

# WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

of the  
August 28, 2008, Meeting

held at the  
Commission Office  
1100 Madison Street, Martinsville, VA  
at 7:30 p.m.

## PRESENT

### HENRY COUNTY

Jim Adams  
Paula Burnette  
Charlie Redd

### FRANKLIN COUNTY

Leland Mitchell  
Bobby Thompson

### ROCKY MOUNT

Roger Seale  
Jerry Greer

### MARTINSVILLE

Kathy Lawson

### PATRICK COUNTY

Karl Weiss  
Ron Knight  
Jerry Adams

### DANVILLE

Harry Kolendrianos, Chairman  
Buddy Rawley

### PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

James Astin, Treasurer  
Henry Davis

## ABSENT

Kimble Reynolds, Jr., Vice-Chairman  
Steve Angle, Rocky Mount  
Sherman Saunders, Danville

## STAFF

Robert W. Dowd, AICP, Executive Director  
Joan Hullett, Assistant Director  
Tammy Moss, Administrative Assistant

## GUEST

Jerry Fischer, City of Danville

1. **Call to Order**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and noted that a quorum was present.

2. **Confirmation of Minutes of the May 22, 2008, Meeting—WPPDC/M(08)5**

Mrs. Burnette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Jim Adams, to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2008, meeting. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2008, meeting.

3. **Points Arising from Previous Meeting**

The Executive Director advised that the WPPD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) had been submitted to the Philadelphia Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, to maintain the Region's designation as an Economic Development District.

**THE BOARD:**

Noted this report.

4. **Treasurer's Reports: April 30, 2008—WPPDC/P(08)31 and May 31, 2008--WPPDC/M(08)33**

Mr. Seale made a motion, seconded by Mr. Redd, to approve the Treasurer's Reports as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to approve the Treasurer's Reports for April 30, 2008, and May 31, 2008, as presented.

5. **Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process—July-August 2008—WPPDC/P(08)33**

**THE BOARD:**

Noted this report.

6. **Quarterly Report of Activities: State Data Affiliate Center & VEC Business & Industry Data Center Programs—Fourth Quarter – FY 2009 – WPPDC/P(08)36**

**THE BOARD:**

Noted this report.

7. **WPPD Fiscal Year 2008 Annual Report Prepared for the VA Department of Housing and Community Development in Accordance with the Regional Cooperation Act, Code of Virginia**

The Executive Director advised the Board that their meeting packages had included the PDC's FY 2008 Annual Report prepared for the VA Department of Housing and Community Development as required by the Regional Cooperation Act of the Code of Virginia. DHCD provides this report for all PDCs to the General Assembly each year. This information is required in order for the Commission to begin receiving monthly payments from the State.

**THE BOARD:**

Noted this informational report.

8. **Status Report on Phase II & III Development of Regional Water Supply Plan in Conjunction with Virginia Department of Environmental Quality**

The Executive Director advised that the Commission's consultant, Draper Aden of Blacksburg, was continuing efforts to complete Phase II of the Regional Water Supply Plan and that staff had been working with the local governments to obtain the required resolutions for participation in the Phase III planning effort. Staff and several local government representatives, along with representatives from DEQ and Draper Aden, had attended a drought response plan workshop in Blacksburg. It was noted that a drought response plan must be included in the final water supply plan to meet Virginia Code requirements.

**THE BOARD:**

Noted this informational report.

9. **Rail Passenger Service—Comments on Draft State Rail Plan—WPPDC/P(08)35**

The Executive Director informed the Board that the draft Virginia State Rail Plan included a project to develop a new rail passenger service route from Lynchburg-to-Charlottesville-to-Washington. Norfolk Southern railway tracks extend south from Lynchburg to Danville—in effect, they are presently used by the Crescent line with stops in New Orleans, Danville, Lynchburg, Washington, D.C. and New York City and intermediate stops. He noted that the new Rail Plan project would not serve Danville. The Plan cited Lynchburg rail facilities as having a Y-track used for reversing the passenger train for its return to Washington, back and forth each day. Danville does

not have this facility and the Rail Plan proposal did not offer constructing a Y-track in Danville for a Danville termini option for the new service.

The Executive Director noted that the City had expressed its concern for the new service since it is not being offered with a Danville option; comments in a letter were attached to the Board paper. He stated that PDC Staff discussion with the City's Staff indicated that the City would appreciate the PDC's interest being expressed in the matter of the Rail Plan recommendations and projects—particularly, the Washington-Charlottesville-Lynchburg proposal.

