



GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting Minutes

July 30, 2020, 1:00p.m.- 3:00p.m, Zoom Webinar.

Council members in attendance: Eddie Amos, Amy Ankrum, Nathaniel Bishop, John Capps, Kenneth Craig, Beverly Dalton, Sandy Davis, John Dooley, Watt Foster, Michael Friedlander, Don Halliwill, Vince Hatcher, Brian Hemphill, Victor Iannello, Marty Muscatello, Kimball Payne, John Putney, Ray Smoot (Chair).

Council members not in attendance: Ab Boxley (Vice-Chair), William Fralin, Mike Hamlar, Terry Jamerson, Floyd Merryman, Debbie Petrine.

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

Public in attendance: Traci Blido, Jenny Bolte, Mike Burnette, Kevin Byrd, Steve Cooper, Greg Feldmann, Deborah Flippo, Victoria Hanson, Matthew Hull, Aisha Johnson, Jody Keenan, Megan Lucas, Chris McKlarney, John Phillips, Stephanie Seagle, Roanoke Regional Chamber.

The meeting convened at 1:07p.m. and adjourned at 3:27p.m.

Financial Report

John Provo began by providing the council with a brief financial report. The council has a remaining balance of \$2,576,316 in per-capita funds and a remaining balance of \$202,800 in Economic Resilience and Recovery funds.

Proposal Review and Action

Experiential Learning in Tech Employment (ELITE) Internship Program

Scott Tate began by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Experiential Learning in Tech Employment (ELITE) Internship Program*, submitted by the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council (RBTC). RBTC has partnered with NextUp Solutions to develop the ELITE Internship Program that will provide funding to support up to 57 semester-long or summer paid internship experiences in one or more Professional Internship Organizations to meet the near term IT and software development talent in Region 2 while building a more robust and connected talent pipeline to meet longer-term regional tech employment needs. John Phillips, Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council, provided council with a detailed overview pertaining to the proposal's expectations and deliverables. Mr. Phillips continued by stating the ELITE Internship Program proposes the creation of a Regional Advisory Group to convene three times a year to review their outreach efforts to small and medium sized companies in coordination efforts with their programs. The intent is to create this board with representatives from OnwardNRV, Get to know Noke, Virginia Tech's Developing a Destination for Talent program, as well as



representatives from the Lynchburg region. Mr. Phillips addressed questions from the Council pertaining to localities covered by the program, as well as questions pertaining to their partnership with NextUp Solutions, stating their decision to partner with NextUp Solutions include the company's unique model of a managed internship program.

The Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council request totaled \$290,000 of Region 2 Per-Capita funds, with a local match of \$162,000.

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

Council members recusing from the vote include Victor Iannello, Eddie Amos, Amy Ankrum, John Capps and Michael Friedlander.

Victor Iannello motioned to approve the project, and Marty Muscatello seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

Amherst LYH Regional Site

Tate began by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Amherst LYH Regional Site*, submitted by the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance. The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance (LRBA) will support advancement of fifteen publicly owned sites to tier three, four and five. The Amherst LYH Site Readiness is the next step after completing the regional Due Diligence Project that advanced a portfolio of six existing commercial/industrial sites along the site readiness scale and clarified next steps for moving all sites to at least Tier III on the Virginia Business Site Readiness Scale (VBRSP) with seven jurisdictions participating. This project is a collaboration between The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance and municipalities in Region 2, including Amherst County and the town of Amherst. Megan Lucas, Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, provided council with a detailed overview pertaining to the proposal's outcomes and deliverables. Ms. Lucas addressed questions from the council regarding location of the sites, as well as how the Lynchburg region's inventory of pad ready sites compares to the rest of Region 2's pad ready sites, stating the Lynchburg region currently has four tier five pad ready sites available, the Roanoke region has four tier five pad ready sites available, and the New River Valley region has one tier five pad ready site available. This grant will allow the program to advance two additional sites to tier five pad ready, one site to tier four pad ready, and the remaining sites to a tier three.

The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance request totaled \$366,572 of Region 2 Per-Capita funds, with a local match of \$180,600.

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

Council members recusing from the vote include John Putney and Kimball Payne.

John Dooley motioned to approve the project, and John Capps seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.



