

WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

of the
March 22, 2007, Meeting

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

PRESENT

HENRY COUNTY

Paula Burnette
Jim Adams

PATRICK COUNTY

Danny Foley
Jerry Adams

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

James Astin, Treasurer
William Pritchett

MARTINSVILLE

Kathy Lawson

ROCKY MOUNT

Roger Seale
Ralph Casey

DANVILLE

Harry Kolendrianos, Chairman

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Leland Mitchell
Marshall Blair

ABSENT

Kimble Reynolds, Vice-Chairman
Steve Angle, Rocky Mount
Russ Johnson, Franklin County
David Young, Patrick County
Charlie Redd, Henry County
Henry Davis, Pittsylvania County
Frank B. Fuller, Jr., Martinsville
Stokes Daniels, Danville
Sherman Saunders, Danville

STAFF

Robert W. Dowd, AICP, Executive Director
Joan Hullett, Assistant Director

GUESTS

Jeff Quill, Tunstall Volunteer Fire Department

1. **Call to Order**

The Chairman established the presence of a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. He introduced and welcomed the guest present.

2. **Confirmation of Minutes of the February 22, 2007, Meeting—WPPDC/M(07)2**

Ms. Burnette made a motion, seconded by Mr. Astin, to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2007, meeting. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2007, meeting.

3. **Points Arising from Previous Meetings**

The Executive Director advised that the Regional Community Development Block Grant priorities had been submitted to the VA Department of Housing and Community Development and that the PDC's Rural Plan Work Program had been submitted to VDOT.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

4. **Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process—March 2007—WPPDC/P(06)17**

THE BOARD:

Noted this informational report.

5. **Intergovernmental Review: County of Franklin – USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Application for Technology Equipment for the Franklin County Workforce Development Center—WPPDC/P(07)18**

Franklin County was applying for \$176,000 in USDA Rural Development RBEG (Rural Business Enterprise Grant Funds) to provide funding for providing technology equipment at the Franklin County Workforce Development Center under construction in the Town of Rocky Mount. This new workforce training facility would house distance learning and in-house training opportunities for its thirteen partners, which included Virginia Western Community College, Patrick Henry Community College, Ferrum College, and Franklin County Adult Education. Both community colleges as well as other institutions of higher learning within the region had expressed interest in providing classroom instruction within this facility, and the County needs funds to provide the necessary distance learning equipment, hardware necessary for the distance learning equipment, fiber connectivity, and other associated classroom needs. The County received funding for construction of the facility from the Virginia Tobacco Commission, the Economic Development Administration, and the Virginia Community Development Block Grant Program; in addition, Franklin County has provided a \$3.5 million dollar local match for the workforce development center project. It was being requested that these funds be considered as leverage for the proposed project. The following is a list of estimates of technology items being requested through this grant to support the County's new Franklin Center:

- **Computer Network Switches** (\$35,000) provide voice and data communication to the entire Franklin Center, the internal County network, and the Internet.
- **Fiber Optic Network Connectivity** (\$60,000). Will be able to carry voice, data, and video communications. Fiber optic cabling ensures dedicated high-speed transmission over long distance with the drawback of interference from surrounding electrical and radio frequencies. The connection will be owned by the County and will not be a recurring expense to a third party provider. Will be able to allow the County to share the County's Internet service with the workforce center, providing service connectivity to all staff, partners, and students.
- **Video Conferencing Core Solution** (\$81,000). Video conferencing technology will provide voice and video collaboration for conference participants independent of distance and geographic location. Service as the core solution for applications such as Board meetings, intra/interoffice collaboration and collaboration between state and local government localities an agencies. Useful for video device management, archival and storage for on-demand web casts and multipoint conference bridging.

No adverse comments had been received during the Intergovernmental Review Process.

Mr. Astin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Seale, to make a favorable comment on the project. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make a favorable comment on the proposed project.

