

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Crater Planning District Commission held on Thursday evening January 14, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. at the Eastside Community Enhancement Center in Dinwiddie County.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Moore, Dinwiddie County, Michelle Johnson, Charles City County; John Wood, Colonial Heights; Woodrow Harris, Emporia; Sam Parham, Petersburg; Michael Drewry, Surry County; Kevin Carroll, Chesterfield County; James Brown, Greensville County.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jasmine Gore, Hopewell; Floyd Brown, Prince George County; Eric Fly, Sussex County.

STAFF PRESENT: Alec Brebner, Denny Morris, Martha Burton, Judy Smith, Erin Slaughter.

GUEST PRESENT: Tom Puryear, Ann Pitts, Natalie Rees, Mitchell Wiggins & Co.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Dr. Moore, who announced that Messrs. Carroll, Parham and Drewry were attending virtually. He then referred to the Minutes of the Commission meeting held on October 8, 2020, which were included in the agenda package for the members' information.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Dr. Moore said that the GO Virginia Region 4 Council will meet next on January 27 and he will have a report at the February Commission meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Financial Report for July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020 – Tom Puryear, along with Anna Pitts and Natalie Rees from Mitchell Wiggins & Company, presented the Financial Report for July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020. He emphasized to the members that these are their financial statements that he has reviewed with Commission staff and about which there were no disagreements. He said that Mitchell Wiggins' opinion adds credibility. He also praised Ms. Slaughter's preparation for the audit and her records. He said there were no adjustments that modified the Commission's net income. He pointed out that Note 24 references the Coronavirus outbreak and potential impacts that could impact the Commission's budget. Mr. Puryear said that he had reviewed reports for other PDCs and not all of them provide the level of detail that Crater does and there has never been a finding from any of this PDC's funding agencies. He said it is an unqualified opinion on the financial statements; there are no comments or material weaknesses.

Dr. Moore pointed out on page 4 of the Financial Statements that the unrestricted balance increased from \$438,624 in 2019, to \$492,216 in 2020, a very positive occurrence.

Upon motion of Ms. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wood and carried the Executive Committee accepted the Commission's Financial Statements for the July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020 fiscal year.

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U. S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) \$400,000 CARES Act Program – Mr. Morris recalled for members that this is a two-year effort that will run through June, 2022, to look at impacts of COVID 19 on the Crater region and then to identify strategies, projects to ameliorate those impacts. He said that the consulting firm DecideSmart has been hired to lead this work and Lane Ramsey will act as project manager.

Mr. Morris said the first phase of work was to conduct interviews with public and private sector community/business leaders, to get their perspectives on the impacts of COVID 19 on their businesses and more importantly the region. He said that approximately 25 interviews have been completed and the report from those conversations will be available soon.

Mr. Morris said the second component of this project was the engagement of Chmura Economics & Analytics to undertake an econometric analysis of the COVID impacts. Referring to the Draft Report, he said there are the regional results as well as an analysis of each of the localities. He noted that because Chesterfield is part of the Richmond Region Economic Development District, Chesterfield's numbers are not reflected in the Chmura work or report. Mr. Morris said that Chmura looked specifically at the April-June, 2020 quarter and reported that this region lost 6,929 jobs, resulting in an economic loss of \$133.9 million. He said the assessment envisions a path to recovery in the second quarter of 2021-2022 assuming that the vaccine is in full play. Work is continuing on trying to gauge the impacts upon tax revenues on the region.

Mr. Morris then said that when the final report on the interviews and the economic impacts are complete staff will host a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee meeting to analyze this information and begin the process of building a plan going forward.

Ms. Johnson asked why the Chmura work did not use a study period longer than the April-June 2020 time period.

Mr. Morris responded that all of this work had to fit within the two-year timeline and the budget. He said the April-June time period was the period when much was essentially "shut down" so this was a snapshot in time.

Ms. Johnson said she thought that the study would look at the full impact from beginning to end, what went well, what did not.

