

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GEORGE WASHINGTON REGIONAL COMMISSION**

November 26, 2018

The Robert C. Gibbons Conference Room
406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg Virginia

MEMBERS PRESENT: **Chair** – Meg Bohmke, **Stafford**; Matt Kelly & Billy Withers, **City of Fredericksburg**; **Caroline County**: Jeff Black & Nancy Long; **King George County**: John Jenkins; **Spotsylvania County**: Greg Benton & Tim McLaughlin; and **Stafford County**: Cindy Shelton

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ruby Brabo

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Kyle Alwine, Fredericksburg Regional Chamber; Gerald Anderson, League of Women Voters; Michael Aukamp, Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC; David Cooper, Thurman Brisben; Susanna Finn, City of Fredericksburg; Dee Smith, Central Virginia Housing Coalition; & Chris Thompson, VHDA

STAFF: Linda Millsaps, Executive Director & Michele Dooling, GWRC; Paul Agnello & Nick Quint, FAMPO; Kate Gibson & Sam Shoukas, GWRC and Diana Utz; Leigh Anderson & JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Bohmke called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with a quorum present; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA: Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Long, with all concurring, the November 26th GWRC agenda was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES (October 15, 2018) - (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Long, with Mr. Benton & Mr. McLaughlin abstaining, and all others in concurrence, the minutes from the October 15th meeting were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - None

DRAFT FINANCIAL REPORT – Michele Dooling

Ms. Dooling advised last month's report noted the agency was on track. Ms. Dooling stated the same applies to this month and she continues to watch & monitor GWRC's cash flow.

a.) Budget Update

Ms. Dooling advised that to date, 34% of agency bills have been received and 68% have been paid. Ms. Dooling stated the two largest vendors for GWRC that are paid monthly are to Stafford County for payroll services & to Michael Baker Consulting firm (\$171,000 & \$62,000 respectively).

b.) Cash Flow Analysis

Ms. Dooling advised that GWRC continues to maintain a positive checking account balance. Mr. McLaughlin asked for confirmation that the agency has received a check from Spotsylvania County for payment in full for the year. Ms. Dooling relayed the check from Spotsylvania County for payment in full for the remainder of the year has in fact been received and deposited.

Ms. Bohmke stated that previously the City of Fredericksburg was the only locality who has paid up-front and in advance annually each July. Ms. Bohmke relayed that now Spotsylvania County has also done the same. Ms. Bohmke stated that Stafford County GWRC members will be meeting with the treasurer for Stafford County to ask if the remaining balance outstanding owed by Stafford County can also be paid in full. Ms. Bohmke relayed that both Caroline & King George counties have payment plans in place as well.

Ms. Bohmke stated that per follow-up from the October meeting, a request was made for Ms. Dooling to compile a letter to be sent out to all GWRC members and each respective County Administrator/City Manager for clarification on a separate budgeted cost item that included an additional \$20,000. Ms. Dooling relayed to date this letter has not been sent out to each locality; however, will be forwarded by week end. Ms. Bohmke asked for clarification to the GWRC Commission members on what the additional \$20,000 is designated to cover.

Ms. Dooling stated that GWRC bills each locality on July 1st for the current year. Ms. Dooling stated that previously the history of payments has been received on a quarterly basis, with the exception of Spotsylvania County who had previously paid quarterly but submitted payment at the end of a quarter rather than at the beginning of a quarter. (Ms. Dooling reiterated that Spotsylvania County has recently paid remaining balance in full for the remainder of the FY2018-2019 calendar year.)

Ms. Dooling stated that with the budget that was passed and approved last year, there was an Emergency Management fund of \$20,000 that needed to be included within the budget. Ms. Dooling stated this \$20,000 was noted at a different rate for each locality and not a standard amount due across the Board. Ms. Dooling stated that when she met with each County Administrator/City Manager, she was told the additional \$20,000 was not part of the original budget request and they would only be paying the designated amounts previously submitted by Tim Ware for approval from GWRC.

Mr. McLaughlin stated this is the first time he has heard about a funding concern or deficit and asked if the County Administrator in Spotsylvania County had been contacted.

Ms. Millsaps stated there are 2 separate issues in play – the first issue involved the previous payment schedules that were in place that each respective locality had previously been paying its locality dues. Ms. Millsaps stated the second issue GWRC members may not be aware of and has not actively been pursued to date with the County Administrators/City Manager but plans are to ensure this is addressed by week-end.

Ms. Millsaps stated that original unified budget request goes into 1 portal making 1 request and then payments are divided out annually. Ms. Millsaps stated apparently the unified budget request that was submitted last year included the normal per capita allocations and the additional revenue allocations designated to pay Eldon James who serves as the region’s legislative liaison. Ms. Millsaps stated there should have been an additional category included for funding of some emergency management work which would have been applied to the emergency management committee who meets regularly at GWRC and who has representatives from each GWRC locality participating on the committee. Ms. Millsaps stated the \$20,000 was to be utilized for training and software. Ms. Millsaps advised the allocations were to be divided on a per capita basis. Ms. Millsaps stated that when checks were received from all 5 jurisdictions information was relayed from each locality that they were under the impression the per capita emergency management allocations were already included within each jurisdictions’ budgeted reimbursement amounts.

Ms. Millsaps stated she then went back and reviewed all original budget request information that had been submitted into the portal and confirmed that what was previously submitted only included the funding for locality per capita allocations & reimbursement for Eldon James. Ms. Millsaps stated GWRC has now been advised to pursue this matter again with each County Administrator/City Manager.

