



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

GO Virginia Region 2

GO Virginia Region 2 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2021, 1:00p.m.- 3:00p.m,

Roanoke Higher Education Center, Room 709, 108 N Jefferson St, Roanoke Virginia, 24016.

Executive Committee members in attendance: Eddie Amos (Vice-chair), Beverley Dalton, Ray Smoot (Chair).

Executive Committee members participating remotely: Sandy Davis.

Staff in attendance: John Provo, Scott Tate, Sarah Lyon-Hill, Rachel Jones, Zach Jackson, Quina Weber-Shirk, Alyssa McKenney.

Public in attendance: Morgan Romeo, Brett Malone, Dawn Myers, Dean Rodgers, Deborah Flippo, Meredith Hundley, Aisha Johnson, Megan Lucas, Catherine Potter.

The meeting convened at 1:04p.m. and adjourned at 2:50p.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 with 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. Revised industry clusters include Transportation and Autonomy, Materials and Machinery Manufacturing, Life Sciences and Healthcare, and IT and Emerging Tech. Zach Jackson reviewed changes in regional data, noting the 2015-2021 trends in the Transportation and Autonomy cluster observed a steeply negative competitive effect of 3,024, largely due to underperformance in the region's logistics and distribution cluster. Therefore, support staff are recommending removing logistics and distribution from the plan. Following lack of success in the Food and Beverage Processing industry cluster, Sarah suggested removing it from the plan as well. The committee then discussed changes in median wages with support staff. Vice-chair Eddie Amos suggested separating IT from Emerging Tech.

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, began by discussing Region 2's unmet need within the Life Sciences Sector. This project will build on the



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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 not accessible to start up businesses in 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. 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. Over the course of their program, J&J has invested 75 billion in over 780 Life Sciences companies. In 2020, J&J has invested over 500 million into startup companies, specializing in drug devices and diagnostics companies. J&J will align a start up company with a designated J&J advisor that would mentor that company, with an agreed upon selection committee, representing businesses in Region 2 but also J&J. Eddie Amos requested clarification as to whether or not this is an extended research park for J&J. Brett Malone responded by stating J&J has an official Children’s National JLABS facility in Washington DC, which would be the anchor for this initiative in Region 2. This grant would result in a facility for J&J to extend their program into the region.

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.

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). 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 focuses on career awareness, to ensure career opportunities are well-known and accessible for students and residents across all skill levels. 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 attraction, capitalizing on the Roanoke Regional Partnership’s efforts, to retain and develop the current Region 2 workforce. The fourth goal relates to regional collaboration; the project will engage a variety of partners in workforce development, economic development, and business and industry. Through talent attraction efforts, they have discovered the most efficient way to attract individuals who are “out-of-market” is to pair them with someone who already lives and works within Region 2; through the talent ambassador volunteer program. Eddie Amos inquired on the measurable outcomes of this proposal. Morgan Romeo responded by stating they will measure success by purchasing a customer relationship management system to track out of market touches the partnership has to individuals



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looking to move to our region. They will document the number of people they are interacting with outside of the region, as well as tracking how many of those individuals actually move here. The applicants will also track those who are placed in work-based learning or internships that are likely to advance to a permanent job position, as well as middle/high school visits with local businesses and how many students are involved in those efforts.

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.

Special Discussion Items

CVTC Update

Megan Lucas shared an update pertaining to her project, the Central Virginia Training Center Redevelopment Plan. The project is moving forward, however, there is a \$100,000 funding gap required to complete the project. Megan has raised \$20,000 to date, with 4 outstanding requests. Megan then stated that Amherst County has brought forth an additional contribution. Beverley Dalton requested more information and likelihood of the outstanding requests for additional funding. Megan Lucas responded by stating 2 of the funding requests are likely to be approved, with an estimated 50/50 chance of the other 2 receiving approval. Beverley Dalton suggested council fund the remaining gap based on Lynchburg's prioritization of this property. Chairman Smoot deferred the decision of funding the remaining gap to the meeting of the full council, to be held on October 27, 2021.

Regional Collaboration on Large Federal Opportunities

John Provo began by sharing there has been ongoing discussion regarding how to plan for collaboration on large federal opportunities amongst announcements of new federal funding sources. This isn't a traditional GO Virginia project, however, through contingency funds, council does have the ability to support initiatives that are outside of council's usual funding priorities. Chairman Smoot then stated very little is known of regulations as the legislation has yet to be passed. Once we know more, regional entities will likely engage to advance the program. Chairman Smoot expressed interest in collaborative efforts to align local government, economic development officials, and higher education institutes to create competitive proposals as to where the region, as a whole, will benefit. Vice-chair Eddie Amos suggested council create a timeline for Region 2 to address these opportunities.

Council Business

Financials and Budget Review

Alyssa McKenney provided the committee with a brief financial report, council has a remaining balance of \$2,189,480 in per-capita funds. Alyssa McKenney continued with an overview of allocations, stating if the 2 proposals reviewed today receive council approval, there will be a remaining balance of



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\$1,274,133. Alyssa McKenney then reviewed drawdown status of all active Region 2 projects, as well as support org staff drawdown for administrative purposes. Chairman Smoot requested the drawdown of matching funds to be reviewed as well during future financial reporting.

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

Quarterly Project Reporting

John Provo reviewed projects listed as “yellow” in the quarterly report, meaning staff is monitoring progress made by sub-grantees who experienced barriers to completing all quarter 3 milestones.

The meeting adjourned at 2:50p.m.