



GEORGE WASHINGTON REGIONAL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

May 16, 2016

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

MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING

Mr. Jim Howard, King George County, Chair
Mr. John Jenkins, King George County
Mr. Matt Kelly, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Jeff Black, Caroline County
Ms. Nancy Long, Caroline County
Ms. Ruby Brabo, King George County
Mr. Paul Trampe, Spotsylvania County
Ms. Meg Bohmke, Stafford County
Ms. Laura Sellers, Stafford County

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. William Withers, City of Fredericksburg
Mr. Greg Benton, Spotsylvania County

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms. Elizabeth Borst, Farmer's Market
Ms. Carey Chirico, St. George's Episcopal Church
Mr. David Swan, Citizen

STAFF

Mr. Tim Ware, GWRC
Mr. Paul Agnello, FAMPO
Ms. Marti Donley, FAMPO
Mr. Danny Reese, FAMPO
Mr. Nick Quint, FAMPO
Ms. Kate Gibson, GWRC
Ms. Danielle O'Leary, CWRC
Ms. Diana Utz, GWRC
Ms. Leigh Anderson, GWRC
Ms. JoAnna Roberson, GWRC

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Howard 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. Brabo, with all in consensus, the agenda for the May 16th meeting was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES – APRIL 18, 2016

Upon motion by Ms. Sellers and seconded by Ms. Brabo, with all others in consensus, the minutes from the April 18th meeting were approved as submitted with the two noted amendments to be made as presented by Ms. Brabo and Ms. Bohmke. (Ms. Brabo requested word revision under Old Business Category B – Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail & Ms. Bohme requested word revision under the GWRC Regional Land Bank category).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

None

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that the Financial Report is included in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Ware stated that to date, the Commission's assets are \$542,638.23 and the year-to-date balance is \$169,233.98. Mr. Ware relayed that the year-to-date agency balance is even higher than what was anticipated it being at this point in the calendar year.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that after several years in the planning stages, the Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) has now been formed and conducted its first meeting earlier today. Mr. Ware stated that the purpose of the committee is for the development of a Hazardous Material Plan for the region. Mr. Ware stated the regional plan is an unfunded mandate; however, something the Commission should be overseeing.

Mr. Kelly stated that a Regional Plan has brought good discussion to the table on the direction the Commission should precede. Mr. Kelly stated that a regional plan is not designed to replace an individual locality plan. Mr. Kelly stated that a regional plan would identify where the haz-mat regions are within the planning district; it would identify where the EMS sites are located; it would

provide insight as to what needs to be updated and compiled together regionally; it would list resources that are currently available and provide insight on ones that need to be incorporated; etc.

Ms. Bohmke asked if the Hazmat Regional Plan also included the rail traffic and concerns. Mr. Kelly advised that the rail system throughout the region provides transportation arteries across the region and would be a factor for public safety issues should a regional emergency/crisis develop. Mr. Kelly asked that more information be provided to the committee on the planning levels, regional cooperation of shared resources; additional regional needs; etc.

Mr. Ware advised that the committee would be kept apprised of the LEPC meetings/discussions, etc. Mr. Ware stated that the LEPC is going to be strictly a planning and informational board that will discuss the region's key concerns; the best practices needed; the local funding sources that would be required; the grants that could be applied for that the Commission regionally could qualify for that perhaps individual localities do not qualify for, etc.

OLD BUSINESS

a.) Harry Nice Bridge – Ms. Ruby Brabo, King George County

Ms. Brabo advised that included in tonight's agenda packet are the revised letters to be submitted to both the Governors in Virginia and Maryland in regard to the Harry Nice Bridge. Ms. Brabo stated that the letters were included in last month's agenda packet; however, there was a committee request that the letters be revised. The revisions included tonight have been amended as requested and the letter to each governor asks that the Route 301/Harry Nice Bridge be replaced in as expedited a manner as possible. It also requests that the project not be pushed further out before any repairs and improvements would be made. The letter(s) endorses consensus from the Commission that the Harry Nice Bridge project remain a priority project and that the stated project dates remain on target.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Long, with all concurring, the letters were endorsed by the Commission with a request that they be submitted to the Governors in both Maryland and Virginia for consideration.

b.) Other Old Business - None

NEW BUSINESS

a.) 2017 GWRC Annual Budget – Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware stated the preliminary budget for 2017 was presented for review and discussion at the April meeting. Included tonight, is the finalized budget request. Mr. Ware advised that there were no changes made from the draft that was presented in April versus the copy presented at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Ware advised that the total budget for the George Washington Regional Commission is \$2,545,405 and this amount represents a \$527,984 increase from the previous fiscal year. Mr. Ware relayed that the locality contributions will remain the same as they were for the FY2016 year and will be \$223,383 based on the per capita request of \$0.6433.