Mr. Jerry Fischer of the City of Danville was also present and outlined the City's concerns. While the above was noted as a concern, another concern noted was the Crescent line's future. The Crescent route currently employed the same route as that being proposed for the new Lynchburg-Charlottesville-Washington route and the timing of the stops was expected to be 1-2 hours apart. The new route's stop schedule for Lynchburg-Charlottesville-Washington would be superior to the current Crescent route's arrangement. [To board the Crescent in Danville for Washington, you board at 4:57 a.m.; for New Orleans, you board at 11:14 p.m.] Prospectively, the Amtrak planners could determine that either the Crescent or the new route would be superfluous and there would be the chance that Crescent routing could be changed. The Crescent route could be connected to the Charlotte-Raleigh-Richmond-Washington route and so would not serve Danville, Lynchburg, or Charlottesville beyond the rerouting event in North Carolina. North Carolina would likely be indifferent to the change since they would still have service to Washington (via a Raleigh-Richmond routing). The outcome of these changes could result in Danville's interstate rail service being eliminated entirely.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rawley, for the Planning District Commission's Executive Director to inform Governor Tim Kaine and other appropriate state officials by letter developed in conjunction with Mr. Jerry Fischer of the City of Danville that the Commission is concerned that Danville has been omitted from consideration under the new service proposal as presented in the State Rail Plan and that there is also concern for the long-term impact if the new Virginia service proposal is achieved without considering Danville's future. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to inform Governor Tim Kaine and other appropriate state officials by letter developed in conjunction with Mr. Jerry Fischer of the City of Danville that the Commission is concerned that Danville has been omitted from consideration under the new service proposal as presented in the State Rail Plan and that there is also concern for the long-term impact if the new Virginia service proposal is achieved without considering Danville's future.

**10. Updates and Reports on Regional Projects/Activities:**

a) US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

It was noted that the recently-approved CEDS document had been sent to the Philadelphia Regional Office.

b) Rural Transportation Planning Program in conjunction with the VA Department of Transportation

The Executive Director informed the Board that staff had been preparing for a meeting of the PDC's Transportation Technical Advisory Committee where a list of projects to be addressed as "detailed study locations" or "hot spots" for prioritizing and assignment to a consultant for study would be reviewed. He noted that the PDC staff, working with local government staff members and VDOT Resident Administrators, would be reviewing approximately 50 detail study locations in order to narrow it down to 31—the number which VDOT's on-call consultants would be studying in upcoming weeks for inclusion in the Regional Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan under development.

He also informed the Board that he had been working with the Lynchburg VDOT office on a new study on Route 29 near Chatham. The project is waiting on VDOT contract arrangements.

He also noted that the consultant on the access management plan for Route 29 near Blairs was wrapping up his final report.

c) Consideration of Resolution: Authorization for the Executive Director to Request Funds for VDOT's On-Call Consultant Services Program and Support for Use of Funds on Detailed Study Locations Identified in the Long-Range Transportation Planning Program—WPPDC/P(08)41

The Executive Director noted, that as stated above, the PDC would be needing to narrow down the number of detailed study locations to be included in the Regional Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan for study by VDOT's on-call consultants from 50 to 31. VDOT's Transportation Mobility Planning Division staff had recently advised of and recommended use of VDOT's on-call consultant services program (eligible for use in rural/non-MPO areas) for needed transportation planning work in planning districts. When the announcement of this grant program was received, the PDC staff had polled locality official as to whether they would like to seek funds for the detailed study locations or other types of studies. The results of the poll indicated they would like to see new FY 2009 On-Call Consultant Services grant funding directed toward the needed detailed study locations that are unaddressed in the Regional Rural Long-Range Plan being developed. If the application is successful, the locations would be studied through employment of a qualified and experienced transportation consultant firm with past experience working in Virginia and for VDOT.

The Executive Director advised that the Executive Committee, at its earlier session, had voted unanimously to recommend that the Board adopt the resolution included in the Board package authorizing its Executive Director to proceed to make application for funds from VDOT from its On-Call Consultant Services Program and to execute any necessary requests, agreements, or contracts necessary for obtaining needed assistance on the selected detailed study locations and further that the PDC supports the project referenced above as an advancement on regional transportation planning and should assist improvement in mobility and safety of transportation locally and regionally.

