



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
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GO Virginia Region 2

GO Virginia Region 2 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2021, 1:00p.m.- 3:00p.m, Zoom Webinar.

Executive Committee members in attendance: Eddie Amos, Beverly Dalton, Sandy Davis, Ray Smoot (Chair).

Executive Committee members not in attendance: Ab Boxley (Vice-chair).

Council members in attendance: Don Halliwill.

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

Public in attendance: Brett Malone, Dawn Myers, Cynthia Lawrence, Caroline King, Annette Patterson, Megan Lucas, Victoria Hanson, Laura Hamilton, Meredith Hundley, Frank Smith, Jason Ferguson, Kevin Carlson, Erin Burcham, Deborah Flippo, Jill Loope, Casey Jenkins, Caroline Buscaglia, Inscape Creative Co.

The meeting convened at 1:04p.m. and adjourned at 2:57p.m.

Financial Report

John Provo began by providing the executive committee with a brief financial report. The council has a remaining balance of \$1,663,160 in per-capita funds and a remaining balance of \$202,800 in Economic Resilience and Recovery funds.

Proposal Review

Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center

Scott Tate began by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *BioTech Lab Space Development*, submitted by the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center, Inc. (VTCRC), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Virginia Tech Foundation, Inc. (VTF), proposes to lead development of a comprehensive assessment, conceptual design, and associated operational plan to support both Roanoke and Blacksburg's life and health sciences ecosystem with flexible laboratory space. Brett Malone, Virginia Tech CRC, and Dawn Myers, Virginia Tech CRC, answered questions raised by the committee regarding project location and deliverables stating staff will be assessing needs in both Roanoke and Blacksburg and how the CRC will holistically manage those sites. Brett continued stating the idea behind the proposal is to create a model where the CRC can manage co-working lab space and utilize the CRC's operational logistics to effectively manage both locations. Eddie Amos inquired about what the surrounding ecosystem and needs are that would potentially occupy this space. Brett stated part of the scope of work would assess specific demand in those localities- what types of companies are needed and what kind of facilities will they need. Brett



continued by stating in parallel with this proposal, RAMP, a regional accelerator network, will host their first set of roughly 10 life science cohort start-ups, which will provide the VT CRC with a helpful indicator of what the regional pipeline indicates. Chairman Smoot inquired on possible entities that will move forward to construct and operate the space. Brett continued by stating staff are actively engaged with 3rd party developers who would bring in real estate investment funds, subsequently, partners of the CRC would partner with those entities in order to create the investment pipeline. This would be a investment opportunity for the 3rd party developers mentioned.

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

The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center request totaled \$100,000 in GO Virginia Region 2 Enhanced Capacity Building funds, with a match of \$55,000.

The committee has recommended the proposal for review of the Region 2 Council.

Carilion Clinic

Scott Tate began by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Building a Regional Health Sciences Pipeline- Charting Career Pathways and Standardizing Curricula*, submitted by Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers (Fiscal agent: Freedom First Foundation; Project lead contact: Carilion Clinic). The project seeks funds to advance the life and health sciences talent pipeline by establishing a new initiative to better; meet the acute and growing need of regional employers for qualified workers, including technicians and others, support the region's emerging Health and Life Sciences (H&LS) ecosystem, and make the region stronger as a magnet for attracting established companies in the H&LS sector seeking to expand or relocate. Cynthia Lawrence, Carilion Clinic, and Caroline King, Carilion Clinic, answered questions raised by the committee regarding how this project will relate to the Radford University Carilion program's presence in health sciences stating the RUC is one of their stakeholder educational institutions in this consortium. Cynthia continued stating staff are currently forming an executive committee with their role being to monitor their progress and ensure the initiative is meeting the objectives of employers, as well as the health and life sciences sector. Engaging the sector and ecosystem beyond providing direct care to patients, would be considered the most acute need and reasoning behind funding the pilot phase. Cynthia continued by stating once the team begins to build out the task force structure that will support the consortium, then the team will engage additional private sector companies to assist with identifying regional needs.

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

The Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers request totaled \$100,000 in GO Virginia Region 2 Enhanced Capacity Building funds, with a match of \$106,355.

With a fiscal year cap of \$250,000 for Enhanced Capacity Building projects, the Carilion team has confirmed they hold a sufficient amount of funds to begin the initiative without the requested GO Virginia Region 2 funds that will be made available on July 1, 2021.



