

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

February 27, 2017

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

MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING:Chair – Jeff Black, Chair **Caroline County**;City of **Fredericksburg**:Matt Kelly& Billy Withers; **Caroline County**: Nancy Long;**Spotsylvania County**: Greg Benton& Paul Trampe; and**Stafford County**:Meg Bohmke & Laura Sellers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ruby Brabo& Jim Howard, County of King George

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Tim Barody, City of Fredericksburg; Gary Kendrick, County of King George; Elizabeth Borst, VCFC; & Jason Winner, Marstel-Day

STAFF: Tim Ware, Executive Director; Paul Agnello & Nick Quint,FAMPO; Kate Gibson, CoC; and Diana Utz, Leigh Anderson & JoAnna Roberson,GWRC

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Blackcalled the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. with a quorum present; which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING AGENDA

Under the New Business category on the agenda, under Item d, Other New Business, Mr. Black made the following request that two additional discussion items be added. Item 10d was for discussion of a regional cable commission/internet opportunity. Item 10e was for discussion and update on the two regional priorities adopted by the Commission at the January meeting (these two were for update on Regional Internet opportunity and Regional Drug Court opportunity.) Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Benton, with all concurring, the amended agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES (January 23, 2017) - (Action Item)

Upon motion by Mr. Kelly and seconded by Mr. Benton, with Mr. Withers abstaining, and all others in consensus,the minutes from the January 23rd meeting were approved as submitted.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT -None

DRAFT FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that the Financial Report is included in tonight's agenda packet. Mr. Ware relayed that the total assets are \$375,956.95 and the total liabilities are \$133308.48. Mr. Ware relayed that we are on schedule with our expenses and assets to date.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ware advised that congratulations are going out to Mr. Nick Quint as he is a brand new father to a baby boy who is sixteen days old.

OLD Business: None

NEW BUSINESS:

a.) **Fredericksburg Area Food Map**– Mr. Jason Winner, Marstel-Day

Ms. Borst stated that for those who did not know her, she is in charge of running the SNAP program for utilization at the local farmer's markets. Ms. Borst advised that recently they had been awarded two grants. One is a \$25,000 National Innovation grant with Roanoke. This program will work with the citizens who receive Medicaid benefits to allow them to utilize these benefits at the local markets as well. Ms. Borst stated this is the first time the grant has been awarded and Spotsylvania is being used as the test site. Ms. Borst stated that she is also meeting with Caroline County with the hope that this locality as well will become eligible for the farmers markets to take SNAP benefits for fresh produce and fruit that is purchased by the residents in Caroline County.

Ms. Borst advised that the second grant is from Fredericksburg and is a \$70,000 grant from the Community Foundation. Ms. Borst relayed that this grant funding will be utilized for developing hunger maps, establishing need trends, educational outreach, etc. In closing, Ms. Borst stated that a separate 5013C grant application is in place that ensures the programs will carry on. This grant focuses on the big picture and keeps the small to medium size farmers in business.

Ms. Borst introduced Mr. Jason Winner. Mr. Winner works locally for the Marstel-Day Corporation and is working on a pilot project to determine what food and agriculture opportunities are currently available within the George Washington region and what opportunities can be expanded on.

Mr. Winner stated that their vision is to strengthen the regional food and agriculture opportunities by improving the connectivity between economic, environmental and social driving forces that will support a sustainable regional and community food system.

Mr. Winner stated that the region has tremendous potential in working with the stockholders, community planners, and farmers to work together to determine the needs, the opportunities, who needs to be involved, etc. Mr. Winner stated that the goal is for this to become strategically based where resources can be shared and capitalized on.

Mr. Winner stated that the goals are broken down into three categories; Economic Goals, Agriculture Goals; & Food Access Goals. Mr. Winner stated that for Economic Goals, the desires are to strengthen the economic sustainability and resilience of a regional food shed. Also the desire is to develop innovative food system business models that will capture a larger share of the retail food sales, maintain local farms, and provide more food and jobs to the region.