Mr. Seale made a motion, seconded by Mr. Astin, to accept the Executive Committee's recommendation. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to adopt the resolution included in the Board package authorizing its Executive Director to proceed to make application for funds from VDOT from its On-Call Consultant Services Program and to execute any necessary requests, agreements, or contracts necessary for obtaining needed assistance on the selected detailed study locations and further that the PDC supports the project referenced above as an advancement on regional transportation planning and should assist improvement in mobility and safety of transportation locally and regionally. (Resolution attached.)

d) **Review of Resolution on West Piedmont Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan Developed by KFH/Cambridge Consultants on Behalf of the PDCs and Steering Committees—WPPDC/P(08)37**

The Executive Director reported that the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation had worked with the staff and numerous agencies which provide public transportation to prepare the West Piedmont Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan—a copy of which had been included in the Board package. The work was formally developed, report prepared, and then presented by the KFH Group and Cambridge Systematics firms. At its meeting in the spring of 2008, a project Steering Committee had accepted the report. It was now being presented to the Planning District Commission for review, consideration, and action. The report would need to become an integral part of the Rural Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan that was under development by the PDC staff, locality staffs, and VDOT representatives, along with VDOT's on-call consultant teams.

He informed the Board that the Plan included the following principal sections: Executive Summary; Introduction; Background; Outreach Efforts; Demographics and Potential Destinations; Assessment of Available Transportation Services and Resources; Assessment of Unmet Transportation Needs and Gaps; Identified Strategies; Priorities for Implementation and Potential Projects; Plan Adoption Process; Ongoing and Future Arrangements for Plan Updates. Key appendices included: Final FTA Guidance on Coordinated Planning Requirements; Mobility Management—Eligible Activities and Potential Projects; Potential Non-DOT Federal Program Guide; Workshop Attendees; Demographics of Potentially Transit Dependent Persons. In addition, the Plan detailed the coordinated transportation planning process for the PDC area and included the following required elements:

- An assessment of available services identifying current providers both public and private which is covered in Section VI
- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes – this assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on data collection efforts and gaps in service. For the PDC, analysis of demographic and potential destinations is included in Section V, and assessment of unmet transportation needs and gaps is contained in Section VII.
- Strategies and/or activities and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to improve efficiencies in service delivery is included in the Plan. The eleven (11) strategies identified during the planning process are located in Section VIII.
- Priorities for implementation based on resources, from multiple program sources, time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified. The prioritized strategies and projects for implementation for the PDC are included in Section IX.

He noted that the CHSM Plan must ultimately:

- Serve as a comprehensive, unified plan that promotes community mobility for seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons of low income.
- Establish priorities to incrementally improve mobility for the target populations;
- Develop a process to identify partners interested, willing, and able to promote community mobility for the target populations.

It was further noted that, in an effort to progress toward the goals, the planning process had involved:

- Quantitative analyses to identify resources, needs, and potential partners
- Qualitative activities including public meetings with major agencies and organizations funding human services, with representative direct service providers, and with consumers representing the target group constituencies;
- An inventory of available public transit services, undertaken to provide initial informational tools to the target populations and their representatives.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Burnette, to approve the sample resolution that had been included in the Board package. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to adopt the resolution included in the Board package stating that the West Piedmont Planning District Commission had had an opportunity to review the Coordinated Human Service Mobility Plan and had accepted it and encourages its inclusion into the Rural Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan in order to form the transit element of that document being developed by the Commission in conjunction with the Virginia Department of Transportation. (Resolution attached.)

- e) Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization Assistance Program in conjunction with the VA Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

The Executive Director updated the Board on the Iris Lane and Route 730 to Route 29 Connector Studies for the Danville MPO. He also briefed the group on the Memorial Drive-West Main Street and Route 58 West Corridor Access Management projects being developed for the MPO.

He reported that he had been selected to serve on a Technical Committee that will be guiding the development of a new statewide corridor study for U.S. Route 29 from Gainesville to Danville. The Committee was in the final stages of hiring a consultant and starting work in October or late September.

**11. Legislative Letter Review: Report on Year 2009 General Assembly Legislative Letter—WPPDC/P(08)40**

The Executive Director called attention to last year's General Assembly Legislative Letter that had been included in the Board package for information and review. He noted that he would be forwarding the letter to the local government administrators for their review and input. He told the Board that work would continue on update and development of the upcoming year's letter with a goal of completing it at the combined November-December Board meeting.

Mr. Davis noted concern with localities having to pay for the local operations of various state agencies where it would be more appropriate that the state fund these operations out of state revenues rather than placing the burden on the localities. This situation has been growing for some time and, along with it, the local tax burden. Discussion among Board members indicated that it was felt it would be helpful if the Planning District Commission wrote a letter to area legislators noting these concerns. Mrs. Burnette indicated that she would provide the PDC staff with additional information on this matter.

