’s support and if he’s taken on

additional duties, his job description should reflect that. Frank made a motion to approve the job description and title change. It was seconded by Drew. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

**6. Central Virginia Flood Resilience Plan: Kate Jones, Berkley Group**

Alec gave an introduction for Kate Jones with Berkley Group. She is a licensed landscape architect and planner who specializes in improving the built environment to support nature systems. She is the project manager for this project. It's a \$54,000 community flood preparedness fund grant with a \$6,000 match. Kate's presentation tonight is a revision to the 2020 Hazard Mitigation plan. She has been working alongside staff, both in the region and localities, to develop recommendations on flood resilience and heat impacts. Within the plan will be a section for each locality as well as a regional plan. This will be an introduction to the plan and then over the next couple of months you will see documents and presentations, one on one, with the localities. Once the plans are completed and the PDC is satisfied, the plans will come back to the Commission for final approval. There is no action required at this time.

Kate mentioned that the fund was established in 2020 to assist localities in Virginia to reduce the impacts of flooding. She went on to discuss how the funding allows localities to apply for a variety of projects, but they can also apply for funding to create a resilience plan. This is what CVPDC is doing now. The first step is to create a plan. This plan will be a mix of important information that each locality can use to apply for funding. In that regard, we do look at vulnerable communities in the region and consider that as part of the plan. The program itself asks grant applicants to prioritize what are called nature-based solutions to flood risk. Kate reviewed the timeline for the project, starting with the kickoff in August of last year. Then the Berkley Group was able to meet with each locality individually and have a session to discuss what their concerns were. From those meetings, a common concern was road infrastructure. In the winter, Berkley Group compiled a lot of new data from the captured information. They also reviewed the 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan, as it is a very important document to build upon. In the spring, Berkley Group went back with more questions, within each locality, through community engagement. Again, Berkley came away with another layer of information and now we have a finalized draft. This document will be available for Commissioners' review. Kate encouraged all members to look over the flood resilience plan and be sure local concerns have been addressed. This fall, after those comments are incorporated, the plan will be coming back for adoption.

Kate discussed the requirements for the flood resilience plan. One of the requirements is having actual projects that are coming out of the flood resilience plan. Tangible projects, that have some nature-based infrastructure where possible, can get done. The plan will include all parts of a community, regardless of socioeconomics or race. It includes coordination with other local and inter-jurisdictional projects, plans, and activities. Berkley Group has taken into consideration all the other work that the CVPDC and localities have done. It has considered climate change and the current flood mapping also.

Each locality will have its own section with a cut sheet and maps. Berkley Group believes this will make it simpler to talk about and submit for prioritized projects. The cut sheet includes details about project cost ranges, how one would implement the project, and how long it would take to complete. The included maps give not only demographic information for specific localities but also flood-area information with an overlay of roads.

Kate mentioned that it's round five of the Community Flood Preparedness Fund. If any localities are looking for funding to implement flood resilience projects, this would be a great time to get the applications in for Fall. Kelly Hitchcock commented that she would be making a one-page presentation available for each of the localities that can be shared with policy boards. If Planning District Commissioners would prefer, Kelly can come to the local Planning Commissions, Boards, and Councils during the September - November timeframe. That would give your boards enough time to review the specifics from the cut sheet for each locality based on information provided by planners, specifically where flood areas are.

#### **7. CVPDC Brownfield Redevelopment Program**

Kelly gave an overview of the Brownfield Redevelopment Program. CVPDC has received a \$500,000 grant that goes through September 2025. It has been a very successful program and provided benefits to property owners throughout the region. Currently, the PDC has spent 97% of its available funding for Phase 1, Phase 2 and Planning Initiatives. Staff did 16 Phase I PAQs and 5 Phase 2s.

While the CVPDC's resources are running out, staff is working with Karen Weber of DEQ, which has a state assessment grant. Staff is working with Karen to facilitate coordination with VBAC program to assist more property owners. Kelly proposed to request another grant for \$500,000 depending on the status of landowners' applications and the level of interest. Staff is considering applying for a cleanup grant with EPA, which has a lot of funding available. Staff will come back in the fall to share what they've learned and discuss why they think this is a valuable request for the Commission's approval. If needed, at that time staff will request authorization to apply for a grant in November for any funds that are not matched with the initial grant requests.

John Sharp made a motion for authorization to proceed on the CDPDC Brownfields redevelopment program. It was seconded by Reggie. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

#### **8. CVPDC Resolution of Support: SMART SCALE Round - 6 Applications**

Alec discussed the resolution of support for SMART SCALE round six applications. Members who are on the TPO Board already voted in support of four projects that were in the TPO footprint. Those are the urbanized areas in the city immediately around Madison Heights. Another four towns in Rustburg are outside the TPO footprint, and there are three projects that fall into the classified rural area. Those include Route 122 and Route 608 left-turn lanes at Route 64. Both of those are in Bedford County. Then in Campbell County, Route 501 passing lane improvements are included. The resolution is for support of these projects for application to the VDOT SMART SCALE funding program.