Mr. Ware relayed that the discretionary/local contributions that equals \$299,354 and after the satisfying local matches are applied; the agency will realize a surplus of \$79,610. Mr. Ware advised that the FY2017 staffing levels will remain at ten full-time employees and two part-time employees and that consideration be given to the budget to allow for a 2% cost of living increase for all employees. Mr. Ware advised that the 2% cost of living increase will impact the budget at \$15,140. The fringe benefit and indirect cost will decrease b \$11,000 for the upcoming year and that GWRC will continue to participate in Stafford County's Health & Insurance Plan.

Mr. Ware relayed that GwRideConnect will realize a budget increase of \$70,373. This increase is due to the way the CMAQ revenue resources are noted in the GWRC budget. Also, an increase of the DRPT grant for 5% has been submitted as well. Mr. Ware stated that the FAMPO funding will increase by \$426,928 as a result of additional RSTP funding. Mr. Ware advised that of this total amount, that it is anticipated that \$101,000 can be carried over for expenditures to FY2018. Mr. Ware stated that the planning services revenue will increase by \$6,424. Mr. Ware relayed that this cost-saving measure was implemented in FY2014 and continues to be self-sustaining.

Mr. Black asked for explanation of what indirect costs are utilized for. Mr. Ware relayed that the indirect costs go to pay salaries for him (Executive Director's position) and our one full-time bookkeeper's position, as well as those expenses, such as rent that can be allocated across the organization.

Upon motion by Ms. Sellers and seconded by Ms. Brabo, with all concurring, the 2017 work budget for the George Washington Regional Commission was approved as submitted.

b.) Resolution No. 16-20, Authorizing the Commission to Prepare an All-Hazards Mitigation Plan on Behalf of Participating Local Governments – Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that last fall the Commission prepared a grant with VDEM for the undertaking of regional eligible planning opportunities and the actual award and process was finalized on April 29, 2016. Mr. Ware stated that Resolution No. 16-20 is authorizing that the George Washington Regional Commission provide as the overseer for a regional planning grant in the amount of \$68,648.

Ms. Bohmke asked how this grant will help the region. Mr. Ware stated that if a disaster occurs and there is no Regional All-Hazards Mitigation plan in place that no FEMA dollars would be allocated to the region should an emergency affect Planning District 16.

Upon motion by Ms. Brabo and seconded by Mr. Black, with all concurring, Resolution No. 16-20 was adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission.

c.) GW Region Food Forum – Ms. Elizabeth Borst

Ms. Borst advised that the local farmer’s markets throughout the region have merged into the Fredericksburg Food Access Forum. Ms. Borst stated that this forum is a working group of community partners who address fresh food access needs and solutions to the citizens in the Fredericksburg region.

Ms. Borst stated that the Forum is hosted by CLEAR, GWRC and the Farmers Market/Virginia Community Food Connections. Ms. Borst stated that the four principal goals are to:

1. strengthen & grow the sustainability and economic resilience of the region’s food shed and its local agriculture;
2. to build a robust food distribution infrastructure
3. to reduce food deserts and to improve fresh food access for all populations; and
4. to enhance food access for emergency preparedness and community resilience

Ms. Borst stated that the action steps identified by the participants at the Food Forum include the following:

1. establishment of a regional food system Steering Council;
2. development of local food regional marketing plan for the institutions and the consumers;
3. exploration of a food aggregation center being created that will increase access to markets and to stimulate the growth for additional local food outlets;
4. to provide farm needs assessment and mentorship program opportunities; and
5. to provide education through the media

Ms. Borst stated that the localities need to do the following:

1. review their local policies that currently now be challenging to small farmers – i.e. a tax exemption offered by Spotsylvania County to large grain farmers that the small produce farmers are not eligible to receive;
2. support policies that will encourage farmland to stay in production; to make the farm land more attractive than selling to developers; to address the farm worker and the family farm sustainability;
3. to highlight the amount of food dollars that leaves the community via the retail grocers versus the small revenue being retained in the local economy which is seen as a major business loss; and

