

**GO Virginia Hampton Roads  
Regional Council MEETING NO. 32  
January 25, 2024**

Meeting number thirty-two of the GO Virginia Hampton Roads Regional Council (“Regional Council”) was held Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. This meeting was a virtual meeting.

**Members Present:** Shawn Avery Patrick Coady Marcia Conston  
Bobby Dyer Christen Faatz Sharon Goodwyn  
Sally Hartman Jeffrey Holland Bob Howard  
Mark Johnson Sarah Jane Kirkland Bob McKenna  
Doug Pons Casey Roberts Bryan Stephens  
Lynn Taylor, Vice-Chair

**Members Absent:** Kenneth Alexander Timothy Bentley Tom Frantz, Chair  
Maria Herbert Aubrey Layne Jerry Miller  
John Olson John Reinhart Katherine Rowe  
Thomas Tingle

**Hampton Roads Executive Roundtable Staff Present:**

Nancy L. Grden, President & CEO  
Donna Morris, Executive Vice President  
Diane Nolan, Operations Support Manager  
Diana Turk, Executive Assistant

- I. **Call to Order/Welcome** – Vice-Chair Lynn Taylor called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and introduced new member, Bob Howard, and asked him to say a few words about himself. Ms. Taylor recognized guests in attendance, Diane Kaufman from Senator Kaine’s office and Drew Lumpkin from Senator Warner’s office. Following a roll call by Ms. Morris, a quorum was confirmed.
- II. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.
- III. **Approval of the November 2, 2023 Regional Council Meeting minutes** – Ms. Taylor presented the Action to approve the November 2, 2023 meeting minutes.

There were no comments or questions regarding the November 2, 2023 minutes, so the following action was taken:

ON A MOTION MADE AND SECONDED THE REGIONAL COUNCIL APPROVED THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 2, 2023 MEETING AS PRESENTED IN THE AGENDA PACKET.

- IV. **GO VA Update** – Ms. Taylor introduced Joseph Dennie, of the GO Virginia staff from DHCD. Mr. Dennie presented the JLARC findings.

- JLARC is the commission of the Virginia General Assembly consisting of State Senators and delegates along with professional staff who support the commission. Their goal is to provide further evaluation, policy analysis, and oversight of State agencies on behalf of the legislature. They make recommendations on how State agencies can be more effective and efficient with public dollars.
- Two things trigger a JLARC study:
  - i. If there is a concern that something isn't working as intended, and
  - ii. When a program reaches maturity and legislators want to evaluate if the program is working the way it should and see if there are ways to make it more effective. The GO Virginia Program study fell into this bucket.
- JLARC examined whether the GO Virginia program promoted regional collaboration and how effective it has been in growing and diversifying regional economies.
- Key Findings:
  - i. GO Virginia does appear to be improving regional collaboration and many projects have positive regional economic impact.
  - ii. Unreliable outcomes data make it difficult to estimate the economic impact of the GO Virginia projects.
  - iii. Some of the program eligibility requirements are unclear, unnecessarily restrictive, or are better suited as project evaluation criteria.
  - iv. There were some other miscellaneous findings. One worth mentioning is that they found funding could be reduced if the program doesn't make full use of its appropriation. Using the 2 to 1 stance on matching funds rather than matching dollar for dollar, they found that when there was less money that people had to bring on their own, there was almost total utilization of funds.
- Recommendations fall into three categories:
  - i. Better and more accurate outcome tracking.
  - ii. Eligibility changes.
  - iii. Creating more flexibility for regions such as Region 5 to access the funding.
- Next Steps:
  - i. The State Board has delegated review of this report to two new committees. One is the Program Performance and Evaluation Committee – they are looking at the outcome tracking and refining how things are tracked. The second is the Governance and Policy Committee – they are looking at higher-level eligibility and other things along those lines.
- Reason to be encouraged:
  - i. The recommendations are clearly actionable within the next 6-9 months. Many of the recommendations were already underway prior to the report.

Ms. Taylor opened the floor for questions and comments.

Mayor Bobby Dyer commented that there are two types of criticism, constructive and destructive, and that this is definitely constructive criticism, which will make our organization stronger.

Nancy Grden commented on the dates for the committee meetings and that the Roundtable will send out the links to these.

**V. Quarterly GO Virginia Grant Progress Reports** – Donna Morris outlined the grant progress.

- The Career & Community Development Program chose to pull their application in this round to work on making it stronger. We look forward to sending that application back in.
- Camp Community College's planning grant focuses on mechatronics. The State DHCD staff had a couple of questions, which are currently being addressed.
- Virginia Tech, Newport News Center grant to promote careers in aquaculture was approved by the State Board. We are partnering with Region 6 on this project.
- Of the 46 projects, 7 of them are competitive and are managed by other regions, but we are an active partner.
- 50% of the funds have been allocated to workforce projects, 15% to startups, 9% to site and infrastructure development projects, and 26% are cluster scale up.
- 30 projects are complete or in the process of closing out. 6 of these have actually exceeded the projected outcomes and deliverables.
- Of the roughly \$20 Million awarded to support grants submitted by Region 5 since 2018, just under \$11 Million of GO Virginia funds have been drawn to date. Roughly 55%.
- Of the \$12.5 Million in GO Virginia funds for active grants, about 27% of the funds have been drawn to date. That number should rise to 39% within the next 30 days.

One of the projects to be closed out by February 14<sup>th</sup> is the Cybersecurity Job Creation System (CJCS). This competitive grant had two components – one around education and other around cybersecurity compliance. Significant progress was made to develop and deliver the online education component, but delays in being able to deliver the cloud-based compliance system was delayed, due to circumstances out of the control of the sub-grantee (ODU Research Foundation). Ms. Taylor commented on the ODURF CJCS Program, saying this program will provide tremendous support to small business government contractors who cannot afford to have a large IT staff.

