

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

September 18, 2017
The Robert C. Gibbons Conference Room
406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg Virginia

MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: Chair – Matt Kelly, and Billy Withers, City of Fredericksburg; Caroline County: Jeff Black; King George County: Jim Howard; Spotsylvania County: Greg Benton and Paul Trampe; and Stafford County: Meg Bohmke and Laura Sellers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ruby Brabo & Nancy Long

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Phil Brown, Mary Washington Healthcare; Jane Yaun, Rappahannock Area Community Services Board; Janel Donohue & Sarah Walsh, Rappahannock United Way; Elaine Dispenbrock, Stafford County Citizen; & Donna Krauss, Stafford County

STAFF: Tim Ware, Executive Director; Paul Agnello, Marti Donley & Nick Quint, FAMPO; Kate Gibson & Samantha Shoukas, CoC; and Diana Utz & Leigh Anderson, GWRC; Eldon James, Legislative Aide/GWRC

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Kelly 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. Withers and seconded by Mr. Black, with all concurring, the agenda was approved as submitted.

APPROVAL OF GWRC MEETING MINUTES (August 21, 2017) - (Action Item)

Upon motion by Ms. Sellers and seconded by Mr. Black, with Ms. Bohmke, Mr. Trampe, & Mr. Withers abstaining, and all others in consensus, the minutes from the August 21st 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 advised that total projects are \$230,402.48. Mr. Ware stated that the year-to-date positive cash flow balance is \$200,512.73.

Mr. Withers expressed compliments to Mr. Ware for the positive financial status of the Commission. Mr. Withers stated this balance is much better than what it was several years ago. Mr. Withers expressed his thanks to Mr. Ware and the staff for making the adjustments as and when needed to have the Commission re-established on a much more positive cash flow status.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ware stated that per request from Ms. Brabo at last month's meeting, GWRC was asked to send letters to both the governors in Maryland and Virginia in regard to the Harry Nice Bridge project. The request was to state we were in support of this project moving forward as originally planned. The most recent modifications to the project are for the project to now not include shoulder modifications and bicycle/pedestrian lanes. Mr. Ware stated that both letters are included in tonight's agenda packet and will be mailed after endorsement at tonight's meeting.

Mr. Withers stated that he will support the request; however, he does not feel that by not including shoulder widening or bicycle/pedestrian lanes that this will result in the bridge being shut down when an emergency occurs. He stated that on I-95 you may have a lane closure for emergencies but you still have 2-3 lanes and shoulders available. Mr. Withers stated that what happens here is the road is just blocked off and then re-opened once the accident has been cleared.

There was also request to change the last sentence in the next to last paragraph of the letter under the "Request" comments to the following: change "humbly" too respectfully. Upon motion by Mr. Withers and seconded by Mr. Howard, with all members concurring, the letters to the governors in both Maryland and Virginia was endorsed to mail accordingly.

Mr. Ware advised that "Go Virginia" has completed its growth and diversity plan. Mr. Ware stated that he wanted to thank Ms. Gibson for her staff efforts in getting the plan completed and submitted by the deadline. Mr. Ware stated that now that this piece of the equation has been completed, we can begin accepting projects and awarding grant funding.

Mr. Ware advised that there will be an upcoming "How to Apply" workshop held in our region on September 28th from 2-4:00 p.m. at the Fredericksburg Area Realtor's Association office. Mr. Ware advised that Ms. Gibson has sent out invitations to anyone who would want to be involved.

Lastly, Mr. Ware advised that on October 11th, there will be a managing waste forum presentation by the UMW University Center.

Mr. Kelly advised that at its September 12th meeting, Mr. Tim Ware was recognized as being the 2017 president's award recipient for the National Association of Development Organizations. Mr. Kelly stated this award is given annually to one individual who has made a valuable contribution to the organization and one who has exemplified a definite commitment towards regionalism. Mr. Kelly stated that Mr. Ware has served for more than 23 years in leadership roles in regard to regional development since 2011. The commission members gave Mr. Ware a round of applause and congratulated him on this recognition.