Mr. Winner advised that the Agriculture Goals would build vibrant interconnected agricultural bases for food and healthier environments. This would also preserve the working lands at the risk of land conversion due to building and development. Mr. Winner stated that education and sustainable environmental and economic practices would become critical and local restaurants would have a means of purchasing local foods.

Mr. Winner stated that the Food Access Goals would reduce food deserts and improve more fresh food access for everyone. The Food Access would also enhance food access for emergency preparedness and community resilience and build a reputable agency of sustainable food in the region.

Mr. Winner stated that a local food hub would help the region eliminate the food insecurities that are pervasive to low-income families; would provide an urgent need for an improved food distribution network system; and help to eliminate the wide-spread regional priority of Mary Washington Hospital of having obesity as the number one health concern for the region.

Mr. Winner relayed that there is significant funding available for agricultural planning and viability from USDA that require local regional match requirements. Mr. Winner advised that the needs are as follows:

- Development of a Needs Assessment Plan – where to start from; where to go
- Development of a Mobile food market
- Development of a Hunger Distribution food web-map
- Development of a food hub storage facility

Mr. Winner advised that the Rappahannock-Rapidan region developed a farm and food plan in 2015. In 2016, this region qualified for a \$250k USDA grant to promote locally grown foods/agritourism.

Mr. Ware asked Mr. Winner if he know how much the local match was from Rappahannock-Rapidan and how they procured their required match. Mr. Winner stated that he did not have this information available with him tonight but he would forward this information to Mr. Ware.

Mr. Trampe asked for the current small to medium sized farms, that when it comes to retirement age, do the farmers pass down their farms to the next family generation. Mr. Winner stated that unfortunately most younger people are not interested in assuming ownership of an existing family farm and the farms end up being sold. Mr. Trampe asked if Mr. Winner had any data that shows how much of the food sold here is actually grown here. Mr. Winner stated that he did not have these figures with him tonight.

Mr. Agnello advised that the TransUrban Community Grant program provides funding for up to \$1500 to three separate recipients and this may be an opportunity to receive additional funding. Mr. Agnello stated that he would forward the website information to Ms. Borst.

Mr. Benton asked whether the local farmers' markets produce is the merchandise provided from the larger farmers. Ms. Borst stated that the larger farmers are sustainable on their own and the produce from the farmers markets comes from farms that are anything from a back yard plot to a 300 acre farm. Ms. Borst stated that the majority of the farms who provide food at the local markets comes from farms that have 15-25 acres.

Ms. Long asked if the development of the plan includes all types of farming: agriculture, produce, etc. as there are different criteria that would need to be developed depending on the development of a regional plan. Mr. Winner stated that the grant this region would be focusing on would be the agricultural farmers.

Ms. Sellers asked if the Medicaid grant is State or Federal. Ms. Borst stated that staff from the state Medicaid office in Richmond has been the one providing information on the incentives of starting up a program. Ms. Sellers asked if coordination has taken place with Mary Washington Hospital to get them on board to an idea of focusing on a regional community food system. Both Mr. Winner and Ms. Borst stated this was a goal to be developed within the region and the first thing they need to be granted to do is for the stakeholders to pass the start-up process for participants in the model.

b.) Approval of Resolution No. 17-08, Authorizing Execution of Agreement with the Virginia Department of Rail & Public Transportation– Ms. Diana Utz, GWRC

Ms. Utz advised the mission of the program is to promote, plan and establish transportation alternatives to the use of a single occupant vehicle, to improve the region's air quality, to reduce congestion, and to improve the overall quality of life to the citizens within the region.

Ms. Utz relayed that the total rideshare budget is \$481,102. Of this amount, DRPT pays \$384,954 and GWRC pays a match of \$96,238. Ms. Utz stated that GWRC is requesting a 3% increase in DRPT funding this year. Ms. Utz stated that this is the first time in five years an increase has been requested. Ms. Utz stated that in order to comply with the Six Year TDM Strategic Plan, the increase is necessary.

Ms. Utz stated that GWRC regularly participates in advertising campaigns that includes promotion of the GWRC program through display ads, social media, and a fall, winter and spring marketing campaign. Ms. Bohmke asked if the advertising is contracted. Ms. Utz states that some of it is and some is done internally. Ms. Utz relayed that the contracted advertising is utilized with a local company so the money used for advertising begins and stays within the region.