**VI. GO Virginia Project Spotlight – Virginia Digital Maritime Center (ODU)** – Ms. Taylor introduced Mark Whitney, RADM, USN, (Ret.) Executive Director, Virginia Digital Maritime Center.

- The Virginia Digital Shipbuilding Program was established in 2018, as a result of a DHCD grant.
- It was established to do two things, curriculum development and outreach.
- Curriculum development has two parts, to upskill the current shipbuilding workforce and to equip the future workforce for advanced manufacturing jobs.
- Outreach to industry partners, training providers, academic institutions and students through internships, conferences, job fairs, & STEM outreach events.
- The VDSP and the HR Maritime Industrial Base Ecosystem (MIBE) combined to form the Virginia Digital Maritime Center (VDMC).
- VDMC will focus on three areas: workforce development, technology insertion, and data analytics.

- Working on several things:
  - i. Maritime-Entry-to-Employment Training (GO VA)
  - ii. Maritime Skilled Trades Alignment (Dept of Labor)
  - iii. Submarine Industrial Base Projects (HRWC)
  - iv. Marine Trades Training (VSRA)
  - v. Commonwealth Defense Manufacturing Strategy

Mr. Whitney opened the floor for questions.

Shawn Avery commented on the positive changes Mark has made and what a great job he is doing.

**VII. Other Business** – Ms. Taylor introduced Nancy Grden.

- Ms. Grden talked about an OP ED piece that would be in the Virginian-Pilot and Daily Press on January, 28 titled GO VA Invests in the Hampton Roads Portfolio of Assets, signed by Tom Frantz and Lynn Taylor, as well as Dennis Mathias and Cliff Fleet from the HR Executive Roundtable Board.
- Key Industry Clusters guide the work and initiatives across the region.
- Statewide, GO Virginia projects thus far represent a total investment of \$82 Million with \$35 Million of that amount attributed to GO Virginia. They are fairly well spread, with Workforce being the largest investment. Other high impact areas are Site Development, Cluster Scale Up, and Startup Entrepreneurial Ecosystems.
- The Workforce Council used a GO Virginia grant to build-out maritime talent pathways. They have since been able to leverage \$50 Million in additional Federal Navy dollars beyond the initial GO Virginia grant.
- The Workforce Council won the Good Jobs Challenge Award, which was the only one in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Congratulations to Shawn Avery and the Workforce Council!
- In the Entrepreneurship space, 757 Collab, Black Brand, SBDC, and Innovate HR built upon a previous GO Virginia award to receive a \$ 1.2 Million EDA “Build to Scale” grant.
- Global Internet Hub used a planning grant that started with a previous grant award to RVA757 to study the I-64 corridor, now known as the I-64 Innovation Corridor between Hampton Roads and Richmond. That work has been completed, but there are a number of potential follow-up initiatives.
- The region applied for a federal grant called Nexus to look at uncrewed systems. While we did not win it, we formed the nucleus of an industry scale up.
- We have revamped the Roundtable website and have a lot of information about GO Virginia Region 5.
- Ms. Grden gave examples of the kinds of projects that GO Virginia funds and the type of grant categories.

Ms. Grden opened the floor for questions. Since there were none, she talked about two more updates on behalf of the region.

- The Department of Energy awarded \$300 to \$500 Million to Jefferson Lab to build-out a Supercomputing High Performance Data Facility.

- The Roundtable sponsored a study on a Talent Marketing Initiative underway by Fahrenheit Advisors. The study looks at why people stay or leave the area in the young adult category 25 to 50. VEDP has a study underway with Development Counselors International looking at the same issues on the Commonwealth level.

Mayor Bobby Dyer commented that Sub Sea cables are coming in as well as Broadband, which will hopefully create tremendous opportunities for the entire region. He went on to say that we should encourage our friends to stay in the region rather than moving away. One of the problems we face is the price of housing. Another need is getting people into a pipeline where they can become a welder, pipe fitter, auto body repair person, electrician, etc. The shipyards are going to need 5,000 more employees over the next few years, as well as the workforce need to support necessary infrastructure repair and replacement as many of our cities are aging.

Nancy Grden commented that the housing issue has been a major topic for the HRPDC with the cities and localities involved. There are efforts underway, but it will take time to change.

**VIII. State Budget & Legislative Overview** – Ms. Taylor introduced Chris Lloyd from McGuire Woods to give us a State Budget and Legislative Review.

- They are 25% through a 60-day session and should be wrapping up on March 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Governor Youngkin proposed removing \$28 Million dollars of unallocated balances from the GO Virginia fund. Delegate Austin did put in a budget amendment to restore the \$28 Million. The Executive Roundtable drafted a letter to Senator Lucas to ask that the \$28 Million be restored.
- 9 bills have an economic impact.
- 32 bills are anti data centers.
- There are a number of bills regarding gaming.
- 2 bills to create a sports tourism fund in Virginia.
- 2 bills to expedite site approval through the permitting process.
- There is a bill to prohibit the increase or expansion of any natural gas pipeline capacity in Planning District 19 (Crater Region).

Marcia Conston had a question about tolls in the area. Mr. Lloyd explained that the toll reduction is wrapped up in the Arena Bill.

Pat Coady asked about the bills on broadband. Mr. Lloyd commented that the Governor removed the State subsidy for the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) and said they were going to allow Federal Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program money to pay for it. There is concern and ongoing discussion about this.

Mr. Lloyd quickly ran through some pertinent budget items.

**IX. Adjourn** – There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Lynn Taylor at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Donna S. Morris  
Secretary to the Regional Council

APPROVED

Lynn Taylor  
Vice-Chair of the Regional Council

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