6. **Intergovernmental Review: Tunstall Volunteer Fire & Rescue Incorporated—Pittsylvania County—USDA Rural Development Grant Application for Ambulance Acquisition Project—WPPDC/P(07)**

The Tunstall (Pittsylvania County) Volunteer Fire and Rescue, Incorporated was applying to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development agency for funding from the USDA's Community Facilities Loans and Grants program to acquire necessary funding to replace fire/rescue equipment (ambulance) for use in its

service area in western Pittsylvania County. The Federal amount was \$45,000 and the Fire and Rescue squad's cost share would be \$90,000; the project cost total is \$135,000. The Tunstall Volunteer Fire and Rescue department needed to replace its 1995 model ambulance that has 75,000 plus miles on it and that was in poor condition. The funds requested would be used to purchase a Type 1, Ford F-450, four-wheel drive, ALS ground ambulance. This unit would be used as the new front line vehicle. It was designed to meet all federal ambulance regulations as well as local and state vehicle standards and regulations. The vehicle would be diesel powered and equipped with: automatic transmission, LED lighting package, airbag rear suspension, automatic O2 tank bracket, climate controlled med box, and ambulance cot and accessories. The new vehicle would be beneficial to the Tunstall community and communities of surrounding areas in the county where mutual aid services can be provided. They answer emergency calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The application noted that the design would benefit the department by being four-wheel drive for response during bad weather and by having the automatic O2 tank bracket, which would potentially reduce back injuries. The unit would also benefit the public by allowing service to be provided in a vehicle that meets all of current specifications. It was noted that patients would benefit from riding in an air-suspension equipped vehicle instead of standard suspension. The department was currently involved in development of its new fire/rescue building project with its attendant costs and that outside funds were needed to assist with the vehicle purchase that is also needed.

No adverse comments had been received during the Intergovernmental Review Process.

Mr. Jeff Quill of the Tunstall Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department was present to respond to questions concerning the application.

Mr. Astin made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, to make a favorable comment on the project. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make a favorable comment on the proposed project.

7. Intergovernmental Review: Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization – Notification of Intent to Apply for Federal Transit Administration Section 5303 Planning and Technical Assistance Funds--WPPDC/P(07)13

The Executive Director, who serves as the Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization's Administrator, advised that he would be filing a Notification of Intent to apply for Section 5303 Planning and Technical Assistance funds from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FTA funds to be sought with approval of the Danville MPO and the City of Danville would be in the amount of \$52,548 with matching funds of \$6,569 from the Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Rail and Public Transportation and \$6,569 from the City of Danville on its approval. The following efforts will be undertaken by the parties to the work program:

- **Danville MPO Administration/Planning**
Provide transit planning administrative assistance to the DTS to meet FTA Section 5307 requirements for preparing and submitting grant applications; maintaining and implementing a Public and a Private Sector Participation Process; and DTS's conduct of short- and long-range transit planning activities; develop the Transportation Improvement Program transit sections and the annual Unified Work Program transit planning elements and insure project selection and public participation procedures are maintained and implemented. The MPO and WPPDC staff would employ \$12,040 in the grant funds and match to carry out its responsibilities.
- **Danville MPO Administration/Planning**
Provide transit planning administrative assistance to the DTS to meet FTA Section 5307 requirements for preparing and submitting grant applications; maintaining and implementing a Public and a Private Sector Participation Process; and DTS's conduct of short- and long-range transit planning activities; develop the Transportation Improvement Program transit sections and the annual Unified Work Program transit planning elements and insure project selection and public participation procedures are maintained and implemented. The MPO and WPPDC staff would employ \$12,040 in the grant funds and match to carry out its responsibilities.
- **City of Danville/Danville Transit System Planning (Pass-Through grant supported):**
Danville Transit System (DTS) would conduct transit planning and assist on certain administration efforts necessary to comply with FTA requirements in order to receive Section 5307 program capital and operating grants. These requirements include maintaining Civil Rights (Title VI), DBE and EEO requirements, performance monitoring, ADA planning and preparing all necessary reports. DTS would coordinate with the MPO on transit planning activities, including maintaining the Public Participation Plan and updating the financial information, if required. Funds were expected to be used to support, in part, a Transit Manager to assist in the preceding efforts. Remaining grant assistance would be used to carry out the following task elements: a) Program Support and Administration; b) Short-Range Transportation Planning; c) Drug/Alcohol Planning and Customer Service Training. The Danville Transit System staff would employ \$53,646 of the grant funds and matches to carry out its activities using a pass-through from the MPO and PDC staff. The Danville Transit System's funds would come from an anticipated award of Section 5303 grant funds to the MPO, a portion of which would then be awarded to Danville Transit System in the form of a pass-through grant from the Danville MPO. Funds that would be made available to the DTS total \$53,646; Danville MPO would use the remaining \$12,040 in funds.