Ms. Dooling advised she has developed a new report for review by the Commission tonight that includes collaboration of the paying efforts for the planning efforts and cash flows by FAMPO, COC, & Rideshare . Ms. Dooling stated on the left side of the report are the projects listed on an accrual basis and year-to-date data. Ms. Dooling stated currently, we are only \$2,000 off from where the agency should be.

Ms. Dooling relayed the other side of the report that reflects the cash view shows \$143,671 in the whole. Ms. Dooling stated we are not really in the whole and this amount of money is what is needed to be paid at month-end after vendor reimbursements have been credited.

Ms. Dooling stated this report also contains definitions to better clarify the accounting process. Ms. Dooling relayed some reimbursements take up to 8 weeks to be reconciled; however, bills are due to be paid within 30 days.

Mr. Withers stated it appears a cash crunch is in play – where you have more bills being received than there is money to pay – is this actually happening? Ms. Dooling stated she continually monitors the accounts and certain bills are definitely more time sensitive than others; however, she tries to ensure that the same amount of money being received will off-set what is going out. For example, Michael Baker Consulting was paid \$62,000 & the VDOT reimbursement due to GWRC will be \$58,000.

Ms. Bohmke stated tonight there are a few bills pending her signature – 1 of these is to Stafford County for \$44,000, which is the cost of 1 payroll fee. Typically, the agency has 2-3 pending bills that are owed to Stafford County for payroll services. Ms. Bohmke stated this scenario is the best it has been in over several years as there were times in the past where more than 3 pay roll bills were due to Stafford County. Ms. Bohmke stated the reason for this is that bills being paid are based on cash flows that are available. Mr. Withers stated so when the grant funding is received, the bills are paid; however, the problem arises is when bills are due to be paid before funding has been received. Ms. Dooling concurred.

Ms. Bohmke stated that she herself was not aware of any funding issues/concerns until she became the Chair of GWRC and began asking questions. Ms. Bohmke stated that what has helped in the past is when the locality dues are submitted & reimbursements made. The City has always paid in full in advance each July; & now Spotsylvania County has also paid in full for the remainder of the year so this allows for bills to be paid on a more consistent basis.

Ms. Gibson stated she had updates for the Commission in regard to the planning budget. Ms. Gibson relayed the major difference now in the planning budget shows a significant increase in the GO Virginia funding resource. Ms. Gibson advised the increased funding in Go Virginia will be utilized to off-set her salary and to provide funding as needed for environmental planning efforts.

Ms. Gibson stated the updated budget also includes a listing of monies that passes through the organization so we can monitor the approved grant request that have been submitted. Currently these involve the following: the flex office space in Montross; the Pamunkey Net grant; the Virginia Sea Grant; and the welding training program in Montross. All of these entities are part of our duties as the GO Virginia support organization as GWRC is the fiscal agency for any Region 6 grant requests.

Ms. Gibson stated the next page of the handout includes 2 additional grants that come through GWRC for the CoC program. One is for \$10,000 from the City of Fredericksburg which funds the Homelessness Program and the other is a \$20,000 grant from United Way for coordinated assessments which goes to fund the Homelessness Help Line phone number that is distributed to all agencies.

Ms. Gibson advised these include all of the changes and revisions within the budget and this was presented to GWRC at the October meeting for review. At that time, Ms. Bohmke felt the Commission members needed 30 days to review the changes before a vote was cast to endorse them.

Ms. Millsaps stated that per By-Law regulations, any changes to the budget do need to be brought back to the Commission for a motion to approve. Mr. McLaughlin asked if these changes include funding from outside sources resulting in no additional locality funds being requested. Both Ms. Gibson & Ms. Millsaps concurred.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Benton, with all in concurrence, the changes and revisions to the budget previously adopted that were presented tonight were approved at the November 26th GWRC meeting.

2018 GWRC Annual Audit Report – Mr. Michael Aukamp, Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC

Mr. Aukamp advised the Commission's annual audit has been completed. Mr. Aukamp stated he is a partner of Dunham, Aukamp & Rhodes, PLC from Chantilly, VA. Mr. Aukamp advised the auditing firm has been represented by GWRC for the last 20 years. Mr. Aukamp relayed that currently the firm represents 9 of the planning districts in Virginia and as many of the PDCs have the same or similar grants in place, this saves the firm time in reading word for word each individual grant.

Mr. Aukamp stated this year for GWRC the situation was a little different as both the GWRC Executive Director and the GWRC bookkeeper retired in June. The audit testing for this year was conducted slightly differently. Mr. Aukamp stated that even though an audit is not designed to detect fraud, however, the firm does look for potential fraud risks. Mr. Aukamp stated that by GWRC having 2 key/top staff members retire at the same time, the auditing firm came out in June and completed a pre-testing screening.

Mr. Aukamp stated the pre-screening audit allowed for both retirees to still be on site, rather than have anything result from the annual audit review that would have resulted in having to contact a retiree after the fact.

Mr. Aukamp stated the pre-screening audit covered the first 11 months of the year and then firm came back in August to complete the annual audit review. Mr. Aukamp stated that even though certainly not surprised, but was pleased to announce that nothing unusual or alarming was detected during the pre-screening process.

Mr. Aukamp stated the end of year audit ran smoothly and as always, the staff was helpful and organized in providing documents needed for the review. Mr. Aukamp stated a few additional journal entries were added to ensure all payables/receivables were properly recorded within the respective period. Mr. Aukamp stated he feels confident that the additional journal entries added this year will not be needed next year now that the clean-up and maintenance efforts have been completed.

Mr. Aukamp stated there were no difficulties revealed from the audit review process. Mr. Aukamp stated that as part of the risk assessment process, a check list was utilized and completed and individual meetings were conducted with administration staff and program staff members. Mr. Aukamp stated questions were asked about programs, compliance issues, etc. and as well this review process went smoothly with no issues remaining unanswered for the organization in regard to issues, evidence, concerns, compliance concerns, etc.