Ms. Utz stated that GWRC is a member of PRTC & Commuter Connections and supports transit options for all modes to include car pools, van pools, bus service, VRE, & FRED. Ms. Utz stated that the number of new applicants that were provided with transportation options for 2016 was 1,286 new applicants. Ms. Bohmke asked if this increase is normal. Ms. Utz stated that usually in years past, the increase has equated to approximately 1,000 new applicants each year so the past year did indicate a slightly higher growth rate. Ms. Utz stated that assistance was provided to 6,225 applicants who are already registered with GWRC in addition to the 1,286 new applicants.

Ms. Utz stated that data is compiled for existing van pools, formal carpools, commuter bus runs, and captures all commuting data with the exception of data generated from those who slug to work. Ms. Utz advised that the Resolution in tonight's packet is asking for approval of the program for FY2018 that will begin this July. Ms. Utz stated that the 3% increase being requested this year will equal \$2,840 from the GWRC match.

Mr. Black asked if staff has provided the information to the local county administrators in each of the GWRC jurisdictions. He stated that he knows there are commuters who begin their commuting route in Caroline County and go to either the Richmond/Washington areas; however, he said he personally has not heard the first advertisement and he feels the citizens in Caroline are not even aware the commuting programs exist. Mr. Black asked if staff would reach out to the administrators and provide the GWRC link; email ads, etc. so that this information can be passed down to the supervisors who in turn can relay the information to the citizens. Ms. Utz stated that she would provide a data sheet and forward it to each of the administrators and provided them with the link to the GWRC program.

Upon motion by Ms. Long and seconded by Ms. Sellers, with all concurring, Resolution No. 17-08 was adopted at the February 27th meeting.

c.) **Go Virginia Update**— Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that membership listing for the "Go Virginia" Regional Council is included in tonight's packet. Mr. Ware stated that the budget conference was held last week and the regions actually received more funding than was anticipated. Mr. Ware stated that for FY2017, each region would be allocated \$400,000 and \$250,000 in FY2018. Mr. Ware advised that the per capita funding is \$10.9 million, which is \$1.40 per capita, for \$500,000 to be allocated.

d.) **Other New Business – Regional Cable Commission/Internet Opportunities** – Mr. Jeff Black

Mr. Black asked for discussion from the members on whether pursuing a regional cable commission franchise agreement would be worthwhile to explore. Mr. Black stated that each locality already has a cable commission agreement in place and that possibly if this was more focused on a regional concept that maybe it would be financially more feasible for the region.

Mr. Trampe stated that he felt pursuing a regional aspect has advantages and thinks joining together is a good idea. Mr. Trampe stated that he felt the negotiation concerns would involve each locality having separate and individual time frames on when their current cable commission agreement is due to be renewed.

Ms. Bohmke suggested that Mr. Ware reach out to each of the TCC committees within the region to get what current services a locality gets; the terms of the agreement; the renewal dates; the cost, etc. Mr. Black stated that he did not know about King George County but that Caroline County does not have a TCC committee. Mr. Ware stated that he would make contact with the county

administrators in both Caroline/King George to receive direction on which department/staff member could serve as a resource. Mr. Ware will talk to the localities here, to include the City of Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania County & Stafford County and provide feedback to the Commission over the next several meetings.

e.) **Regional Priorities (regional internet and regional drug court)/Discussion/Update**
– Mr. Jeff Black

Mr. Black stated that at the January meeting the Commission voted to proceed with a regional concept of discussing internet capabilities and a regional drug court. Mr. Black stated that these two priorities were endorsed unanimously by the committee and he wants to see the progress, discussion, etc. to move forward. He does not want to see these issues being determined to have regional impacts and wants to see it materialize into a focus concept and not just a talk/discussion effort.

Mr. Ware stated that he was asked by the committee in January to schedule a workshop to meet with localities that have a regional drug court program now implemented. Mr. Ware stated that he is working on this effort and hopes to have information to relay at the March meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Withers and seconded by Ms. Long, the February 27th meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m. The next meeting will be held on March 20, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

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