OLD BUSINESS

- a.) Regional Legislative Agenda – Mr. Eldon James

Mr. James thanked the GWRC commission members and staff for providing feedback, comments and input to the draft VACo Region 7 2018 Legislative Draft that is included in tonight's agenda packet.

Mr. James stated the draft includes 5 priority items responding to direction from our last meeting. which include the following areas: Children's Services Act; Increased speed limits on selected non-limited access, multilane, divided highways; Improvement to Virginia's Smart Scale program; Viability of Cash and Off-Site Proffers; & Equal Taxing Authority. Mr. James stated that the other issues that follow are items that will come up as the legislative session moves forward.

Mr. James stated that he would like to make some comments regarding the five topics mentioned above:

Children's Services Act – since its beginning in 1992, Virginia's CSA has led the nation by consolidating funding sources and coordinating treatment services for children with severe/significant needs. This care coordination has been successful in both meeting needs for an individual child and in proving that state and local responsibilities and cost sharing does work.

Improving Virginia's Smart Scale program – the region supports 3 changes to Smart Scale process: focus statewide high priority funding on regional projects instead on small local projects; mandate that average traffic counts cover all 7 days of data collection and not just data collected from Monday-Friday; & mandate that total project cost be used in the Smart Scale benefit/cost calculations in stated of the Smart Scale request cost.

Increased speed limits on selected multilane divided highways – once approved by VDOT, efforts from both Delegate Fowler and Ms. Nancy Long from Caroline County have requested this be taken out of the State Code once the safety Improvements are implemented and this request was endorsed.

Viability of Cash and Off-Site Proffers – As a result of the changes made in 2016 having a negative economic impact, the time may be right to consider impact fees as an appropriate means for supporting the capital improvement costs that are now being driven by new residential development.

Equal Taxing Authority – Mr. James advised that it is recommended that this item be completely removed as there is absolutely no interest from any member of the General Assembly for it to move forward. Mr. James stated there is no request for a bill to be even drafted, much less signed. This item can be left in but Mr. James advised that the Bill will not go any further.

Mr. Kelly asked as there will be a new candidate elected to represent the seat currently held by Delegate Howell and it appears that they are fundamentally different, he thinks there is concern about whether the region should submit all concerns or whether it should just submit what we may get versus what we may want.

Mr. Trampe recommended taking them out if there is no chance of getting an approval or having it introduced. Mr. Trampe stated that sometimes submitting less is better. Ms. Bohmke felt the legislative meetings held in Stafford County were productive. In Stafford, they have agreed to pursue items that can receive movement because submitting others that do not have support are just a waste of everyone's time. Ms. Sellers stated that she felt more information is needed on the Equal Taxing Authority so appropriate discussion/concerns etc. can be compiled and forwarded to the General Assembly.

NEW BUSINESS

- a.) Approval of Resolution No. 18.01, Authorizing Staff to Issue a Request for Proposals to Hire On-Call General Planning Services Consultant(s)– Mr. Tim Ware

Mr. Ware advised that Resolution No. 18-01 is a request for approval of new contract periods for its on-call consultants who are tasked with providing assistance in General Planning services for GWRC and FAMPO.

Ms. Bohmke asked how much money has been expended for these services in years passed. Mr. Ware stated that the contacts are for a 3-year cycle and even though FAMPO has utilized the consultants as well but the amount that GWRC has expended has been approximately \$100,000.

Upon motion by Ms. Bohmke and seconded by Mr. Black with all concurring, Resolution No. 18-01 was adopted by the George Washington Regional Commission at the September 18th meeting.

- b.) Alice Project – Ms. Sarah Walsh & Ms. Janel Donohue

Ms. Sarah Walsh & Ms. Janel Donohue with the Rappahannock United Way provided presentation on Virginia's ALICE report. ALICE is an acronym which stands for: asset, limited, income, constrained, & employed and is way of defining citizens who work consistently but earn above the federal poverty levels; however, do not earn enough to afford a basis household budget.

It was stated that when ALICE households cannot make monthly ends meet they are then forced to make difficult choices in what gets paid – i.e. forego health care, child care, car insurance, healthy foods, etc. By not including these needs it results in the health, safety and future productivity levels decreasing and insurance premiums and taxing increasing for everyone.