Mr. Aukamp advised that financial statements for the audit was completed in compliance with DMD133 for any agency that receives federal financial assistance in excess of \$750,000 (this PDC had \$1.5m most of which is VDOT funding that comes through from a number of programs that are all funded the same way so this was the basis used & tested in determining major programs.)

Mr. Aukamp stated he was again pleased to report that no inconsistencies or compliance issues were found and the audit review showed programs are functioning properly within the major program classifications.

Mr. Aukamp advised the remaining portion of the audit review resulted in a clean review with no changes needed to be made to the financial statements other than the adjustments made to entries for accruals that involved payables/receivables.

Mr. Aukamp stated that when looking at the financial statements, the Commission showed a positive cash flow for the year in the amount of \$5,800. Mr. Aukamp stated that even though the cash flow balance was a lower amount, it is important to note that it is in fact a positive cash flow balance and the agency did not go backwards.

Mr. Aukamp stated that several years ago with a change in 1-2 executive directors, that at that time, the agency ended the year with an audit review that reflected a zero cash flow balance. Mr. Aukamp stated that being consistent with last year's audit results, again the agency is heading in the right direction with cash flow balances reflecting \$23,000 last year and \$5,800 this year.

Mr. Aukamp advised the agency equity balance is now back up to \$126,000; however, need to note that 50% of this balance includes the building and contents so it is not a liquid asset that can be spent. Mr. Aukamp stated that \$64,000 remains in an unrestricted net position that includes both assets & liabilities and further reinforced the continued strength of the organization.

Mr. Aukamp stated the question is also asked to auditing firms as to how much money does an agency actually need to solidify its assets. Mr. Aukamp stated there is no exact formula; however, a rule of thumb measurement would include a 3-month operating surplus being adequate.

Mr. Aukamp stated that with using the above suggested formulas, the GWRC expenses for the year were \$3.2m so to reach the desired measurement, an agency would need to have \$300,000 in surplus. Mr. Aukamp stated that with VDOT grants and projects ongoing, that no money is being kept but instead paid out to respective vendors. Mr. Aukamp relayed the agency is in a comfortable position and moving in the right direction and the auditing firm would like to see balances continue to grow each year.

Mr. Aukamp stated another item to note is that the indirect cost rates decreased this year (65.3% last year & 60.4% this year) so direct cost for salaries/benefits increased. Mr. Aukamp stated when the base rate goes up and the cost remains consistent, then the indirect cost rates go down. Mr. Aukamp relayed this is an important note when negotiating other VA agencies for projects as indirect cost rates decrease it provides for a better competitiveness for securing new or additional projects.

Mr. Aukamp stated that no other specifics, concerns, red flags, etc. resulted from GWRC's financial reports and from an auditor's perspective, this describes a good audit – auditors do not want to see changes occur in these categories so “no change” is a good thing.

Mr. Withers advised that he has dealt with audits for a number of agencies and he likes seeing “no’s & “x’s” by the results. Mr. Withers stated that “no’s” is definitely a plus for an agency. Mr. Withers stated that he has served on the Commission where in previous years this was not always the case so it is positive to see the progression/trend to moving forward remain in place.

Mr. Aukamp stated that “no’s” & “x’s” are a plus to an agency because then it qualifies the agency to be classified as a low-risk status. Mr. Aukamp stated that when specific criteria is continually met over a period of time – i.e. for 3 years, the amount of testing needed decreases which ultimately could reduce auditor expenses. Mr. Aukamp stated that if something changes for a company that would result in errors/compliance issues, etc. then the next year the agency automatically would not be considered as a low-risk audit.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Shelton, with all concurring, the 2018 audit report was accepted as presented.

PRESENTATIONS

- a.) Affordable Housing Efforts & Funding – Chris Thompson, Director of Strategic Housing, Virginia Housing Development Authority

Mr. Thompson advised the VHDA was created in 1972 by the Virginia General Assembly to help residents attain quality and affordable housing through public-private partnerships with local governments, community service organizations, lenders, developers, etc. Mr. Thompson relayed VHDA provides mortgages for first-time homebuyers and housing counseling; provides financial assistance for multifamily & neighborhood revitalization efforts; & supports key state initiatives such as community integration efforts focusing on rural housing needs.

Mr. Thompson stated he wanted to present tonight to GWRC some recent partnerships that are ongoing now with other PDCs across the state that have been successful and ones that potentially could be implemented as well in this region. Mr. Thompson relayed that if partnerships were implemented here, that this PDC would be eligible to receive funding assistance and utilize resources as well.

Mr. Thompson relayed that the Housing Policy Advisory Council has determined that Virginia has a shortage of affordable housing to the substantial share of households. Mr. Thompson stated the failure to address affordable housing needs effectively has significantly affected key priorities of the state policy that also includes economic and workforce development, transportation, education and health.

Mr. Thompson advised that Virginia needs to produce substantial new affordable housing to accommodate the continued anticipated workforce growth in Virginia. Mr. Thompson relayed the homebuilding industry still faces major challenges in meeting the affordable housing needs. Mr. Thompson stated that data has proven that regions who have lower combined housing and transportation costs have resulted in better economic performances. Mr. Thompson advised that the state can no longer rely on the federal government to address the critical housing needs that exist in Virginia.

Mr. Thompson advised the GO Virginia program is a positive example of where incentives that have been matched with local, federal, & private funding initiatives have encouraged collaboration at the regional level. This program has also seen growth and diversity between the economy of each region and ultimately for the state. Mr. Thompson stated public-private resource brings together leaders from the business field, higher education standards, local government entities, the workforce, increase in economic development and planning efforts.

