



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR  
**GROWTH &  
OPPORTUNITY**  
IN EACH REGION

*GO Virginia Region 2*

## **GO Virginia Region 2 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

**April 16, 2025 1:00p.m.- 3:00p.m.**

**Roanoke Higher Education Center, Room 701A, 108 N Jefferson Street, Roanoke, VA, 24016.**

Executive Committee members in attendance: Eddie Amos (Chair), Paul Denham (Vice-chair), Richmond Vincent

Executive Committee members in virtual attendance: Whitney Czelusniak

Staff in attendance: John Provo, Scott Tate, Sarah Lyon-Hill, Jemma Sabokrouh, Alyssa McKenney, Emmalee Wagner.

Public in attendance: Megan Atkinson, Katie Boswell, Matthew Dunleavy, Leo Priddy, Kim Soerenson, Elise Spontarelli

The meeting convened at 1:00p.m. and adjourned at 2:39p.m.

### ***Financials Review***

Alyssa McKenney reviewed the financial reports included in the board packet. Council has a remaining balance of \$1,489,702 in FY25 per-capita funds. Alyssa then reviewed FY 25 Capacity Building balance (\$187,498). Alyssa also highlighted three GOVA projects are in fiscal closeout process (Regional Talent Strategy, Workforce & Entrepreneurship in a Reg. Makerspace (Vector Space) and Region 2 Talent Pathways Planning Initiative). Two projects have executed contract extensions (Industry 4.0 for the ACE Workforce and Lynchburg Beacon of Hope Career Acceleration Program). Finally, Project VITAL's contract was executed on 1/31/2025.

### ***Project Proposals***

#### ***New River Valley Regional Commission, Site Advancement Strategy***

Scott Tate reviewed the planning project application for the New River Valley localities, submitted in partnership from the New River Valley Planning Commission and Onward New River Valley, requesting \$94,400 in GOVA funding. The project aims to address the shortage of shovel-ready sites, targeting industries such as materials, transportation, autonomy, and manufacturing. Leo Priddy and Katie Boswell, representing the applicants, responded to the executive committee's inquiries. Dr. Eddie Amos asked if the consultant had been selected and if so, the scope of the consultant's work; applicants shared the consultant had not been selected yet. They would like the localities to have a voice in that process. Paul Denham emphasized the importance of industry engagement in this project.

#### ***Vector Space, Robotics Facility Planning, Lynchburg Region***

Scott Tate reviewed the Vector Space Robotics Facility Planning proposal. The project is requesting \$97,200 in GOVA funding. The project intends to explore the need for a robotics education and training facility, primarily for



high school students, in the Lynchburg region. The project's deliverables would include a market analysis, equipment considerations, design plans, revenue sources, and sustainability and budget plans. Elise Spontarelli was available to answer questions from the executive committee. The executive committee asked about the level of engagement there currently is with this program and how much more engagement the program could have. Elise explained there has only been one pilot year for the robotics program in Lynchburg. Increasing engagement and conducting surveys on interest would be a part of the planning grant.

### ***United Way of Central Virginia, Childcare & Workforce Development, Lynchburg Region***

Scott Tate reviewed the planning grant application submitted by United Way of Central Virginia, titled Childcare & Workforce Development, requesting \$99,639 in GOVA funding.

The project aims to develop a regional childcare model and a model for a childcare center, with deliverables including a business plan, employer engagement models, demand analysis, marketing materials, and a resource/funding plan. Kim Soerenson provided details about the proposed childcare center and its operational plans. Executive committee members discussed the feasibility of this project securing GOVA funding if the application does not strongly tie its purpose and outcomes to the GOVA program. Executive committee members emphasized the final application to the GOVA state board should clearly show how the proposed childcare center would intersect with target sector employers.

### ***Region 2 GO TEC Launch in the New River Valley and Roanoke County***

Scott Tate reviewed the implementation grant application titled GO TEC Launch, submitted by Montgomery County Public Schools, requesting \$994,212 in GOVA funding. Megan Atkinson and Matt Dunleavy were available to answer questions.