ALICE households vary in size and makeup and there is no typical stereo-type. In Virginia, ALICE households are those with children and those with a family member with a disability. They vary in educational levels as well as in race and ethnicity. ALICE households in Virginia live in cities, suburbs or rural areas. Over time, ALICE households move above and below the thresholds. A younger ALICE household may be able to capitalize on improving their education; however, an

older ALICE household may experience a health emergency, lose a job, or suffer from a personal crisis which will cause them to slip in to poverty. The success of local communities is directly related to the financial stability of ALICE households.

The following ALICE data for Planning District 16 is as follows:

City of Fredericksburg – Population = 27,395; # of households = 1,080; & the number of ALICE citizens = 55%

Caroline County – Population = 29,349; # of households = 10,970; & the number of ALICE citizens = 39%

King George County – Population = 24,933; # of households = 8,379; & the number of ALICE citizens = 29%

Spotsylvania County – Population = 130,475; # of households = 42,568; & the number of ALICE citizens = 47%

Stafford County – Population = 142,003; # of households = 43,887; & the number of ALICE citizens = 35%

With these figures, the question was asked: “Do you know ALICE?”. It was stated that 57% of the jobs in the State of Virginia pay less than \$20.00 per hour so it is certain that an ALICE is very well known to everyone on the committee.

Ms. Sellers stated that 39% of the citizens are within the ALICE poverty range and is there anything that determines where the children are? Ms. Sellers stated that 25% of the total population in Stafford County is children so how many of these children belong to the percentages of the families accounted for. Ms. Walsh stated that she did not have that number at today’s meeting; however, will forward this information to GWRC. Ms. Walsh also stated that an executive summary is available and stated this would be forwarded as well.

Ms. Walsh stated that the purpose of today’s presentation from the United Way is to make everyone aware of ALICE and to bring this matter to the concern of city/county decision makers when collectively supported by a region, things can be done that will support ALICE. Ms. Walsh stated that United Way is starting the process now of making the community aware and starting conversations with organizations and businesses within the region. Ms. Walsh stated that United Way is aware that the region is already helping and working to serve ALICE by providing emergency assistance, taxes, etc. but still more needs to be done regionally.

Mr. Kelly asked when the cost of living data was compiled was this taken into account by specific areas state-wide because cost of livings vary from locality to locality. Ms. Walsh stated that cost of living data was obtained per locality.

Ms. Walsh thanked the Commission for allowing them to present ALICE to the region and advised they are scheduled to make a presentation to the Stafford Board of Supervisors. Ms. Walsh stated that if any other boards are interested in an ALICE presentation to please contact her.

Mr. Kelly asked if data could be provided that shows what is being done state-wide by the United Way in regard to assisting the ALICE citizens. Ms. Walsh advised that the State UDA is already involved by talking to developers for construction of affordable housing and that businesses have been contacted requesting larger wages be applied. Mr. Kelly also asked if a list could be compiled and forwarded to GWRC indicating comparisons of how other areas within the state are assisting ALICE so PD16 can have something available to review. Ms. Walsh stated a list of this nature is being compiled now and expected to be completed soon for the State of Virginia and once this is available a copy will be sent to GWRC. Ms. Walsh advised that Virginia is the 15th state that has begun taking efforts to combat ALICE so they are still learning as well.

c.) Opioid Issue Update – Ms. Donna Krauss

Mr. Ware stated the Commission tasked him with finding out what is being done on the opioid epidemic in other areas. Mr. Ware stated that Ms. Donna Krauss from Stafford County is here today to provide an update. Ms. Krauss is the Human Services Director in Stafford County and Chairperson of the Community Collaborative organization for youth and families.

Ms. Krauss advised that Virginia data from 2016 shows the following:

- ER Visits due to overdose = 7,326
- 75% of all fatal drug overdoses involved opioids
- 1,133 opioid overdose deaths
- 2,856 naran administrations

Ms. Krauss stated that within Planning District 16 the following data is available from 2016:

- 72 opioid overdoses
- 35% increase from last year's totals
- 94% of all drug overdoses involved opioids

Ms. Krauss stated that since 2013 fatal drug overdose has become the leading cause of unnatural death within the State of Virginia. This trend has continued to worsen and has resulted in more deaths than motor vehicle accidents or gun-related deaths.