Mr. Thompson provided 9 examples of work with other local and government agencies that is either completed and/or ongoing across the state. Mr. Kelly asked if Mr. Thompson would forward copies of all projects currently underway and their success rate data be forwarded to Ms. Millsaps so it can be distributed to commission members so it can be reviewed for future and more discussion. Mr. Kelly stated he thinks these efforts need to become regional ideas and would be interested in seeing what actually can be done. Mr. Kelly asked Mr. Thompson what he sees the expectations for this PDC should/could be.

Mr. Thompson stated that funding could be made available for the region to look at its existing regional inventory; to identify regional gaps (i.e. ownerships, multi-families, income ranges, etc.); how to start building out the infrastructure, etc. Mr. Kelly stated that before moving forward, he would also like to request that FRA be asked to come again to provide presentation & update at an upcoming GWRC meeting.

Mr. Black asked if there is a concerted effort by VHDA to keep mortgage rates competitive and even lower than the private sector rates. Mr. Thompson relayed VHDA is in a position to stay competitive and in most cases comes in at a lower rate than is received from private funding agencies.

Ms. Bohmke asked where the VHDA funding comes from. Mr. Thompson stated that VHDA raises all of its funding and they receive no state, federal or local monies and all funding is either raised or by issuance of bonds.

b.) GWRideConnect Update & Quarterly Report – Diana Utz, Director of GWRideConnect

Ms. Utz advised she was providing the quarterly DRPT progress report at tonight's GWRC meeting. Ms. Utz stated the current TDM operating grant is the funding grant for the GWRC's TDM program which is the GWRideConnect program. Ms. Utz advised that the total grant for this year is \$496,021; the year-to-date expenditures are \$149,460; the remaining budget allocations are \$346,561; and to date, 30% of the approved budget has been utilized. Ms. Utz stated that within the next several weeks, work will begin on the development of several grants for the purpose of continuing the GWRideConnect program.

Ms. Utz stated that DRPT requires a lot of information to accompany each grant request and when they look at a ride connect program they determine what the program plans to do for the upcoming year; determines modes/methods of how to change people's perspective of utilizing single occupancy vehicles for their daily work commutes; determines methods of how to market the population; etc.

Ms. Utz advised that GWRideConnect needs to promote multiple types of commuting options that includes car pools, van pools, buses, VRE, slugging, etc. GWRideConnect needs to determine how goals can be obtained; what the goals are; & how the market is going to help to reach the goals. Ms. Utz relayed that when goals are not met, that DRPT needs to have an explanation as to why – is it because it's seasonal; is it based solely on the price of gas; etc.

Ms. Utz stated the first quarter project activity report update quotas are as follows: 4,000 rideshare clients would be assisted in FY2018-2018 & to date, 1,233 new and previous applicants have been assisted. Ms. Utz stated that to date, we had 289 new applicants to the program this quarter which is 60 more than last quarter. Ms. Utz relayed that over 1,500 non-applicants and vanpool operators have been assisted with TDM information and ridesharing matching.

Ms. Utz stated another goal for the year is to provide express match/email replies to 3,300 new applicants to the registered van pools that have vacancies. To date, 1,542 express match letters to the van pool operators have been submitted which hopefully allows them to fill empty seats on their existing van pool.

Ms. Utz stated another grant requirement is to conduct data base surveys to 4,800 applicants to ensure data base accuracy is kept up to date and to explore methods of improving the matching effectiveness.

Ms. Utz stated that in July of 2018, GWRideConnect distributed 2,035 surveys to our data base clients. The purpose of the survey is to update data base records in both the local Rideshare data base as well as in the Commuter Connections data base and to provide additional assistance if needed. Of the 2,035 surveys submitted, 1,437 applicants returned the surveys and these 1,437 records were either updated with a request for no changes to be made; or were provided a new and fresh match letter because either they are not satisfied with current arrangements; no satisfactory matches were obtained with first mail-out; and/or whereby applicants now have new work locations and work hours.

Ms. Utz stated that another goal to accomplish is to assist as many clients as possible that contact GWRideConnect and to answer transportation/TDM questions as they arise. To date, GWRideConnect has assisted at least 2,000 clients within the region and 170 who are from outside of the region.

Ms. Utz relayed another goal is for GWRideConnect to update its website weekly throughout FY2019. Ms. Utz stated that staff spent at least 16 hours in database management this quarter which includes updates the website to keep it running smoothly and to keep the contents fresh. Currently, staff is working to completely re-design the web-site and will launch a new design this fiscal year with efforts to make the materials easier to find with a site that is easier to navigate.

Ms. Utz stated GWRideConnect also needs to monitor the number of visitors that go to the website and determine visitor traffic. For the first quarter, the program had 17,974 visitors to the website with 13,821 unique page views. In the month of August, GWRideConnect had 6,000 visitors.

Currently, the Vanpool Connection page remains the most popular webpage being followed and has become a clearing house of transit and transportation alternatives within the GW region.

Ms. Utz stated GWRideConnect is requested to email follow-up surveys on a weekly basis to all new applicants to see if they were successful in finding a ride or if they still need additional assistance. This quarter, 289 clients received follow-up surveys; however, we have a very low return rate on the survey replies. Due to the large number of existing clients requesting assistance, we make the assumption that clients will simply re-contact us if additional assistance is needed and do not follow-through with returning the survey. Whenever update requests are received, the applicant's record is updated accordingly in both the GWRideConnect data base & the Commuter Connections data base.