Eddie Amos asked if there is a strong pathway for the middle school students who would participate in the GO TEC program to high school and college. Megan Atkinson clarified there are aligned CTE courses which each of the GO TEC modules for interested students to pursue. Paul Denham asked if there is industry support for the program in this region. Megan responded that the application has received Letters of Support from major companies in the New River Valley and Roanoke region, but the project team continues to pursue industry engagement. The executive committee suggested the applicant ensures the existing education pathway and industry engagement is strongly highlighted in the final application to the state board.

### ***Approved for Full Council***

The executive committee decided to forward all the projects to the full council. Due to the limited planning funds left for FY25, the executive committee decided to stack rank how they would suggest the full council vote to approve the planning projects. The executive committee took into consideration information from the applications on how a delay in funding would affect the project. Each executive committee member ranked the planning projects in order (in terms of need for funding) from highest priority to lowest priority. The outcome was to suggest to the full council to prioritize sending to the state board in the following order: 1- United Way of Central Virginia, Childcare & Workforce Development, 2- New River Valley Regional Commission, Site Advancement Strategy, 3- Vector Space, Robotics Facility Planning.



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Eddi Amos motioned to move the Region 2 GO TEC Launch in the New River Valley and Roanoke County implementation project to the full council; Richmond Vincent seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

## ***Administrative Updates***

### ***Quarterly Project Reporting***

Jemma Sabokrouh reviewed active project status, noting there is one current project listed in red, meaning they did not meet quarterly milestones, and staff is meeting with the sub-grantee. Due to unforeseen financial circumstances of the building owner, the project has restructured aspects of space and equipment ownership. This has taken priority or stalled work for Q1 2025. The subgrantee is committed to continue with the project and staff are in close communication with the subgrantee.

Three current projects are listed in yellow, meaning they did not meet one or more Quarter 1 2025 milestones and staff is monitoring. ACE workforce received a no-cost extension through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025, but is still behind on milestones and students trained metric. The Bedford Metal Workforce Training Center is behind on Quarter 1 2025 milestones, but they plan to complete them next quarter. This project received a no-cost extension through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The Educating Engineers in the region 2 workforce is also behind on Quarter 1 milestone. GOVA Region 2 staff will set up meeting with all these projects to check-in and support where possible. Lastly, the CS/root project ended March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025. This project did not complete its last quarter milestones. Staff will discuss final deliverables and reporting.

All other active projects are listed in green, meaning they have met quarterly milestones and are on track with their current deliverables.

### ***Speakers' Bureau***

Emmalee Wagner reviewed previous and upcoming schedule GOVA Region 2 Speakers' Bureau and expressed gratitude to council members who are participating.

### ***G&D Plan 2025 Process***

Sarah Lyon-Hill reviewed the formal Region 2 Growth & Diversification Plan 2025 update, sharing the scheduled employer workgroup roundtables. She also emphasized the importance of the 2025 Impact Survey that will be an important part of the final plan. The final updated plan is due to state staff by October 31, 2025.

### ***AI Statewide Landscape Assessment Update***

John Provo highlighted that the consultant for the AI Statewide Landscape Assessment will be attending a few of the upcoming Virginia Chamber of Commerce AI events. Two events will be held in Region 2: in Roanoke on April 30, 2025, and in Lynchburg on May 7, 2025.



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### ***Board Policy #10 Helene Business Recovery Initiative***

John Provo reviewed the GOVA state board policy # 10, Eligible communities, that were in the Governor's declaration and the Supplemental Declaration, impacted by Hurricane Helene. This would include all Region 2 localities in the New River Valley, except for Floyd County. Provo reviewed what ways the emergency funds can be allocated under GOVA policies and shared which NRV organizations Region 2 staff has been talking to that could point to where the businesses need help. June 30<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to submit for funding under Board policy #10.

### ***Minutes***

The committee reviewed minutes from the Region 2 Executive Committee Meeting held on October 10, 2024 and December 5, 2024. Chairman Amos asked if there were any corrections, additions, or questions regarding the minutes; there were none.

Paul Denham motioned to approve the minutes, with Richmond Vincent seconding. All were in favor and none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.