Beverly Dalton motioned to recommend the proposal for review of the Region 2 Council during the spring 2021 meeting, with intentions of funding the proposal at the beginning of the FY22 fiscal year, beginning on July 1, 2021. Sandy Davis seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

Lynchburg Beacon of Hope

Scott Tate continued with a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Futures Centers Expansion*, submitted by the Lynchburg Beacon of Hope. For the past 8 years, Lynchburg's Beacon of Hope has partnered with the Lynchburg City Schools to operate high-school based Future Centers. The Future Centers have proven effective in increasing students' pursuit of, access to, and affordability for post-secondary education, certification and training. This project aims to scale the Future Center's model outside of the City of Lynchburg. Laura Hamilton, Lynchburg Beacon of Hope, addressed questions raised by the committee regarding the effectiveness of the expansion's hands-on versus a virtual component stating the team has found that a combination of on the ground support in the locality that they're serving alongside the virtual expertise will create a successful model. Beverly Dalton requested clarification in regard to implementation timeline. Laura continued by stating their intention is to fully implement the program during the school year 2021-2022, with future centers in Lynchburg City, Amherst County, the Town of Altavista by September 2021, as well as expanding to another locality in the region by Spring 2022. Beverly Dalton requested additional information as to the Future Center's deliverables. Laura continued by stating the Future Centers were opened in Lynchburg City in 2012, with the idea for them to provide a k-12 pathway to certification, college, and portable post-secondary training, as well as offering the City of Lynchburg the first privately funded "promise program" implemented in Virginia that allows any student who graduates from Lynchburg City schools to attend Central Virginia Community College free of charge. The Future Centers will ensure all students participating will graduate with a viable pathway to certification, a career, or college. Eddie Amos requested clarification regarding why the students participating in the Futures Centers will not receive access to attend the community college for free. Laura responded by stating the access to free college is privately funded in the City of Lynchburg, therefore, the program would rely on each participating locality to privately fund access to free community college.

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

The Lynchburg Beacon of Hope request totaled \$95,480 in GO Virginia Region 2 Enhanced Capacity Building funds, with a match of \$138,600.

The committee has recommended the proposal for review of the Region 2 Council.

The Advancement Foundation

Scott Tate continued by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Ag/Food Technology and Business Innovation Center*, submitted by The Advancement Foundation. The Advancement Foundation proposes to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility around emerging technology in agriculture, food/beverage processing and business incubation in the Bedford area. Annette Patterson, The Advancement Foundation, addressed concerns raised in the review process, stating the town and



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county of Bedford will not be the only locality confirming their support of the project as The Advancement Foundation's partnerships run deep across the region. Annette continued by stating staff are working on business development not only through main street businesses, but also through new and early stage high growth companies, through their previously awarded phase 1 and 2 grants from GO Virginia Region 2, exceeding their contracted metrics. The project has since evolved and assisted in developing additional relationships across the region, particularly in more rural areas. The Advancement Foundation has experienced much success with their Gauntlet program, a general business development initiative, which has launched 70 businesses in the last year, through a pandemic. Regarding their innovation mill, they have assessed around 75 potential high-growth companies, and are working directly with 40 companies, some of whom fall into the Ag/Technology sector. The Advancement Foundation hosted a conference inviting locality leaders, entrepreneurs, farmers, and economic developers in January 2020 to engage conversation of agriculture and technology opportunities in Region 2. Sandy Davis inquired if the 70 businesses launched in the last year are still active. Annette responded by stating they are all still open and discussed processes of the Gauntlet program. Chairman Smoot requested clarification on expectations of creating higher paying jobs with this initiative. Annette responded by stating as they refine and refocus on outcomes, she expects to attract environmental engineers, bio chemists, food scientists, and small scale processing engineers, all of whom would be an integral part of what they are expecting to build out in order to support local farmers and innovators.

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

The Advancement Foundation request totaled \$85,000 in GO Virginia Region 2 Enhanced Capacity Building funds, with a match of \$42,500.

The committee has recommended the proposal for review of the Region 2 Council.

Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance

Scott Tate continued by providing a brief overview of the new project proposal, *Site-specific Readiness for Amelon Industrial/IT Growth Center*, submitted by the Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance. The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance is applying for a GO Virginia Region 2 site-specific readiness grant to build an Industrial/IT Growth Center on lot 6 of Amelon Commerce Center in Amherst County. Megan Lucas, Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance, and Victoria Hanson, Amherst Economic Development Administration, addressed concerns raised in the review process, stating there are support letters from additional municipalities, City of Lynchburg, Campbell County, and the Town of Amherst. Amherst intends on submitting a US EDA application in March, which will build the industrial building, this GO Virginia regional application will fund the site-specific readiness prior to the build out of the facility. Megan continued by discussing project deliverables and outcomes. Chairman Smoot inquired about the use of regional funds. Megan stated the funds will be used for site preparation which will include completing the detention pond, VDOT entrance work, VEQ requirements, and utility work to begin construction on the 40,000 square foot building. Chairman Smoot requested clarification on how GO Virginia funds will coincide with US EDA funds. Megan responded by stating the US EDA will not allow for funding of site readiness. Amherst County has already invested around \$400,000 in in-kind contributions to the site for real estate costs, preliminary grading, and due diligence. Chairman Smoot



inquired about which entity will own the building, Victoria stated the building will be owned by the Amherst County Economic Development Administration, however, the US EDA will have a large portion of control as they will have funded around half of the construction costs.

