



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

GO Virginia Region 2

GO Virginia Region 2 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

**January 16, 2020, Roanoke Higher Education Center, Room 701A, 108 N
Jefferson St, Roanoke, Virginia, 24016**

Executive Committee council members in attendance: Beverly Dalton, Sandy Davis, Ray Smoot.

Council members in attendance: William Amos, William Fralin.

Staff in attendance: John Provo, Scott Tate, Rachel Jones.

Additional Attendees: Jerry Dunnavant (Brown Edwards), John Phillips (Roanoke- Blacksburg Technology Council, RAMP), Carole Tarrant (Virginia Western Community College).

The meeting convened at 3:03PM and adjourned at 4:20PM.

Project Overview

Scott Tate (OED) began with a project overview of three new project applications. The first project application is an update for a project previously approved by the council, The Montgomery County, “Classrooms to Careers” project. The project was approved by the council for \$225,000 at the previous full board meeting held on October 24th, 2019. The project focuses on the counties of Montgomery, Giles, and Floyd and will work to provide an enhanced cyber security curriculum in schools with the coordination of the local IT sector industry. The project will assist in the creation of meaningful job experiences for local high school students and build a talent pipeline. Scott shared that during the review process on the state level, conversations arose with the applicant regarding the number of private sector employers who had demonstrated their commitment to the project. Of the five total employer commitments for internships, two of those are public sector employers. The state wanted more demonstration of private sector buy in and recommended the revised application be put on hold to go before the state board in March once the application has strengthened to secure those additional employer commitments. Region 2 support staff have continued meeting with the applicant on the council’s behalf to discuss restructuring the proposal with the expectation of additional employer commitments. Chairman Smoot asked whether the GO Virginia application would change in other ways. John Provo (OED) explained that there will be slight changes as some of the employers may shift roles and the application would include other ways for the private sector to be engaged. John stated that the revised application will be substantially stronger than the applicants first. Chairman Smoot then requested a time frame in regards to when the three additional employers’ involvements can be expected. Scott Tate responded that the expected outcome is to be confirmed by the end of the month.



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The project will be presented once more to the full council meeting that will be held on February 4th, 2020. Scott continued with the second project expected to be presented to the council. The project will not draw from Region two funding as it is a state-wide competitive application from the lead applicant “Lighthouse Labs”. The project is called the Virginia Accelerator Network that will include regions two, three, four, and nine. The project is requesting a total of three million from the state and will be a comprehensive accelerator network to focus around assistance with the start-up development of new high growth companies, enhance the acceleration of promising ventures, and includes some post acceleration start-up opportunities. Region Two’s current project RAMP will be a core partner to provide services and support post acceleration to the companies that will be involved. John Phillips (RAMP) began by emphasizing that this program provides significant leverage to access resources that are available throughout the state and will provide the region a step for sustainability further down the road, as well as provide us an opportunity to mentor that we may not have otherwise. Carole Tarrant (VWCC) stated that this grant would assist with renovations for unused square footage in the basement of Virginia Western Community College that will provide space to the cohort for up to a year. Carole continued by stating that the grant would also support university outreach to recruit cohort members from higher education from our region. Chairman Smoot asked if there were any questions. There were none. Scott continued with the third project application expected from The Advancement Foundation that will be a continuation of the current project “Increasing the Birth Rates for New High Growth Companies”. The project previously received funding from the council for one year and decided to reapply for the second year of funding with a request for \$180,000 and have attained the required match. Chairman Smoot asked about their metrics, and Scott Tate responded that in nine months their goal is to have fifty start-up companies, with twenty new and early stage companies participating in their innovation mill program, of which seventeen currently participate. They have twenty-two mentors and consultants actively engaged with their companies, when their goal was ten, as well as a goal of four colleges/universities participating in their program and they have met that goal with the following colleges/universities actively participating: Hollins University, Virginia Tech, Virginia Western Community College, and Roanoke College.

Chairman Smoot asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Staff Updates

John Provo led the committee through staff updates. Staff updates includes an update of a current region two project: “Region 2 Talent Collaborative” that was discussed in the previous council meeting on October 24th, staff has been assisting the project grantees with evaluation and essentially billing issues. The grantees have not drawn down as much funding as expected in the allotted time frame, however, the project is on schedule. John Provo then shared highlights from the State Leadership Summit that took place on December 9th, 2019, in Richmond, Virginia. John stated that the State Board will convene a working group with representation from the state and each region to revise GO Virginia



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policies to better improve the program, including the topic of discussion to weaken the restrictions regarding the local match requirement. John gave an update in regards to the GO Virginia Celebrate Success event that is scheduled for January 22nd, 2020. The event will surround focus on the success of the GO Virginia Region 2 projects, while also unveiling the new GO Virginia website.

VEDP Sites Study/ New State Broadband Policy

John Provo led the committee through the discussion regarding the implementation of the new Sites Study and Broadband Policy. John stated that the implementation of these new state policies is meant to guide the council as to what the State Board, and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development are interested in seeing in future project applications for the region. Scott Tate then led the council on the new broadband policy which is to provide the council with an avenue for the approval of broadband related projects in two arenas, with the first arena being affiliated with planning projects that could engage industry partners or large employers and how to address their broadband needs. No local match is required for future broadband related projects. The second arena being the indication of a critical need to seek funds for middle mile infrastructure improvements. This policy will assist in the expansion of the network to meet required needs. William Fralin commented that there is a need in the state for 5G internet speeds, which this policy could assist with the implementation of faster internet speeds in our region. Chairman Smoot suggested discussing this at the council meeting in February.

Council Speakers Bureau, Volunteers for Outreach to Local Government

John Provo led the committee through a discussion regarding the Council Speakers Bureau that was very successful last year with most of the local government setting aside money for local match requirements to use on GO Virginia projects. In return, the GO Virginia grantees did not seem to have as many issues receiving a local match for their project applications.

Membership Summary

Chairman Smoot led the committee through a membership summary in regards to the current open positions on the council and expressed interest for the committee to begin searching for additional members. Current member vacancies are as follows, one vacancy in the New River Valley, two vacancies in the Lynchburg region, and two vacancies in the Roanoke Valley/Alleghany Highlands region.



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