Ms. Utz stated another required is that new van pool or car pool operators are assisted with new pool formations, maintenance & assistance. Ms. Utz advised that GWRideConnect staff assisted operators in the formation of 11 new vanpools this quarter. Vanpool/Car pool operators are given information on vanpool start-ups and then provided all of the information they need to start up their pool. Ms. Utz relayed that once the pool is established, it is then entered into both the local GWRideConnect data base & the Commuter Connections data base as well as posted on the website. Start-up subsidies like Van Star and the Vanpool Alliance programs begin and pools start receiving updated match lists and express match letters noting passenger names and contact information.

Ms. Utz advised staff maintains the vanpool connections webpage which monitors visitor contact; provides follow-up to all van pool page requests; & posts new vanpools with vacancies as they occur. Ms. Utz relayed the vanpool connections webpage is the most popular page on the GWRideConnect website. It provides information on vanpool start-up as well as provides lists of vanpools with vacancies. All clients then also receive a thank you email from GWRideConnect offering a link to fill out a rideshare application to receive the complete list of vanpools going into their work areas. Ms. Utz stated that all vanpools who receive subsidies are required to post their pool on the Vanpool Connections page.

Ms. Utz stated another requirement is that the van start program for the I-95 corridor through the I-395 TMP funding & through GWRideConnect/CMAQ funding is required. GWRideConnect is conducting 2 van start programs this year. One includes vanpools that travel the I-95 corridor & the other is where vanpools travel any portion of I-395. Both of these programs have separate funding sources and are separately monitored. For the first quarter, staff assisted 7 vanpools with both of these programs. Ms. Utz stated that even though both programs are successful, they both could benefit greatly from more advertising & awareness.

Ms. Utz relayed that with the express match program in place, 1,337 applicants were "express matched" to existing vanpools who are in need of additional passengers. Ms. Utz stated that GWRideConnect also encourages vanpools to assist in the educating and promoting that van pool operators participate in the vanpool alliance program which then generates 5307 funds generated back to the region.

Ms. Utz relayed that Virginia has an Advantage self-insurance program that offers van pool insurance to operators within the State of Virginia. Ms. Utz stated that GWRideConnect is the fiscal agency for this program and that staff maintains and operates this program for the entire State of Virginia. Ms. Utz stated that 245 staff hours were administered to the Advantage program this quarter and to date, Advantage has 347 vanpools enrolled in the program that are from multiple regions across the State.

Ms. Utz advised that staff is required to submit monthly reports to DRM on the Advantage program that includes program activity and premiums that have been collected. For the first quarter, staff collected and transferred \$131,740 in membership fees (premiums) from 68 vanpool program members.

Ms. Utz stated that staff also assisted 79 enrolled Advantage members with billing questions, new enrollments, Certificate of Insurance letters; processing of insurance cards, forwarding claim information & DMV assistance to DRM.

Ms. Utz relayed that staff also provides commuters with all transit options that not only includes van pool or car pool information but also includes information on the commuter bus, FRED, VRE & Metro.

Ms. Utz advised that staff distributed 289 bus schedules within the applicant commuting packets that are mailed to the home address & the transit option page had over 4,000 visitors this quarter and remains a popular webpage. Ms. Utz stated that staff continues to work with FRED to promote commuter service options to the VRE trains from Caroline County. Ms. Utz relayed that staff also attends FRED's PTAB meetings.

Ms. Utz relayed that staff provided 285 VRE & Metro schedules to commuters in addition to providing them with a match letter. Ms. Utz stated that staff also advertises and promotes the regional commuting options through advertising campaigns, face book, the GWRideConnect website; newspaper color display ads google adwords, etc. Ms. Utz stated the ads are run either on a monthly or quarterly basis and to date 15 large color display ads ran weekly on Wednesdays & Sundays. Ms. Utz advised GWRideConnect had 83,138 impressions on Google adwords that resulted in 4,682 clicks to the website & the website also had 17,974 page views. Ms. Utz stated that radio spot advertisement was featured on 2 stations and ran 202 times in September.

Ms. Utz stated that staff also has lease agreements that are renewed annually that allow for commuter parking in private lots that are in addition to the VDOT Park & Ride lots that are located in Spotsylvania & Stafford counties. Ms. Utz stated GWRideConnect currently leases parking spaces in the following counties: Ladysmith, Spotsylvania & Stafford and the leased spaces require an annual lease agreement be signed and for GWRideConnect to provide payment to DRPT at a \$1.00 per space, per day lease fee. Ms. Utz stated that staff also conducts Park & Ride lot inspections to monitor utilization. Ms. Utz stated that utilization for this quarter resulted in higher utilization from the lots located in Stafford County versus those from Caroline or Spotsylvania counties.

Ms. Utz advised that ongoing efforts occur with employer/realtor outreach. For this quarter, meetings were held with Dahlgren representatives in regard to creation of shuttle bus service going from King George County to the military base. Rideshare informational packets and flyers are continually distributed to the local realtors, hotels, libraries, employers & tourism departments that provide a “welcome” packet to be distributed to new citizens moving to the region.

Ms. Utz stated that staff participates in job fairs that are set-up by employers; that representatives attend meetings held at Commuter Connections in Washington, DC; and attend monthly FAMPO/GWRC meetings. Staff also participates in bicycle/pedestrian planning meetings; the Act conferences; VDOT meetings; etc.

Ms. Shelton asked what is the difference between GWRideConnect & Commuter Connections. Ms. Utz stated that Commuter Connections is a larger commuting target base that serves the states of MD/VA & the District of Columbia. Ms. Utz stated that GWRideConnect is a member to Commuter Connections and we pay an annual fee to be a member; however, our focus is strictly on commuters from the Fredericksburg region that includes the City of Fredericksburg & the Counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania & Stafford. Ms. Utz stated the fees are used to pay for advertising and to allow the commuters from this region to enroll in Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) for emergency transport from their job site to their home address up to 3 times a year when an unplanned work schedule requires overtime and/or an illness to the commuter or family member.