Frank made a motion of support for these projects to apply for SMART SCALE funding through VDOT. It was seconded by Drew. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

#### **9. CVPDC Virtual Meeting and Participation Policies**

Alec went on to explain the two separate policies for virtual meeting participation due to the recent change in state law. The new law changed the virtual meetings from one (1) to two (2). Additionally, if someone wants to zoom into a meeting or phone into a meeting, they can do that twice for personal reasons or if anyone has any medical reasons and they need to stay

home but want to participate in the meeting, this is allowable. Alec shared that VAPDC believes that the policy needs to be updated every year. The CVPDC has several Commissioners that have already participated virtually, and staff seeks the Commission's interest on whether it should increase the flexibility for virtual attendance.

Frank made a motion of support for approval of this additional meeting flexibility. It was seconded by Gary Shanaberger. All were in favor, and the motion passed.

## 10. Organizational Reports

### a. Financial Report – Fiscal year 2025

Alec reviewed the May Financial Report with the Board that was in their packets. Alec explained that there is a lot of revenue to collect at year's end. The PDC spends money and draws it down, then requests reimbursement. Every quarter CVPDC must submit staff hours to VDOT to be reimbursed. As a result, revenues are always running behind the expenses.

Staff will provide the final report in the near future. The PDC is in good financial health with ample reserve to manage this capital. Sandy added that we are in the process of closing out the fiscal year and that we have an audit scheduled for August 5. There were no questions or comments at this time.

### b. Executive Director's Report

#### i. Staffing

Alec introduced Patti Lassiter, CVPDC's new finance services professional and office manager. She will be helping Sandy with payroll and Services Authority expenses, as well as assisting with office management. She and her family have relocated from Chesterfield County where she performed similar functions for the Chesterfield County School District. We are happy to have her join our team.

#### ii. Safe Streets for All update

Alec introduced the next item, Safe Streets for All. Alec reminded the board that it was proposed to put this on the PC's agendas although it used to be part of the TPO meetings. Kelly shared a brief presentation. Staff has received federal funding from the US DOT to create safe streets and roads for all. PDC is calling this the

Central Virginia Safety Action Plan. The funding received was \$280,000 with a match of \$70,000. It's part of the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Law." The action plan follows the national roadway safety strategy that was established in January 2022 for the purpose of reducing fatalities and serious injuries. Kelly shared The National Circle slide.

To summarize, Kelly included Virginia's Statewide Safety Highway Strategic Plan, which follows the federal safety program with its five safe road categories. Virginia added its unique principle that is not in the National

## Safe Systems Approach



Source: FHWA.

Circle, which is the *supporting data* category. This category will be used to inform Smart Scale, HSIP applications, and safe roads. Kelly explained that this is a federal program, so the safety action plan in Topeka, KS, will have the same element of those five categories that are within safety action plans across the country. She brought attention to the top of the slide that says leadership commitment and goal setting. These are components as well, and include, planning structure, safety analysis, engagement and collaboration.

All this will be happening within the next 10 months with CVPDC's consultants. They plan to get out and hear from the residents and know where citizens are having problems crossing safely. As with similar federal programs, the effort will prioritize impacts where persons are most vulnerable, especially low-income areas. VDOT has found that in all regions, this is where a higher number of accidents occur. The commitment part of the safety action plan is a commitment by the locality to reduce serious injuries to approach the Vision Zero. The requirement is the setting of a target date to reach 0 or setting one or more targets to achieve significant declines in roadway fatalities and serious injuries by a specific date. Each locality must adopt some metric, and staff will be providing data to help each locality with an appropriate metric. The downside to choosing not to do this is that member local governments won't be able to go after the bigger construction funding opportunities through the USDOT programs.

Kelly reviewed the timeline for this project. Over the next several months, staff will visit the localities and review the high-injury networks. The consultants have analyzed each spot within the high-injury network. They'll break that down and share data with each locality. These will be public meetings with the consultants in attendance.

Staff are ready to start sharing the data with each locality and are excited to be having our first work meeting on August 21. Staff are looking to complete this project in May. Then the Plan will come to the Commission for adoption so each locality can apply for construction or improvement dollars at its discretion.

Kelly commented that moving forward, the information for the Safety Action Plan would be shared at the PDC meetings. However, if the group feels there is important information that needs to be addressed at the TPO meeting, it will appear at the end of the meeting.

Frank asked if the federal money that we would be applying for, is it over and above anything that VDOT already does through HSIP? Kelly responded yes, that is correct.

### **iii. Commuter Assistance Program Update**

Alec introduced the next topic, commuter assistance program which will have a presentation at the next meeting in September. The survey has been completed. We have received over 300 responses. Ada Huntsberger is the project manager for this project.

**iv. Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Update**

Alec asked the Board if they wanted to discuss this at the next meeting since four commissioners had left the meeting. Due to the late hour, it was decided that the item would be presented at the next meeting in September.

**11. Selection of PDC officers for 2024-2025**

Alec moved to the next item, Selection of officers for 2024-2025. Reggie Bennett as Chair, Drew Wade as Vice Chair and Gary Shanaberger as Treasurer.

Frank thanked Richard Conner for his service as Chair. Frank made a motion to appoint Reggie Bennett as Chair, Drew Wade as Vice Chair, and Gary Shanaberger as Treasurer. These are the officers for the 2024-2025 year. The motion was seconded by Jeremy.

**12. Adjournment**

The motion to adjourn was entertained by the Chair. Frank made a motion to adjourn, and Drew seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 6:37PM.

**Signature Attest of Approval**

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Alec Brebner, Secretary

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date