



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

GO Virginia Region 2

GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting Minutes

October 27, 2021, 1:00p.m.- 3:00p.m,

Hotel Roanoke, Shenandoah Room, 110 Shenandoah Ave, Roanoke, Virginia 24061.

Council members in attendance: John Capps, Kenneth Craig, Janice Crawford, Beverley Dalton, Paul Denham, John Dooley, William Fralin, Don Halliwill, Pat Huber, Victor Iannello, Fourd Kemper, Kim Payne, Debbie Petrine, Ray Smoot (Chair), Luke Towles.

Council members participating remotely: Eddie Amos (Vice-chair), Michelle Austin, Sandy Davis, Michael Friedlander.

Council members not in attendance: Nathaniel Bishop, Mike Hamlar, Vince Hatcher, Floyd Merryman, Marty Muscatello, John Putney.

Staff in attendance: John Provo, Scott Tate, Sarah Lyon-Hill, Rachel Jones, Julia Kell, Alyssa McKenney.

Public in attendance: Morgan Romeo, Brett Malone, Dawn Myers, John Hull, Billy Gammel, Erin Burcham, Marc Nelson, Megan Lucas, Deborah Flippo, Jill Loope, Kevin Carlson, Rebekah Gunn, Sharonita Cousin, Victoria Hanson.

The meeting convened at 1:06p.m. and adjourned at 3:25p.m.

Growth & Diversification Plan Updates

Sarah Lyon-Hill began with an overview of proposed updates to the 2021 GO Virginia Region 2 Growth & Diversification Plan. Plan updates began by reviewing regional data and strategic plans, as well as assessment of Region 2 priorities through conducting interviews with local organizations. The process continued through a series of workgroup sessions involving public input. The four proposed regional strategy areas are as follows; Innovation Cluster Scale Up, Entrepreneurship and Business Development, Talent Development, Attraction, and Retention, and Collaborative Sites and Infrastructure Development. Council then discussed changes in mean wages presented from 2019 through 2021. Sarah Lyon-Hill continued by reviewing changes in regional data. William Fralin and Debbie Petrine discuss the benefit of including long-term healthcare in the Health & Life Sciences cluster. John Provo responded by stating the inclusion of healthcare would be beneficial for the region, however, since inception of the program, state staff has prohibited the use of GO Virginia funds for healthcare. John Provo suggested Region 2 staff express council's preference of including long-term healthcare as a funding opportunity, to which Chairman Smoot agreed. John Provo explained why Food & Beverage Processing has been removed from the plan, stating support staff could not find any iteration of this cluster producing a regional above average wage income.

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



Victor Iannello motioned to approve the 2021 Growth and Diversification Plan and Eddie Amos seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

Project Proposals

Project Eagle +

Scott Tate began by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Project Eagle+*, submitted by the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Brett Malone, Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, discussed project deliverables. This project will build on the findings of a previous GO Virginia Region 2 awarded project, which concluded the following: early-stage companies have a need for wet and dry lab spaces which are practically non-existent within the region, our region would benefit from a deeper network of life-science specific investment capital and access to industry experts to provide adequate mentoring. Partnering with Johnson & Johnson, this project will launch Johnson & Johnson (JLABS) as the premier life science accelerator program in Region 2. JLABS has agreed to create an initial cohort of 5 companies, with the assembly of a local and JLABS joint steering committee who will select eligible companies moving forward. The accelerator program will be launched through a build out of a shared lab facility in the VT Corporate Research Center, and by conducting site design for an existing building in Roanoke to create an integrated wet-lab and co-working site to support health & life sciences activity in the region. Additionally, the project will construct a small prototype lab in the Corporate Research Center as the initial home of JLABS and to showcase the “shared lab” model concept. William Fralin inquired on Roanoke City’s financial commitment to the project, to which Brett Malone responded the investment is intended for engineering and design work, resulting in a shovel ready site, which would make it possible for the team to quickly pursue additional funding resources outside of GO Virginia to build out the labs. Chairman Smoot inquired on the owner of the building in Roanoke, to which Brett Malone responded the owner is Carilion Clinic. William Fralin inquired on project timeline and what can be done to accelerate the outcomes. Brett Malone responded to accelerate the timeline would mean identifying the site and funds to complete construction in Roanoke, the applicants have been planning a line of sight to receive additional funding that could take this site into the construction phase through available funds beyond GO Virginia.