Ms. Shelton also asked for explanation of differences between a car pool and van pool. Ms. Utz stated that a car pool is a private vehicle that accommodates 2-3 passengers for a daily Monday through Friday work commute. Ms. Utz stated that van pool restrictions previously required a commuting vehicle that accommodated 15 passengers; however, now SOV's and mini vans are also eligible to form a van pool so this vehicle would be eligible if transporting 4 or more passengers on a daily work week. Ms. Utz stated that in order for a van pool to be receive the federal transit benefits, it must have a minimum of 7 working seat belts.

Ms. Shelton stated that she thinks the formation of just 1 van pool in July is extremely low and asked how this number compares to other rideshare agencies across the state. Ms. Utz stated this region has formed 11 new van pools for the quarter and this number is more than the other rideshare agencies achieve in a year's time. Ms. Utz stated that currently GWRideConnect has 380 registered van pools within the region and this number is probably higher than the number of van pools registered on the entire east coast.

Ms. Shelton asked if the current number of leased parking spots that includes 105 total spots includes the van poolers who park on Route 17 at the Wal Mart parking lot. Ms. Utz stated that previously we did lease spaces from Wal Mart; however, as it is privately owned these allowances for parking there could be rescinded at any time leaving the commuters with nowhere else to go. Ms. Utz stated the 105 leased spaces within the FAMPO area include 60 spaces at the Fredericksburg Field House in Spotsylvania County; 30 spaces at Claiborne Heights in Stafford County; & 15 spaces in Coleburn Run in Stafford County.

Mr. Kelly stated that in looking down the road from PRTC's perspective, the State has already indicated that since Smart Scale projects are so beneficial for transportation efforts progressing so will we now see the same occur for transit projects and even though rideshare is different than PRTC do we see rideshare being pulled into the same nightmare?

Ms. Utz stated yes that even if the DRP requirements are not enough, whereby we need to account for every brochure; every contact; every email; every Commuter Connection application; etc. she does not think we will have the same requirements that transit has; however, but will in fact be responsible for developing its own mandated criteria, thresholds & goals. Ms. Utz stated she did not think these requirements would be as stringent as the transit requirements but will become more evident as more emphasis is going to be made on ride-matching in FY2019.

Mr. Kelly asked if GWRC has receiving any direction from DRPT in regard to the rideshare program. Mr. Kelly stated that PRTC is already saying they will be losing money in regard to transit. Ms. Utz stated that to date, we have not received any direction from DRPT & it is her opinion that the rideshare programs will remain steady based on the number of matches & mobility we have within the region.

Mr. Black asked if face book is the only social media that GWRC utilizes. Ms. Utz stated that we also use Google Awards which is a way we can advertise on google & this is where we get the website impression number cited previously. Ms. Utz stated we also advertise on face book and for the last several years in operation, we have face book contacts have been 14,000. Ms. Utz stated that advertising on face book does reach a large number of citizens; however, face book is a challenging feat as in order to keep contacts consistent, you have to keep the information fresh and current. We also need to be mindful of not diluting the information or changing topics in it, etc. Ms. Utz stated that GWRideConnect adds a new face book post weekly. Ms. Bohmke stated she was not aware that this is such a tedious process.

Mr. Kelly stated a reference had been made in regard to the Metro situation that is coming down the pike where all southernmost stations will be completely closed down for a 90-day period of time in the spring of FY2019. Mr. Kelly stated there is also additional funding to be made available to encourage SOV riders to utilize other modes of transit for their daily work commutes so is GWRC doing anything in regard to this additional transportation obstacle?

Ms. Utz advised that she is currently unaware of any TMP (Transportation Mitigation Program) at this time and if there are endeavors ongoing and/or planned, GWRC would like to be a part of the discussions.

Ms. Bohmke asked Mr. Agnello if he was aware of any endeavors forthcoming. Mr. Agnello stated there are no TMP efforts being planned for the I-95 corridor projects as was completed with the I-95 & 395 express lane projects; however, information will be distributed by VDOT as any information is received. Mr. Agnello advised that currently Ms. Parker, with VDOT, has been very coy on this topic when it has been brought up.

Mr. Kelly stated this is an item that needs to be monitored and Ms. Bohmke stated this should be an item that will need to be monitored and asked Mr. Agnello if it is an agenda item that can be added

to an upcoming FAMPO agenda for further discussion. Mr. McLaughlin stated it does not necessarily need to be an actual agenda item but is something to ask Ms. Parker about.

Ms. Bohmke thanked Ms. Utz for the presentation and update and stated if any committee member needs more information, to please contact Ms. Utz to schedule a meeting with her.

OLD BUSINESS

a.) Legislative Committee – Mr. Matt Kelly

Mr. Kelly stated an email has been sent out to committee members for concurrence in scheduling a meeting to meet with local officials. Mr. Kelly stated we are still waiting to hear back from the elected officials on their availability. Mr. Kelly stated it is going to be hard to get all of the legislators here so he thinks our focus should be on scheduling a meeting with Mr. Thomas & Senator Stuart. Ms. Bohmke stated it is almost getting too late so she would concur to try and set up a meeting as soon as possible. Ms. Long stated that unfortunately the lack of responses regarding meeting availability may be due to the delegates simply not having a lot of answers to date.

Mr. Kelly stated that both Mr. Thomas & Senator Stuart have been the biggest regional supporters and Senator Stuart is working heavily on the proffer/impact fee issues & Mr. Thomas is working on some other issues. Ms. Bohmke stated that she does not think the impact fee request is going to be received positively and thinks proffers will end up being more favorable.