The Executive Director noted that the City of Danville (Pittsylvania County) MPO was utilizing Section 5303 funds in the current fiscal year. He also noted that the City of Danville and the Danville MPO anticipated the funding request and it was being included in the upcoming Unified Work Program for FY 2008. In addition to Commission review and consideration of the application notice of intent, the MPO Administrator was also requesting Board consideration of approval of a resolution authorizing the MPO Administrator/WPPDC Executive Director to apply for funds and to contract with the City of Danville for the pass-through funds from the FTA Section 5303 planning grant, anticipating the City's desire for these funds and the MPO's own approval of the pass-through action.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee had voted unanimously to recommend that the Board adopt the resolution as presented.

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

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to adopt the resolution as presented authorizing the MPO Administrator/WPPDC Executive Director to apply for funds and to contract with the City of Danville for the pass-through funds from the FTA Section 5303 planning grant, anticipating the City's desire for these funds and the MPO's own approval of the pass-through action.

8. Status Report on Regional Water Supply Plan

The Executive Director advised that the PDC staff had recently met with the local government representatives, along with DEQ staff and the Draper Aden staff, to review the plan's progress to date. There had been discussion about the upcoming Phase II of the project. Staff had also attended a DEQ meeting in Charlottesville where regions across the state had discussed their progress on plan development as well as reviewed pitfalls each had encountered in the initial data collection phase. In addition, staff had attended a meeting with DEQ staff in Roanoke to discuss preparation of the grant application package for potential funding in 2008. He reported that, following that meeting, staff had emailed each locality a resolution of commitment to joining together to carry out Phase II of the water supply plan and, in the cases of the cities and counties, advising of the required local match which would be reduced for each locality by the amount of grant received on a prorated basis.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

9. General Assembly Update

The Executive Director distributed a copy of "The Giesen Perspective," a report by the Honorable A.R. Pete Giesen, Jr., which provided an update on the General Assembly Session. He also noted that the Democrat House Caucus had voted Delegate Ward Armstrong their Minority Floor Leader.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

10. Updates/Reports on Regional Projects/Activities Related to:

a. US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration

The Executive Director advised that work was continuing on the development of the annual update to the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy document and that a draft of the document would be distributed to the Board at its April meeting for consideration at the May meeting.

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

The Executive Director noted that the staff had attended recent workshops put on by VDOT to assist us with the development of the long-range plan. First, a session had been held in Salem where staff participated in a statewide videoconference to discuss the outline for the upcoming Phase II of the plan's development. Staff had also attended a statewide meeting with VDOT that included all the PDCs and the VDOT staff responsible for the program to review traffic database information and how to make adjustments to it and also discuss how the PDCs might employ their GIS systems in further bringing better analysis to the planning program in the next phase. The meeting provided an opportunity to ask questions and provide some clarifications and start resolution to some of the problems PDCs have been having with use of the database given to them.

He also noted that the Rural Transportation Planning Program application for the upcoming year had been submitted to VDOT.

He noted that staff had also meet with the local tech committee membership to review work done to date and inputs that are missing from the local staffs as well as means to obtain information from various agencies across the district in the area of transit and bus and van services.

c. Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization Assistance Program in conjunction with the VA Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration

The Executive Director noted that the MPO had adopted a Public Involvement Plan following a hearing in Danville. He also advised that he had submitted the contract for a corridor study in Danville and expected to see executed copies back from the consultant soon. The second contract was also moving forward toward the final signatures stage.

He noted that the staff would be involved in the development of a new corridor study in Pittsylvania County that would address traffic changes needed on Route 29 North of Danville. Staff would need to work on this from the perspective of the MPO and also as the Rural Planning agency seeking a VDOT grant for a section of the corridor since the corridor is split between Urban MPO areas and Rural areas and the federal planning support money to support each area has to come from two different programs under the Federal Highway Administration.

THE BOARD:

Noted these reports.

