

**WEST PIEDMONT PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION
MINUTES
of the
September 24, 2009, 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

Jerry Adams

FRANKLIN COUNTY

Marshall Blair
Bobby Thompson

MARTINSVILLE

Kim Adkins
Kathy Lawson

ROCKY MOUNT

Roger Seale
Jerry Greer
Ralph Casey

DANVILLE

Harry Kolendrianos, Chairman

PITTSYLVANIA COUNTY

James Astin, Treasurer

ABSENT

William Pritchett, Pittsylvania County
Ron Knight, Patrick County
Karl Weiss, Patrick County
Wes George, Henry County
Leland Mitchell, Franklin County
Kimble Reynolds, Vice-Chairman, Martinsville
Albert K. "Buddy" Rawley, Jr., Danville
Gary Miller, Danville
Henry Davis, Pittsylvania County

STAFF

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

1. **Call to Order and Welcome to Guests**

The Chairman established a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. **Regional Forum Opportunity—Comments from Commissioners and/or Public**

Mrs. Burnette noted a matter, which she had brought up at the Executive Committee concerning a requirement that cleanup participants in cleanup efforts along federal highways were required to use a special vest. She noted that the vest, even when purchased in large quantities, are very expensive. The Executive Director noted that he would ask VDOT about this. She indicated that this may be an item to include in the Legislative Letter.

Mrs. Adkins noted that the Institute for Advanced Learning, the Southern Business Technology Center, and Virginia Tech were planning to submit a grant application to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration. The Deputy Director noted that this project would need to be brought before the Board of Commissioners for consideration as a project amendment to the recently approved Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy submitted to EDA. She indicated to Mrs. Adkins that the group needed to contact her to set up a meeting.

3. **Confirmation of Minutes of the August 27, 2009, Meeting—WPPDC/M(09)6**

Mr. Blair made a motion, seconded by Mr. Casey, to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2009, meeting as presented. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Unanimously approved the minutes of the August 27, 2009, meeting as presented.

4. **Points Arising from Previous Meetings**

The Executive Director reported that the Annual General Assembly Report to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), had been submitted. He had received notification from DHCD that, as soon as the reports were received from a PDC, it would be eligible to begin receiving FY 2010 General Assembly contributions. However, it was also noted that PDCs would be reduced in the amount of \$219,000 in the State's Budget for FY 2010 and the manner of the cuts to PDCs could be taken under advice of the VAPDC.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

5. **Register of Administrative Reviews Under the Virginia Intergovernmental Review Process—September 2009—WPPDC/P(09)54**

THE BOARD:

Noted this informational report.

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

The Executive Director reported that staff had recently met with the Water Supply Planning Committee, consultants (Draper Aden), and Department of Environmental Quality staff to review tasks completed for the Regional Water Supply Plan. The group also discussed the best approaches for presenting the required drought response plans and their accompanying drought response ordinances as well as how and whether to incorporate their review into the review of the overall comprehensive water supply plan. He noted that the committee felt that combining all the reviews into a single timeframe made most sense as it allowed issues to be better interrelated and made for a more efficient and cost effective planning effort.

It was also noted that a Public Information Meeting on the Regional Water Supply Plan was being planned for Thursday, October 29th, at the PDC Office from 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Staff would be advertising and would also send out invitations. Board members were encouraged to attend.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

7. **Update on Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning**

The Board was advised that staff was completing a grant application, as authorized by the Board, for funding to hire a consultant to update the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. This five-year update would keep the localities in the region in compliance in order to receive Hazard Mitigation Plan program funds for eligible activities. Staff was in the process of obtaining Letters of Intent from all of the region's cities, counties, and towns; the participating localities would be providing in-kind staff time and travel as the grant's required local match.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

8. ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM: PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION PARTICIPATION – WPPDC/P(09)62

The Executive Director informed the Board that staff had been involved with representatives from the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (VDMME) through meetings and emails since July. DMME needs assistance in administering the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program since they have limited staff to work with the over 300 localities that would be eligible to receive the federal ARRA-based EECBG grant funds. They wanted to delegate some of the program administration to the Planning District Commissions using the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions as a first-line conduit. In turn, VAPDC, VDMME, and the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC) have basically agreed that NVRC should be the lead PDC in managing the interface between VDMME and the Planning District Commissions across the Commonwealth.

A PDC Management Team has been working with VDMME in the development of the EECBG program to be administered. The guidelines and an electronic application were being developed to be supplied to local governments. There had been some delay because the responsible Federal agency had apparently not officially released the funds and final directives; however, it was anticipated that the information should be made available soon.

There would be over \$9.0 million in funding made available under the program. It was anticipated that VDMME would want to spread the funds geographically and that grants may be in the \$150,000 to \$200,000 range. In discussion with the WPPD administrators who had already expressed interest, staff had noted the need to carefully observe the compliances, assurances, NEPA reports that may be required, and other regulatory involvements that were set out to insure full transparency and compliance was attained by each successful applicant.