4. to commission a study that is similar to the plan utilized by the Rappahannock Rapidan Planning District that identifies barriers and recommend strategies that will support continued food production

Ms. Borst introduced Ms. Carey Chirico, who runs the “Table” at St. George’s Episcopal Church. Ms. Chirico stated that their church has set-up a food distribution ministry. Ms. Chirico stated that the mission is 90% grant funded. Ms. Chirico advised that they have established partnerships with local farmers to obtain at a much reduced price all of the remaining produce that does not sell at the weekend farmer’s markets. Ms. Chirico also advised that the church’s project also partners with local restaurants to receive day-old breads, etc. Ms. Chirico stated that currently the church has enough volunteers but what is needed is a coordination of what agencies/programs are available throughout the region; other resources that citizens can be utilizing; new location sites to come forward such as the one being operated at St. George’s; etc.

Mr. Kelly asked Ms. Borst what the next steps need to be. Ms. Borst stated that a regional team/committee needs to be compiled that includes all service agencies whereby contact information is compiled; resources available captured; inventory lists created; creation of a plan similar to the one compiled by Rappahannock Rapidan, etc. and that local funding of \$15,000 would need to be secured. Ms. Borst stated that with \$15,000 of funding allocated; the match would be \$15,000, and the grant amount would then equate to \$45,000. Mr. Howard stated that he did not think the Commission would be in a position to staff the effort this year; however, it is definitely something that should be pursued on the regional perspective and encouraged Ms. Borst to begin the process of making contact with individual localities.

d.) Letter Providing GWRC Comments on Transportation projects that have been Scored and Recommended in HB2 Prioritization Process – Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that included in tonight’s agenda packet, is a letter addressed to Secretary of Transportation, Honorable Aubrey Layne. Mr. Agnello stated that the region did well within the HB2 project selection process. Mr. Agnello relayed that eleven of thirteen projects that were submitted received funding considerations. Mr. Agnello relayed that FAMPO is asking that GWRC also endorse the letter included that expresses the region’s appreciation for the high number of project considerations that are to be funded.

Mr. Agnello stated that two projects that were not selected for funding within round one of the HB2 process have been re-submitted for consideration of funding for round two. Mr. Agnello relayed that the letter also asks that the two projects be re-considered.

Lastly, Mr. Agnello relayed that the letter asks that continued state support remain in the development of additional projects that could help to mitigate the continued congestion along the I-95, US 301 and US 207 corridors within the GWRC region.

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all concurring, GWRC endorsed the chair submitting a letter of thanks and support from the Commission.

e.) Local Area Targets Task Force Guiding Principles – Ms. Ruby Brabo

Ms. Brabo advised that the Local Area Targets Task Force was established to provide recommendations to the Chesapeake Bay program partnership. Ms. Brabo stated that discussion is occurring on whether the Phase III WIPs should include local area targets and if so, options on how these targets could be allocated to the seven bay watershed jurisdictions. Ms. Brabo stated that EPA wants to set local targets instead of having state/federal target requirements implemented.

Ms. Brabo stated that she has been appointed by the Governor to serve on this advisory committee and requested that any individual, agency, or locality that has information, feedback, comments, etc. to please forward these to her so that she can effectively represent the region's goals, etc.

Mr. Black asked how this program was different than the Rappahannock River Basin program which is already a regional outreach chaired by Mr. Eldon James. The Commission requested that Mr. Ware contact the localities, Mr. James, and any others who may already be working towards the same goals; who already may have goals in place, etc. so this matter can be discussed at greater length at the June meeting.

f.) Other New Business

Ms. Brabo asked as to the committee's consensus on having meeting materials and agenda packets being forwarded electronically versus Xeroxed. Ms. Brabo stated that she had discussed this issue with Mr. Ware. Mr. Ware relayed that the Xerox costs for the monthly agenda packets for the GWRC/FAMPO committees are quite expensive and that it probably would be cheaper to provide members with i-pads instead of individual Xeroxed copies.

There was committee discussion and consensus obtained that if electronically is cheaper and accommodates all the members, whether they have a personal electronic device or not, then there was Commission recommendation to study this matter further.

The Commission requested that Mr. Ware provide current Xeroxing costs being utilized each month for the packets, staff time in Xeroxing, Xeroxing supplies to include toner, ink, & paper, etc. versus the cost of purchasing an electronic i-pad device and to provide the information at the upcoming June meeting for further discussion.

ADJOURN

The May 16th meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on June 20, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Timothy Ware, Executive Director
(Draft minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)