Profiles to Increase Critical Knowledge for Skills That Matter (PICKS TM)

Tate began by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *PICKS TM*, submitted by the New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board. PICKS TM seeks to assist employers, job-seekers and training providers to better understand and communicate knowledge, skills, and abilities required to effectively perform specific in-demand jobs of high-growth businesses in targeted industries of GO Virginia Region 2. Using the American College Testing (ACT) Job Profiling system, the program will analyze the skills, skill levels, and skill frequency workers need to be successful at certain high-demand, high-wage jobs. The project seeks to provide businesses with a sharable, detailed analysis of skills and abilities an employee needs to be productive and efficient on the job. Jenny Bolte, Virginia Career Works, provided the council with a detailed overview pertaining to the proposal's deliverables. Ms. Bolte addressed questions from the council regarding the use of funds, as well as which in-demand job sectors will be targeted through the proposal, stating the program would target the following industries, Automation and Manufacturing, Robotics, and several IT focused positions including software development and data base administration.

The New River/Mount Rogers Workforce Development Board request totaled \$100,000 of Region 2 Enhanced Capacity Building Per-Capita funds, with a local match of \$100,000 and anticipated additional leverage of \$477,240.

Chairman Smoot asked if there were any additional questions and invited council members to make a motion of the funding request. There were no further questions nor a motion. Council did not take action on the proposal and Chairman Smoot invited those making the request to discuss any revisions they may wish to make in the proposal with staff prior to the next meeting.

New River Valley COVID-19 Business Continuity Team (BCT)

Tate continued by providing a brief overview of a follow-up proposal from a previously awarded Region 2 project, *New River Valley COVID-19 Business Continuity Team*, submitted by the New River Valley Regional Commission. The BCT will assist local businesses impacted by the covid-19 pandemic by delivering wrap around services necessary for them to continue operation in the COVID environment. Services available to assist businesses include a continuity plan developed by the BCT, access to funding for on-site cleaning, public relations expertise to communicate with employees, customers, media and general public; website support for any pertinent messaging needed, human resources related legal advisement, and COVID-19 testing provided by the New River Valley Public Health Task Force. Kevin Byrd, New River Valley Regional Commission, and Chris McKlarney, Giles County Administrator, provided the council with a brief update stating the team is currently conducting interviews for the hiring of the Program Manager as well as the Public Health Director on the Business Continuity Team. The BCT addressed questions from the council regarding testing procedures, stating the GO Virginia Region 2 funds will not be utilized for initial covid-19 testing, however, the team will be coordinating with the NRV Health District as positive cases are received, to determine direct needs of impacted businesses.



The New River Valley Regional Commission request totaled \$250,000 of Region 2 Per-Capita funds, with a local match of \$125,000 and anticipated additional leverage of up to \$450,000.

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

Brian Hemphill motioned to approve the project, and Sandy Davis seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

PHRE Mobile App – A Resource for Helping Small Organizations Confront COVID19

Tate continued by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *PHRE Mobile App – A Resource for Helping Small Organizations Confront COVID19*, submitted by the Virginia Tech Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Sciences. The project will develop a Public Health Readiness Evaluation (PHRE) tool – an easy-to-use mobile application designed to help smaller organizations quickly assess and optimize their readiness to operate with minimal risk to workers, customers/patrons, and surrounding communities. The tool will assist local and state health officials to better understand and meet the public health and safety needs of small businesses. Matthew Hull, Virginia Tech Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science, provided the council with a detailed overview pertaining to project deliverables. Mr. Hull addressed questions from the council pertaining to localities covered, stating the reasoning behind the limited regional access listed in the proposal is due to active discussion with the mentioned localities, however, the localities covered can be revised to include all of Region 2.

Virginia Tech's Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Sciences request totaled \$63,500 of Region 2 Per-Capita funds, with a local match of \$42,610.