At its earlier session, the Executive Committee had voted unanimously to recommend that the Board authorize the Executive Director to execute an agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Northern Virginia Regional Commission (“Lead PDC”) and the West Piedmont PDC (“a Participating Planning District Commission”) for participation in the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program.

Mr. Astin 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 authorize the Executive Director to execute an agreement in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Northern Virginia Regional Commission (“Lead PDC”) and the West Piedmont PDC (“a Participating Planning District Commission”) for participation in the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program.

9. Update on U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Activities

It was noted that work was underway on the Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre EDA grant. Staff had submitted a stimulus grant to the Philadelphia Regional Office for site development at the Cane Creek Business Park, a joint Danville-Pittsylvania County project, on July 10; however, the project had not yet been reviewed by EDA.

10. Appalachian Regional Commission Activities

Staff noted that it was anticipated that the Spencer Penn Centre would be submitting an application for ARC funding; however, they were not aware of other applications to be submitted at this time.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

11. Input on Surface Transportation Plan Update by VDOT with MPO/PDC Assistance—WPPDC/P(09)63

The Executive Director advised that staff had been working with the VDOT Salem and Lynchburg District staffs and VDOT Headquarters staff in bringing together their recommendations for the PDC’s review to provide guidance on improvements for inclusion in the Surface Transportation Plan. He noted that, as it turned out, the recommendations they wanted reviewed were fairly limited but an essential part of the area’s transportation network. The roads and suggested improvements which they wanted the PDC to review were on Route 220, Route 40 east of Rocky Mount and west of Gretna, Route 122, Route 57, Route 58, Route 29, and parts of Route 8. He advised that he would be asking Board approval for the staff to work with the VDOT Salem and Lynchburg District staffs and VDOT Headquarters staff in bringing together their recommendations for the PDC’s review to provide guidance on improvements for inclusion in the Surface Transportation Plan. He noted that he had suggested, and the Executive Committee agreed, that the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee, joined with the Danville MPO’s Project Management Team/TAC, should be charged with review and comment on the proposed project improvements to go into the Surface Transportation Plan.

He indicated that this effort would help further define the problems and available solutions in improving the region's transportation network over future years.

He noted that, at its earlier session, the Executive Committee had occurred with the suggested review approach.

Mrs. Burnette made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Lawson, to approve the proposed approach for obtaining input on the Surface Transportation Plan Update. Upon vote, the motion carried unanimously.

THE BOARD:

Approved having staff work with the Commission's Transportation Technical Advisory Committee and members of the Danville MPO Project Management Team to develop recommendations for changes to the Surface Transportation Plan recommendations originally forwarded for review by the PDC and MPO from the Transportation Planning Division staff of VDOT.

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

The Executive Director advised that, in respect to special corridor study work, staff had prepared a final draft of a correction copy for the Route 29 Blairs Area Access Management Study. It was also noted that the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan effort would produce some new traffic counts at critical, selected intersections in Danville and the urban Pittsylvania County area. He stated that the Modeling effort for the long-range plan was fairly complete and could test alternatives for making improvements by removing or counteracting deficiencies. He stated that an effort to greatly accelerate the Plan's development had been initiated so it could be adopted by the MPO before year's end.

Board members were referred to a handout, a publication by Virginians for Better Transportation, regarding funds for transportation.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

13. Discussion of Legislative Letter for Upcoming General Assembly

The Executive Director informed the group that he had had a brief discussion of the legislative letter with Delegate Donald Merricks at the recent U.S. Route 29 Public Forum. Delegate Merricks seemed interested in receiving the letter early with the thought of giving us some ideas and inputs. It was noted that, when the PDC sends it out, it could encourage responses particularly in those principal interest areas it had been addressing in the areas of education, economic development, transportation, planning, land use, development, and resources environmental issues, along with other topics.

Several potential topics for inclusion in the Legislative Letter were discussed including jails and regulations regarding vests for cleanup of federal roads.

THE BOARD:

Noted this report.

14. Highlights of Commission and Staff Activities: Other Business and Reports

The Executive Director informed the Board that a recent Regional Managers Meeting had focused on the economic impacts of the recession on each area's job situation and the impacts on the inflow of funds to the local government's for use in the budgets.

He reported that the PDC would be experiencing additional reductions of funds from the General Assembly due to the budget cuts at the Department of Housing and Community Development.

He noted that he had attended a session in Charlottesville to discuss establishment of a Virginia Association Metropolitan Planning Organizations. Since the PDC serves as an MPO Administrator, it would need to work with our MPO on participation in the proposed VAMPO organizations. Establishment of VAMPO had been ordained by the General Assembly.

It was noted that staff had also attended luncheon meetings with Congressman Boucher and Congressman Perillo.

THE BOARD:

Noted these reports.

15. Committee Appointments

The Chairman appointed the Executive Committee to serve in the capacity as FY 2011 Budget and Work Program Committee and FY 2010 Community Development Block Grant Priority Committee. He also invited any interested Board members to participate with the committees.

16. Establish Date for November-December Board Meeting

The Board decided to hold the November-December meeting on December 3rd.

17. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Robert W. Dowd, AICP
Executive Director