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

The Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance request totaled \$297,000 in GO Virginia Region 2 Per-Capita funds, with a match of \$526, 105.

Beverly Dalton motioned to recommend the proposal for review of the Region 2 Council, and Eddie Amos seconded. All were in favor and none opposed.

Special Updates

VIC Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative

Meredith Hundley began by providing an update on progress made within the Region 2 funded project, Regional Entrepreneurship Initiative. Meredith shares processes within the initiative, including the processes of review, engagement, synthesizing the information from the existing plans, into the creation of 3 sub-regional strategic investment plans and prioritizing projects they view would be beneficial for advancing innovation driven entrepreneurship in region 2. Staff are in the process of finalizing those projects now, with a request of any additional feedback on what the initiative is suggesting should be prioritized upon presenting these projects to the executive committee. Staff are envisioning this to be a continuous planning process in effort to grow the pipeline of projects that would further the entrepreneurial ecosystem in our region. Participation has been tough considering a pivot to online only collaborations, staff have distributed surveys that were not initially anticipated in place of focus groups and in person interactions. They surveyed 114 regional innovation-driven entrepreneurs to identify regional priorities, receiving responses from 35 individuals. 111 stakeholders from entrepreneurial support organizations across the region were invited to participate, with 81 stakeholders participating in 2020 sector representation. The coalition met quarterly and involved 26 representatives in local government, 16 involved in higher education, and 38 involved in entrepreneurial support organizations participated in meetings. Geographical representation involved the following localities, 37 stakeholders from the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Highlands, 29 stakeholders from Lynchburg, and 28 stakeholders from the New River Valley. Following the survey, the team identified the following prioritized projects, technical assistance, startup pathways, startup studios, early-stage funding sources, industry-specific accelerator cohorts, technical talent for hire, hub-and-spoke structured co-working spaces, shared wetlabs, EXIT RAMP program, C-suite for hire, and broadband initiatives. Meredith stated there are several projects that staff have assisted in formation that have since received funding.

Broadband Task Force

Frank Smith, Roanoke Valley Broadband Authority, provided the committee with a brief overview of the Region 2 Broadband Task Force, stating the working group has recently added Scott Midkiff, CIO, Virginia Tech, and Keith Perry, CIO, Carilion Clinic, as well as two county administrators from Roanoke



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and Botetourt. The authority has built fiber optic network underground and are currently reviewing wireless applications for last mile. Currently, the region has 4 existing providers and 4 next generation providers on the network. The group has begun deployment of wireless access in Botetourt County through CARES funding. The group has recently responded to Roanoke County RFP for internet services and dark fiber. Additionally, members are working on grant applications for wireless related projects, involving Carilion and Virginia Tech, as well as public Wi-Fi areas to deploy. Finally, the authority is also collaborating with partners to begin planning stages in order to provide fiber internet to private residences in the region. Eddie Amos elaborated on the importance of adequate internet access in the more rural areas of Region 2 as citizens continue to have poor internet access which has in turn hindered our ability to promote economic development.

Council Business

Council Vacancies

Chairman Smoot announced there are 7 positions on the council whose term expired in January 2021. Of those individuals, 5 have expressed interest in serving an additional term, those members include Sandy Davis, Michael Friedlander, John Capps, John Putney, and Marty Muscatello. Watt Foster has indicated he will be leaving the council upon expiration of his term this month. Additional vacant positions on the council include 4 positions in the Roanoke/Alleghany region.

Chairman Smoot motioned to recommend the reappointment of the previously mentioned members of council with Eddie Amos seconding. The full council will convene on February 5, 2021 and will review this recommendation.

All were in favor and none opposed.

Staff Updates

Proposal Pipeline

John Provo provided the committee with a brief update regarding Region 2 proposal pipeline. Support staff are tasked with project development and technical assistance with applicants who are moving forward. Provo stated there are currently 7 active ongoing contacts who are developing proposals to bring before the council. Of the 7, 3-4 of those proposals are likely to come forward next quarter.