



GO Virginia Region One
Executive Committee Meeting
August 7, 2018
Minutes

The GO Virginia Region One Council Executive Committee meeting was held on August 7, 2018 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon, Virginia. Executive Committee members present were Donna Henry and Mike Quillen. Council members present were David Leonard. Region One Support Staff present were Shannon Blevins, Becki Joyce, Robyn Lee and Martha Necessary.

Chairman Mike Quillen called the meeting to order.

Overview of Project Applications – Robyn Lee

Letters of Intent (LOI)

Letters of Intent (LOI) have been received for three project applications expected to be submitted by the September 3 deadline:

- Virginia Highlands Community College – Advanced Technology and Workforce Development Center – Collaborative Grant project
- Mountain Empire Community College – Center for Workforce & Innovation of Appalachia – Collaborative Grant project
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) – Coal to Graphene Market Study - Enhanced Capacity Building project

Status of Current Projects

United Way of Southwest Virginia: Ignite Internships Program – The UVa Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) is currently working with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) on the project contract concerning issues with the language in the contract. The contract is expected to be executed in the near future and communication is ongoing with the sub-grantee.

Southwest Virginia Technology Council: SWVA HUB Link – DHCD informed staff that they will recommend funding for this Enhanced Capacity Building project totaling \$27,547.19. Due to concerns with the matching funds, the project budget was decreased from \$47,088.

Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD): Agricultural Action Plan – Staff has been working with the applicant on a strategy to implement the Agricultural Action Plans. At this time, the applicant is not planning to resubmit this project due to issues with obtaining match.

Update on Work Groups – Becki Joyce

Advanced Manufacturing Work Group – This group is currently discussing entrepreneurship opportunities involving creation of new products for existing advanced manufacturers or enhancing products or machinery that are currently in use. Specifically, the group is discussing a project to develop a spiraling maker space, which would host and support an inventor or entrepreneur from conception to production. One locality has identified a potential building for the space and conversations are continuing to identify additional locations, which can be industry focused.

Agriculture & Food/Beverage Manufacturing Work Group – This group is currently focusing on two initiatives. One initiative is a regional meat processing facility that serves NC, TN, WV and all of SWVA. The initiative is poised to expand to bring in the feed lots throughout the region to decrease cattle finishing in other states, and market true homegrown grass fed and corn fed beef. Russell County has expressed interest in submitting an application for Competitive funding, partnering with Carroll County in Region One, as well as other localities in the state. At this time, a letter of intent has not been submitted, although staff has reached out to provide assistance with the project. The second initiative is exploring the potential of agriculture and technology and its usage in farm machinery and applications, as well as how the region can support this industry and build on it locally.

Technology Work Group – In addition to working on the SWVA Hub Link project, this group is discussing a Try SWVA initiative, which would recruit technology workforce to relocate to Southwest Virginia and work remotely for 2-3 months to experience the region, resulting in potential permanent relocation. This strategy would include marketing Homestead sites.

General Discussion

Pipeline Development – Staff shared various ideas and potential strategies for helping to build a pipeline of projects eligible for GO Virginia funding in Region One. The Executive Committee also discussed other regional projects related to an energy park with pump storage and educational research in technology development.

Agriculture Action Plan – The Executive Committee discussed building on the Agriculture Action Plan proposal that ASD submitted as a strategy to unlock several projects in the Agriculture and Food and Beverage Manufacturing industry. The project would result in identifying the infrastructure that can produce private sector growth in agriculture and a suite of regional agricultural action plans to advance initiatives in Region One. Since ASD was unable to carry out this project and it is a priority for the Council to ensure that incoming agricultural projects align with specific strategies for the region, staff has been working with ASD and other grant funders to identify a strategy to move the project forward. This type of enhanced capacity building project is in alignment with the goals of GO VA and the Region One Council and can be funded partially through the building capacity funds allotted to Region One. Working with ASD and an Advisory Committee, the Executive Committee agreed that the Region One Council and staff should move this plan forward and procure a consultant to develop the action plans.

Housing Committee – The Virginia Housing Development Authority (VDHA) hosted a Regional Housing Study Workgroup kickoff meeting in late July that focused on housing opportunities within Region One.

Following a productive meeting, Shannon Blevins asked the Committee if a Housing Committee or Work Group should be assembled to continue the conversations to identify opportunities, barriers, and strategies for housing. Chairman Quillen suggested forming a Work Group initially consisting of the members present at the VDHA meeting.

The Executive Committee also discussed a developing Homestead project that would involve forming a centralized hub in a Southwest Virginia community, which can provide broadband and housing to remote workers.

Legislative Guest – Mike Harney, Chief of Staff for Senator Mark Warner, is on a learning tour of Region One and offered his assistance in addressing the economic needs and goals of Southwest Virginia. Mr. Harney relayed Senator Warner’s concern for the region and the efforts to make the Rural Promise of Internet a reality. Shane Clem, Senator Warner’s Regional Director in Southwest Virginia, accompanied Mr. Harney to the meeting. Donna Henry stated the intense recruitment of Southwest Virginia residents to Tennessee, particularly East Tennessee State University (ETSU) has created challenges for the state’s colleges and universities, particularly in Region One. ETSU is offering in-state tuition to students residing within 300 air miles of their campus. UVA Wise is located within close proximity to Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, North Carolina and Ohio and is currently in discussions to offer reduced tuition rates to residents from these states.

FY 2019 Budget Revisions

The FY 2019 Region One budget totaling \$361,111 has been approved by DHCD with revisions to expenditure categories as they relate to Administrative and Direct Planning activities. Line item adjustments include fringe benefit rate increases for fiscal year 2019, F&A percent calculation to reflect UVA Office of Sponsored Program’s calculation, adjustments to Marketing and Consulting to more accurately reflect planned expenditure activity. At the request of DHCD, the budget structure and line items have been reformatted to ensure an accurate comparison across all of the GO Virginia regions. This reformatting combined multiple line items and shifted several planning activity line items to the administrative section. Donna Henry made the motion to approve the revised budget, which was seconded by Chairman Quillen.

Public Comment

Scott Robertson with the Tri-Cities Business Journal requested additional information concerning various projects in the region, which were addressed following the Executive Committee meeting.

Plan for 2019 Regional Meetings

The Executive Committee agreed to approve the proposed four Council meeting dates with Executive Committee meeting dates to be scheduled as needed. Motion was made by Donna Henry and seconded by Chairman Quillen. The dates will be further reviewed by the full Council at the October 2 meeting.

Adjournment

Chairman Quillen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Donna Henry made the motion, which was seconded by Chairman Quillen.