Since 2012, Ms. Krauss advised that drug overdoses from fentanyl have sharply increased. Prior to 2013, most fentanyl-related deaths were due to illicit use of pharmaceutical produced fentanyl. Ms. Krauss stated that by 2016, most fatal fentanyl-related drug overdoses were due to illicitly produced fentanyl and not pharmaceutically produced drugs. The number of fatal fentanyl overdoses from 2015 to 2016 increased by 176.4%.

Ms. Krauss advised that drug overdose can happen to anyone and presented the following facts:

Opioids do not discriminate & effect people regardless of where they were born, how much money they have, their age, or their race/nationality.

Daily 1,756 teenagers abuse a prescription drug for the first time

Daily 8 people die from an opioid overdose

1 in 5 high school seniors report misusing a prescription drug at least once; however, only 12% of parents think alcohol or drugs present a problem in their home

9 of 10 addicts started experimenting before they turned 18

Most first time users obtain a drug from a family member or friend

Ms. Krauss relayed that on May 10th, Mary Washington Healthcare and the Rappahannock Area Community Services Board sponsored an all day workshop that was followed by a town hall event. This workshop had expert panelists to answer questions from the community. Ms. Krauss stated that more than 50 community leaders participated. The results from this workshop are to focus community efforts on 3 areas: prevention; treatment/recovery; & reduction of harm.

As a result of the workshop meeting, a group of community leaders have drafted an organizational structure that involved the formation of the Rappahannock Healthy Community Advisory Council that will provide oversight and accountability to the groups working on the 3 focus area initiatives. The Rappahannock Area Community Services Board serves as the fiscal agent and the Community Collaborative for Youth & Families' leadership team provides oversight to the work groups and reports back to the Advisory Council.

Ms. Krauss stated that in an effort to combat this growing epidemic, "Chasing the Dragon" (which is life stories of opiate addicts and a documentary that was filmed in part at the Rappahannock

Region jail) is scheduled at 5 different areas throughout PD16. The screenings are free and open to the public. All community leaders, parents, teachers and concerned citizens are invited to attend. A discussion about the crisis and what individuals and families can do to prevent a loved one from becoming an addict is held after the conclusion of the movie. The 3 remaining sites within the region are scheduled as follows:

September 28th – Brooke Point High School

October 2nd – James Monroe High School

October 16th – Rubicon Café – Salem Fields Community Church

Mr. Black stated that he appreciated the presentation made tonight but also asked if these efforts are occurring with local school boards and educators. Ms. Krauss stated this was a great recommendation and the schools/school boards will be approached. Mr. Benton stated that local sheriff departments need to be involved as well.

Mr. Kelly stated that several months ago a presentation was made from Shenandoah on their drug program. Mr. Kelly stated that he feels the information that has been presented to date has been good material but he still questions what results are being obtained from the community efforts. Mr. Kelly asked if a follow-up presentation can occur in six months that provides a “progress” report on # of citizens treated; # of success stories, etc.

d.) DC2RVA Update –Mr. Paul Agnello

Mr. Agnello advised that the draft EIS was released on September 8th and a 60day public comment has begun and will conclude on November 7th. Everyone is encouraged to submit comments during this time period so that all comments can be addressed in the Final EIS. Mr. Agnello stated that there have been no changes to the alternatives that were presented several months ago. For the Fredericksburg region, DRPT’s recommendations are to add a third track through the City of Fredericksburg on the existing right-of-way property. The Fredericksburg project is expected to cost \$507 m. This project will also include a new bridge crossing at the Rappahannock River which would run parallel to the existing rail bridge.

e.) Other New Business – None

ADJOURN GWRC MEETING–The September 18th GWRC meeting was adjourned at 7:12 p.m. The next meeting will be held on October 16, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted, Timothy Ware, Executive Director
(Minutes prepared by JoAnna Roberson)