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

Victor Iannello motioned to approve the project, and Nathaniel Bishop seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

Virginia SBDC Cash Match (Statewide) CY2020-2021

Tate continued by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Virginia SBDC Cash Match*, submitted by George Mason University. The Virginia SBDC Network is a statewide program of twenty-six local offices staffed by professional business advisors that provide confidential one-on-one business advising and group training to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs in every corner of the Commonwealth. George Mason University manages the Virginia SBDC Network and is funded in part by a cooperative agreement from the US SBA. This GO Virginia Statewide ERR application is a request to provide up to \$1,620,235 to ensure the Virginia SBDC Network can satisfy the required 50% cash match in order to access the full amount of SBA funding and sustain SBDC services for small businesses. Jody Keenan, Mason Enterprise Center, Virginia SBDC Network, provided council with a detailed overview pertaining to program deliverables and implementation processes. Ms. Keenan addressed concerns raised by the council regarding potential reduction of local government support, stating if revenue to local government entities decline due to negative economic impact from the covid-19 pandemic, the



network would request a letter that provides a legitimate justification as to reasoning behind the reduced match.

George Mason University request totaled \$1,620,235 in GO Virginia Statewide Competitive funding.

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

Council did not take action on the proposal. Chairman Smoot indicated he would draft a letter to the state board, neither endorsing nor rejecting the proposal, but summarizing issues raised in discussion

Special Update

Eddie Amos began by providing a brief update from GO Virginia Region Two's Broadband Task Force. The Broadband Task Force was created to review and examine the prospects of 5G technology in Region 2. The working group is led by Frank Smith, President and CEO of the Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority, members include Brenda Van Gelder, Office of the CIO, Virginia Tech, Scott Midkiff, CIO, Virginia Tech, Jeff Crowder, Jeff Reed, Virginia Tech, and Luiz DaSilva, Commonwealth Cyber Initiative, with council member William Fralin acting as Executive Sponsor of the task force. Amos continued stating a significant barrier to rural broadband initiatives is related to a limited set of network mobile operators controlling the roll out of technology around the country. The ultimate goal of the working group is the creation of a public-private initiative to help facilitate the roll out of 5G broadband technology in the region. The task force will conduct a study to determine best practices in leveraging the regional infrastructure to build out several innovation zones. Amos addressed questions from the council regarding geographic coverage of the initiative, stating the initiative will target all of Region 2, then possibly rollout across the state. No funding is requested at this time.

Project Evaluation

Elli Travis provided the council with a detailed overview of quarter 2 project evaluation. Most Region 2 funded projects are on track with milestones and metrics, other than a few delays or cancellation of events due to covid-19 restrictions. Enhancing the Region through New Technology for Unmanned Systems, a funded GO Virginia Region 2 project, will close out this quarter with greater outcomes than previously contracted as well as providing a higher match than required. However, the program did not provide training for as many students as anticipated. Additionally, Region 2 Talent Collaborative, a funded GO Virginia Region 2 project, has not utilized all funds, subsequently, Region 2 Council is projected to receive some previously allocated funds following project closeout. However, the project has met their outcomes. Projects closing out this quarter include Enhancing the Region through New Technology for Unmanned Systems, Capital Ecosystem Development, SBDC Expansion, WoodHaven Infrastructure Enhancement, Regional Acceleration and Mentorship Program Expansion (RAMP) phase one and Increasing the Birth Rates of New High Growth Companies phase one. Travis stated she is compiling a 2-year project closeout and outcomes evaluation report with focus surrounding entrepreneurial collaboration and growth, partnership development and change, as well as working with the sub-grantee to identify additional data to be collected to show long-term impacts of the project.



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

Proposal Pipeline

Tate provided a brief update to council regarding proposal pipeline, stating Region 2 support staff have received several inquiries for review, with additional proposals requiring appropriate action from council during the upcoming meeting in October.

Council Business

The council reviewed minutes from the Region 2 Council meeting held on February 4, 2020, the Region 2 Council meeting held on May 6, 2020, and the Region 2 Executive Committee meeting held on July 16, 2020. Chairman Smoot asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes, there were none.

Sandy Davis motioned to approve the minutes, and John Putney seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

Chairman Smoot provided the council with an update regarding vacancies existing on the Region 2 Council.

Chairman Smoot then offered the council the names of Luke Towles, Senior Vice President, Pinnacle Financial Partners, and Janice Crawford, Director, Corporate Environmental Health and Safety, Framatome, to fill the two Lynchburg vacancies.

Kimball Payne motioned to appoint the two new Lynchburg regional members, with John Putney seconding. All were in favor and none opposed.

Adjournment occurred at 3:27 p.m.