Mr. Morris said he believes that the state will do that, adding that the pandemic is not over and we are not certain when it will end. We were looking at the period following the Governor's actions and the closures. He said the Virginia Employment Commission is bringing on additional economists.

Mr. Wood asked if these numbers in the Chmura draft report are based on raw data or are they numbers generated through modelling.

Mr. Morris responded that it is a blend. He said the Virginia Employment Commission numbers are actual monthly unemployment payments.

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Mr. Wood then asked if the numbers by industry and jurisdiction are founded in raw data.

Mr. Morris responded yes.

Dr. Moore said that additional updated information will be available to the Commission in February.

NEW BUSINESS

Certification of Crater Revolving Loan Fund Plan – Mr. Brebner explained that this is an annual procedural action. He reminded members that there is available a Business Continuity Loan Program that was developed in response to the pandemic.

Upon motion of Mr. Harris, seconded by Mr. Wood and carried, the Executive Committee certified that: (1) the RLF Plan is consistent with and supportive of the area's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), and (2) the RLF is being operated in accordance with the policies and procedures contained in the RLF Plan, and the loan portfolio meets the standards contained therein.

2021-2022 Local Member Contribution – Referring to a table on page 11 of the agenda materials, Mr. Brebner recommended that the Commission maintain the current level of funding for FY 2021-2022. He noted that the Commission has maintained the same local government per capita rate for 20 years.

Upon motion of Ms. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Wood and carried, the Executive Committee agreed to recommend that the Commission retain the current local government per capita rate for FY 2021-2022.

Authorization to Apply for Growth and Accessibility Planning Technical Assistance – Mr. Brebner said that a new opportunity has been made available that offers assistance in conducting multi-modal planning outside of urban areas, referring members to page 12 in the agenda materials. He said that this "Growth and Accessibility" Planning (GAP) technical assistance program is made available through the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment. He said that earlier in the day the Tri-Cities Area MPO had agreed to seek technical assistance support through this GAP program also. He said that there would be no expense to the PDC.

Mr. Parham asked why we would not seek assistance also for the District's urban area.

Mr. Brebner responded that the MPO action was to seek technical assistance for the urbanized area.

Upon motion of Ms. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Brown and carried, the executive director was authorized to seek technical assistance from the Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and

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Investment's Growth & Accessibility Program (GAP) to identify existing and potential mesh points between automobile, transit and pedestrian traffic, with the recommendations to be included in a rural long-range plan.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Brebner provided written reports in the agenda materials on the following:

- 1) Status of the **TCAMPO Long-Range Transportation Plan** – launch of Plan 2045- the public involvement effort commenced with a survey; and an application to the Virginia GAP Program will request consulting assistance in support of performance-based planning.
- 2) Updates on the PDC's work associated with development of the 2022 **Richmond-Crater Hazard Mitigation Plan** (page 13 of agenda materials). Work underway is in the hazard identification and risk-assessment stages. Localities will be asked for data and GIS information and to identify their "Critical Facilities" in order for them to be eligible for upgrades via Hazard Mitigation Assistance funding. He added that a new required component in this plan will be a resilience component.
- 3) **Watershed Improvement Plan** (page 13 of agenda materials)- A final report was submitted to DEQ in December, 2020 and a new Scope of Services for CY 2021 will be finalized later this month.
- 4) **Coastal Zone Management Technical Assistance & Coastal Resilience Master Planning** (page 14 of agenda materials) – Execution of the Scope of Work underway for 2021; Final Report for FY 2019-2020 was submitted on November 3; and the regional working group will meet again in February. A new requirement will be a 3-year Coastal Resilience plan and the state is providing additional funding with no match required.
- 5) **Community Flood Preparedness Fund** (page 14 of agenda materials)- Virginia is participating in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative and funding (grant & loan) will be available to assist localities affected by recurrent flooding, sea level rise, and severe weather events. Draft guidelines are available for review.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Ms. Burton recalled that four reports identifying bills that may be of interest to local governments in the region had been sent, adding that copies of bills of particular interest/impact are sent to area chief administrative officers. She said that it is a 30-day session that may be extended by action of the Governor if work is not complete.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.