Mr. Withers stated that VACo is recommending it support the regional “Stuart” bill. Ms. Bohmke stated she thinks at this time they do not have enough information on the proffers bill yet which has been kept rather low-key to date. Mr. Withers stated that VACo has been asked to sponsor the “Stuart” bill but he is not comfortable in doing so at this time at the City Council level. Ms. Bohmke stated City Council may want to consider voting on this item until after more information has been released because there are still a lot of uncertainties being discussed. Ms. Bohmke advised that she would provide Mr. Withers with a contact/resource to discuss the issue in greater detail.

Mr. Black asked Ms. Millsaps if she would forward an email to all members with the attachment to include what the agenda items will include. Mr. Black stated by receiving this prior to the meeting date this will give the Board of Supervisors & City Council an opportunity to review the agenda items and be able to concur with the items accordingly. Ms. Bohmke asked that the email be sent to the entire boards and not just GWRC members so localities as a whole also have the opportunity to provide input and to make arrangements to send an alternate member to a meeting if scheduling conflicts arise.

Ms. Millsaps stated that the meeting dates being considered are November 29th & December 6th. Ms. Millsaps relayed that Senator Stuart has replied that he is available for either date. Ms. Millsaps advised she would follow-up again tomorrow to the other legislators to get a confirmed meeting date set.

b.) Executive Director's Report – Dr. Linda Millsaps

i. Intergovernmental Funding Applications

Ms. Millsaps stated that as follow-up from the last meeting the committee voted on the per capita allocation request to be submitted from each of the 5 localities. Ms. Millsaps stated that all 5 localities have been sent an email for the budgeted proposal requests. Ms. Millsaps advised the budget amounts requested included the exact amounts previously discussed for the per capita allocation amount; the funding for Eldon James, & then the \$20,000 emergency management allocations discussed earlier in tonight's meeting. Ms. Millsaps stated that given the previous and current confusion regarding the emergency management allocations that a note will be included that clarifies this funding request is in fact a separate request from the other requested amounts. Ms. Millsaps also advised that after discussion with some of the county administrators, their recommendation was to also include a statement that states if GWRC is chosen for continued funding, that payments being made sooner rather than later would be greatly appreciated. Ms. Millsaps stated the requested budget amounts are to continue the existing programs at the current levels and the only increase was an increase of \$1,300 which is due to the increase in regional population growth.

ii. Report on Staff Retreat

Ms. Millsaps stated that per authorization from the Commission, a staff retreat was approved. Ms. Millsaps stated the retreat was held outside of the office and included a full day of agenda topics, discussions, role playing, etc. Ms. Millsaps stated she is happy to announce that there was 100% staff participation at the retreat.

Ms. Millsaps advised we opened the retreat with ice-breakers; talked about the ladder of inference; had a cooperative staff/team effort in processing worded cards whereby each employee selected words that had specific value to them which were shared with the staff. The employees then collectively selected & agreed on value words for the organization.

Ms. Millsaps stated the afternoon agenda did not cover as much as had been hoped. There were currently not updated job descriptions in the personnel files for all employees; however, it was learned at the retreat that most supervisors had in fact updated job descriptions for the employees they supervise so the personnel files will be updated accordingly and missing job descriptions were added to the files.

Ms. Millsaps stated that staff was asked to describe their daily work duties that were things that are not necessarily included within the job descriptions. Ms. Millsaps stated staff was asked to provide a "blue sky" dream list which is an office "wish" list if not financially constrained. Ms. Millsaps stated an environmental staff person and additional planning staff were the most highly requested "wish" list items.

Ms. Millsaps stated that staff also had another group of words to determine values that were deemed important to the organization. Ms. Millsaps stated the staff ranked the values & the top 6 that were

selected by more than 1 staff member include the following values: Integrity; Transparency; Collaborative; Professionalism; Respect; & Public Service.

Just for staff comments only, staff concurred that all would like to have a comfortable work environment and to also be able to have fun while at work. Ms. Millsaps stated some “office” concerns were requested to be addressed which include the following items: deep cleaning of the entire office; updated phone system; & back door which has some card entry issues. Ms. Millsaps stated she expressed a desire for efforts to be made to update the website to include staff bio’s on the website. Ms. Millsaps stated that currently all the information there is name, phone number, & email address for contact information. Ms. Millsaps stated that even though the Commission is aware; however, the public does not know how great the staff is – how much experience, background, training & expertise each staff member has & she thinks this is important information for the public to be aware of.

Ms. Millsaps states the retreat was successful and she appreciated the Commission granting the request for all employees to be out of the office for the day & extended appreciation to all of the supervisors for encouraging staff members to participate.

iii. Other

Ms. Millsaps advised she realized she has not provided 2019 meeting dates for distribution to the members for notation on their personal calendars. Ms. Millsaps stated that all monthly meeting nights for 2019 follow the current set meeting date of the 3rd Monday at 6:00 p.m. with the exception of the January/February meetings. Ms. Millsaps stated meetings for these 2 months would move to the 4th Monday night as there is a state holiday on both the 3rd Monday in January & February. Ms. Millsaps stated the regular schedule of no meetings in July or December remain unless the Board has a request to change them accordingly.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this needed to be approved tonight. Ms. Millsaps stated certainly it could be approved at the January meeting so members have time to check their personal schedules/calendars, etc.; however, we would need to get endorsement on the change for the January meeting.

Mr. McLaughlin asked if the GWRC meeting dates coincide with the FAMPO meeting dates. Mr. Agnello stated they generally do. Mr. Agnello relayed the January/February meeting dates concur; however, usually FAMPO meets in July and then does not meet in August.