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

The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center request totaled \$599,437 in GO Virginia Region 2 per-capita funds, with a total match of \$503,687.

Victor Iannello motioned to approve the project and William Fralin seconded. Don Halliwill abstained from the vote. All were in favor and none opposed.

Regional Talent Strategy Implementation

Scott Tate began with a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Regional Talent Strategy Implementation*, submitted by the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board (WVWDB). John Hull, Roanoke Regional Partnership, and Morgan Romeo, WVWDB, began by elaborating on project



deliverables. This project will implement a regional talent strategy in the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands. The proposed talent strategy will focus on four goals pertaining to career awareness and career pathways, talent development, talent attraction and retention and collaboration and leadership. The first goal will focus on increasing regional career awareness of programs and needs across k-12 systems, post-secondary education, and local businesses. The second goal focuses on talent development, to ensure there are adequate educational programs to train workers for available jobs that align with Region 2's targeted industry sectors. The third goal relates to talent retention and will enhance efforts to retain local college graduates and encourage "boomerangs" to return. The fourth goal will focus on regional collaboration and will include an annual talent retreat to discuss talent pipeline development, alignment of training and business needs, and economic development tactics. John Dooley inquired on sustainability strategies. Morgan Romeo responded that the grant will fund one staffing position for the first year of employment, with federal dollars funding half of the second year of employment. Most of the activities will be one-time expenses, including the creation of the web portal and investing in a customer relationship management system, with not many ongoing costs. Victor Iannello inquired on the involvement of the local community colleges. Morgan Romeo responded by stating they have ongoing relationships with Virginia Western Community College and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College and are considered key stakeholders to this initiative. The largest challenge community colleges are currently facing is low enrollment. Identifying and placing individuals in training programs within the region's community colleges is included in the applicant's goals. Pat Huber expressed her support for this proposal, stating early involvement in k-12 is crucial to encourage not only 4-year educational efforts, but 2-year as well. Career pathway development will play a critical role as local community colleges educate and train technicians who support the region's in-demand industries. Foudr Kemper inquired on national talent attraction efforts. John Hull responded by stating the Roanoke Regional Partnership has continued digital attraction efforts through the years, the organization has recently hired a Director of Talent Attraction, who oversees the Thrive Plan which focuses on a number of out of market engagement. Janice Crawford suggested expanding this initiative to all of Region 2.

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

The Western Virginia Workforce Development Board request totaled \$315,910.80 in GO Virginia Region 2 per-capita funds, with a total match of \$189,354.

Victor Iannello motioned to approve the project and Beverley Dalton seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

The proposal was approved with a contingency that the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board will collaborate with the New River Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board and the Central Virginia Workforce Development Board through a series of meetings to discuss expansion of the program throughout all of Region 2.

Special Discussion Items

CVTC Update



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Kim Payne shared an update regarding the previously funded Region 2 project, Central Virginia Training Center Redevelopment Plan. The grant manager has continued to seek additional funding to close the \$100,000 gap necessary to complete the project. The plan is important because it will provide guidance to the Amherst County Board of Supervisors pertaining to a possible amendment to their comprehensive plan and a potential proactive zoning change to make the property easier to develop. Upon completion of the project, the Department of General Services can offer the property to the county, or a different regional entity, highlighting the importance of continuing efforts to advance the site. Dean Rodgers is offering an additional \$15,000, along with the \$25,000 Megan Lucas has raised. Kim Payne requested a drawdown from the council contingency funds to fund the remaining \$60,000 to ensure the plan's completion and use of the plan to market the site.

Kim Payne motioned to allocate \$60,000 from council contingency funds in order to complete the redevelopment plan. Beverley Dalton seconded.

Council Business

Council reviewed minutes from the GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting held on July 29, 2021. Chairman Smoot asked if there were any questions or corrections regarding the minutes. There were none.

Kim Payne motioned to approve the minutes and Beverley Dalton seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:25p.m.