11. Highlights of Commission and Staff Activities; Other Business and Reports

The Executive Director noted that the staff continues to work on development of chapters for updating the Patrick County Comprehensive Plan and the Martinsville Comprehensive Plan. Staff had recently attended a wind and solar energy facility siting public outreach meeting at the Roanoke Valley Higher Education Center in Roanoke. The technical session in the afternoon was interesting, representing an introduction to a continuing study effort to develop a siting plan. The evening session covering a number of counties and regions was interesting; however, the WPPD staff members were the only members of the public to show up, other than the James Madison University staff assigned to present the background on the program. Staff had also attended a session at Smith Mountain Lake to review the VDOT program on land use impacts and transportation planning put on by the VDOT staff. He noted that this program could take some attention by the local planning staffs and elected officials whenever a significant local development occurs near major highways in the Commonwealth.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

12. Intergovernmental Review: USDA Rural Development Agency Grant to Continue Revolving Loan Fund to Assist Commercial Improvement/Small Business Development Projects—WPPDC/P(07)19

In order to support a business neighborhood program, the City of Martinsville had made application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development agency for grant funds to develop a loan program that would support neighborhood development. The City originally applied for \$99,000. Several years ago, the City of Martinsville had obtained financing for the rejuvenation of the West Church Street Commercial area including street, sidewalk, landscape, clean up, and other work. Now the City was working on an effort to encourage small business development in the area to enhance the business life of the West Church area and Citywide. A new revolving loan fund program should help; the businesses targeted included those that cannot initially access funds through traditional lenders. An applicant's credit, cash available, and collateral are the criteria being considered for loan approval. Under the new program, loan decisions would be made by the City of Martinsville Loan Committee. Starting the loan program with the distribution of over thirty (30) loan application packages, the Revolving Loan Committee approved the initial loan from the fund created in the amount of \$46,023, in the month of March 2006. In December 2006, the Loan Committee had approved a second loan from the fund in the amount of \$44,220. The City now needed to apply for reimbursement of the funds. The USDA was requiring the City to have an A-95 review, which must be administered by the Planning District Commission in order to satisfy the USDA's requirements.

Mr. Jim Adams made a motion, seconded by Ms. Burnette, to make a favorable comment on the application. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to make a favorable comment on the application.

13. Consideration of Resolution for Authorization to Apply for and Approve Scope of Work for Rural Transportation Planning Program Grant Funds from the Virginia Department of Transportation for the Purpose of Conducting an Access Management Plan for a Section of U.S. Route 29 in Pittsylvania County—WPPDC/P(07)20

The Executive Director advised that the Pittsylvania County representatives on the Danville MPO had asked the WPPDC to apply for VDOT funds to assist in carrying out an access management plan effort. The staff had

prepared a Resolution and draft Scope of Work that needed to be submitted along with a project budget, cover letter, and any other resolutions to serve as the Commission's application for funds from the Virginia Department of Transportation's Rural Transportation Planning Program Grant (RTPP Grant). These Virginia Department of Transportation grant funds were available competitively and were outside the regular assistance program that the WPPDC participates in on an annual basis. The applications were due in spring 2007. The staff expected to give the County and VDOT staff in Lynchburg an opportunity to comment on the scope before the application was submitted officially; staff would then amend the wording of the descriptions if changes were needed.

The Scope of Work would be addressing approaches and criteria for the application of access management on a section of US Route 29 in Pittsylvania County to address the interplay of transportation and land use in sections of corridors in Pittsylvania County that were highly impacted by new, future developments. The section of Route 29 that needed planning efforts was being addressed by two means. First, the MPO would use its PL funds to carry out a study of a southern portion of the section for study; then the WPPDC would apply for SPR planning funds from VDOT to be used in studying the northern portion of the segment for study. VDOT would employ an on-call consultant to do the work, saving the PDC procurement time and effort.

The Executive Director noted that the effort was expected to coincide with the fiscal year; the program was to be included within the Commission Annual Strategy/Work Program document to be presented later in the spring along with the Commission Budget. Two programs were available--one had a match requirement; the other did not. At this time, the budget was expected to be in the range of \$50,000; with the matching program, it would likely require \$40,000 from VDOT and \$10,000 match from Pittsylvania County.

Board members were referred to the resolution (copy attached) and Scope of Work which had been distributed for review. The Executive Director noted that the management tasks and man-hours on the effort had been added into the scope for Rural Transportation Planning Assistance annual program submitted to VDOT in March.

Mr. Pritchett made a motion, seconded by Mr. Astin, to approve the resolution as presented, with the stipulation that the staff make any necessary changes prior to the application submission. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Voted unanimously to approve the resolution as presented, with the stipulation that the staff make any necessary changes prior to the application submission.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Robert W. Dowd, AICP
Executive Director

Attachment