Mr. Agnello stated that previously both FAMPO/GWRC met in July and not in August and several years ago there was a switch that FAMPO/GWRC would meet in August. Mr. Agnello stated for this past year, FAMPO went back to the original schedule; however, GWRC did not.

Ms. Bohmke stated that personally she would like to have both committees being off in July because a lot of Board of Supervisor meetings also do not occur in July. There was verbal consent from GWRC members to go with July & December as being the off-meeting months for FY2019.

Mr. Agnello stated that this year FAMPO did not meet in November because the CTB was not going to meet until December 5th. As Smart Scale projects could be rejected after the December

CTB meeting if FAMPO did not meet in December they then would not have had time to make comments on the Smart Scale applications that were selected and/or rejected so for 2018, FAMPO will be meeting in December.

Ms. Millsaps stated the last item involves staff changes. Ms. Utz will be retiring in February of 2019 so she, Ms. Dooling, Ms. Gibson, & Ms. Utz are meeting to determine how to fill the holes that will arise after Ms. Utz's departure and to look at possible structural/organizational changes. Ms. Millsaps stated that Ms. Utz has agreed to serve as a consultant for a period of time after her retirement date if the services would be needed.

Ms. Millsaps advised that even though staff is very saddened for us but happy for him, she wanted to announce that Mr. Quint will be leaving the middle of December. Ms. Millsaps stated that Mr. Quint will be moving to Blacksburg where he will become the TDM manager for Virginia Tech. Ms. Millsaps stated Mr. Quint has been an integral and vital part of the transportation related items that occur within the organization. The Commission thanked Mr. Quint for his efforts and service to the organization and congratulated him on his new position.

c.) GWRC/FAMPO Update, Chair, Ms. Meg Bohmke

Ms. Bohmke stated that as all in the room know, a lot of discussion has occurred at meetings, off-line, etc. regarding GWRC/FAMPO and the current MOU that is in place. Ms. Bohmke stated it is being decided how the agencies will be aligned; whether the MOU needs to be updated, amending, etc.

Ms. Bohmke stated that as Chair of GWRC, she has learned a lot and we need to clearly determine and understand the issues, concerns, requests. Ms. Bohmke stated she personally is interested in hearing the specific concerns from the FAMPO board members to see if the existing MOU needs to just be updated and/or amended. Ms. Bohmke stated she is confident that both committees can all work together and ultimately work effectively as a team.

Ms. Bohmke stated that she & Mr. McLaughlin (FAMPO Chair) have talked several times off-line & her request to the Commission tonight is if endorsement can be received for the Boards to move forward in meeting to discuss the concerns/issues from both boards. Ms. Bohmke stated it is requested that initially herself & Ms. Millsaps & Mr. McLaughlin & Mr. Agnello meet and then the issues that need to be addressed will be brought back before both Boards for endorsement.

Ms. Long concurred that we have to move forward and every MOU, even if no changes are needed, needs to be reviewed and updated at a set time – whether this is annually, every 3 years, every 5 years, etc. Ms. Long stated in order to move forward with this process you have to have a starting point and she concurs with having this begin with the 4 members Ms. Bohmke referenced. Ms. Long stated she is also not opposed to have all localities nominate a person to meet at the on-set as well. Ms. Long stated it does both her to be in receipt of a document that has supposedly been approved & signed and the copy that gets distributed to committee members is in black & red; is not dated; is not signed by all signatures listed in the MOU; etc. so she is totally in support of reviewing MOU's, By-Laws, etc. and then once all are endorsed properly they are then submitted for member review/ county administrator/city council review, etc.

Mr. Withers stated that it is critically important that issues/concerns are addressed and for staff benefit, they need to have direction from the Board and not be receiving separate direction/instructions being implied before the committee of 4 meets and reaches a resolution.

Mr. Kelly stated that since he has been on the board, which has encompassed a period off & on of over 20 years, there has never been an issued between GWRC/FAMPO working together. However, he realizes that now there are concerns/issues that need to be addressed and resolved. Mr. Kelly stated that he thinks both boards need to move forward as quickly as possible to reach the desired resolutions.

Mr. Kelly stated that it clearly should be FAMPO's decision on how the district money allocated is to be utilized so he does not feel a change is needed in this process. However, Mr. Kelly stated the MOU clearly states that FAMPO is an advisory board with GWRC serving as the fiscal agency for the organization. Mr. Kelly stated that here, as well as state-wide, an MPO (FAMPO) is not modeled to be a stand-alone entity. Mr. Kelly stated that discussions need to begin & occur at both boards and both boards need to support any changes, amendments, revisions, etc.

Mr. Withers stated the MOU stipulates that certain regulations are required and compliance issues to be met as a result and these would need to remain as part of and MOU updates to ensure compliance regulations are in fact being met.

Mr. McLaughlin stated that there are still things that need to be clarified with FAMPO & he concurs with the committee of 4 moving forward to discuss the concerns as quickly as possible. Ms. Long stated that it may be of benefit to have a neutral person to also serve on the sub-committee – this should possibly be someone from the State; someone with legal expertise; etc. who can clearly understand the funding allocation requirements, regulations, etc. Ms. Long stated this member could be an “advisory” member and not a voting member but would at least provide for an unbiased set of eyes/ears during the discussion process.

Ms. Bohmke asked if this action to move forward with the committee of 4 meeting as soon as possible required a motion. Mr. Withers stated as all members concurred with verbal consent that he did not feel a motion was needed.

NEW BUSINESS - None

ADJOURN GWRC MEETING – The November 26th GWRC meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m. The next meeting will be held on January 28, 2019.

Respectfully Submitted, Linda Millsaps, Executive Director
(Draft Minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)