**THE BOARD:**

Instructed the Executive Director to send area legislators a letter advising of the concern of the West Piedmont localities with having to pay for the local operations of various state agencies where it would be more appropriate that the state fund these operations out of state revenues rather than placing the burden on the localities.

**12. Development of Year 2008 Transportation Projects List for Presentation to the Commonwealth Transportation Board—VDOT District Workshops, Fall 2008—WPPDC/P(08)38**

The Executive Director advised that it was anticipated that VDOT District Workshops would be held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) in the fall of 2008 to gain input from the public as well as agencies such as the PDC. He referred the group to the letter and lists from the fall of 2007 which had been included in the Board paper. He noted that the staff would be using these lists as the basis for beginning work on this year's input at the hearings and that the information would be distributed to the local government administrators for advice and input. He also requested that Board members provide comments and inputs as the lists are being developed.

**THE BOARD:**

Noted this report.

**13. Highlights of Commission and Staff Activities; Other Business and Reports**

- a) Staff Activities

The Executive Director informed the Board that he had attended the summer conference of the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions. In addition, he and the Deputy Director had attended a Title VI Workshop sponsored by VDOT. Staff had also participated in training for MPO work on financial management issues to be addressed in future updates of transportation improvement programs required by federal codes.

- b) Revised VDOT Rate for Reimbursement of Mileage Effective July 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008

The Executive Director informed the Board that, on July 1, 2008, staff had been advised by VDOT that the Department of Accounts had announced that effective July 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008, the mileage reimbursement rate would change from \$0.505 to \$0.585. At its earlier session, the Executive Committee had voted unanimously to recommend that the Board, in keeping with the State's guidelines, authorize the staff to use the VDOT rate for reimbursement of mileage effective July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2008, at the rate noted above.

Mr. Davis made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rawley, to accept the Executive Committee's recommendation. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously that effective July 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008, the Commission's mileage reimbursement rate would change from \$0.505 to \$0.585, in keeping with the State of Virginia's guidelines.

c) **Review of Locality Grant Applications to VA Department of Health**

The Executive Director informed the Board that the City of Martinsville, Town of Rocky Mount, and Franklin County would be applying for grant funding from the VA Department of Health. Martinsville's request would be to improve its water system mapping, particularly in some of the City's older areas. Rocky Mount's request would be for funding to perform preliminary engineering and study for the extension of water lines to reach the Western Virginia Water Authority System that is being expanded into Franklin County. Franklin County's request would be for a planning grant for water serve extension planning outside the one-quarter mile service area studied as part of the water line extension along the U.S. Route 220 Corridor.

Mr. Seale made a motion, seconded by Mr. Rawley, to authorize the Executive Director to prepare letters of support for the above-noted projects. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director to prepare letters of support for the above-noted projects for Martinsville, Rocky Mount, and Franklin County to be requested through VA Department of Health grant applications.

**14. Appointments to the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee, Established per Code of Virginia Section 62.1-69.39—WPPDC/P(08)39**

The Executive Director informed the Committee that the Commission needed to make a nomination for General Assembly consideration so that an appointment to the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee could take place. He stated that, from reading the Code of Virginia and correspondence between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and Division of Legislative Services, it appeared that this appointment would be for a citizen at-large, or it could be a member local government elected official or employee, or a PDC Board member or staff person. He informed the group that the PDC had a citizen at-large member appointed and still serving as one of the two appointees from the West Piedmont region. He also advised that Charles Poindexter, appointed from an earlier PDC nomination, had stepped off the Committee as one of the region's two representatives since he was now a member by virtue of being a member of the House of Delegates and thus was now appointed to the Committee by that route. For general information, the staff had supplied copies of the pertinent Code of Virginia section, plus information on Committee service gathered from an earlier nomination process.

Mr. Thompson stated that he felt Russ Johnson, a former WPPD Board member and currently a member of the Franklin County Board of Supervisors, would be a good candidate to nominate for consideration. He noted that Mr. Johnson represents the Smith Mountain Lake area and has been on the relicensing committee.

Mr. Thompson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Davis, to nominate Mr. Russ Johnson for consideration for appointment to the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee. A motion by Mrs. Burnette to close the nominations, was duly seconded and unanimously approved. Upon vote, Mr. Thompson's motion carried unanimously.

**THE BOARD:**

Voted unanimously to nominate Mr. Russ Johnson for consideration by the General Assembly for appointment to the Virginia Roanoke River Basin Advisory Committee.

**15. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Robert W. Dowd, AICP  
Executive Director