



Minutes
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Meeting
Via Zoom Video Conferencing – December 21, 2020, 5:00 p.m.

Member Jurisdiction Representatives			
	Augusta County	City of Staunton	Staff
✓	Butch Wells	✓ Carolyn Dull, Vice Chair	✓ Bonnie Riedesel, Executive Director
✓	Pam Carter	Sharon Angle	✓ Rebecca Joyce, Community Program Manager
	Vickie Moran	Rockbridge County	✓ Elizabeth McCarty, Deputy Director
✓	Leslie Tate	✓ Jay Lewis	✓ Ann Cundy, Director of Transportation
	Bath County	✓ Chris Slaydon	✓ Lee Bell, Finance Director
✓	Edward Hicklin	Rockingham County	✓ Rita Whitfield, Office Manager
	City of Buena Vista	✓ Steve Schofield	✓ Nathan Garrison, Regional Planner
✓	Billy Fitzgerald	✓ Rhonda Cooper	✓ Grace Blanchard, Regional Planner
	City of Harrisonburg	✓ Kim Sandum	✓ Hunter Moore, Regional Planner
	Sal Romero		✓ Nancy Gourley, Transit Manager
✓	George Hirschmann, Secretary	City of Waynesboro	
✓	Adam Fletcher	✓ Terry Short, Treasurer	
	Highland County	Rusty Johnson	
✓	David Blanchard		Others
	City of Lexington		✓ Megan Argenbright, Brown Edwards & Co.
	Frank Friedman, Chair		✓ Jordan Bowman, Esq., Litten & Sipe

Call to Order

Governor Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency in Virginia on March 12, 2020, in response to COVID-19. In light of this emergency, the December 21, 2020, CSPDC meeting was conducted via Zoom Video Conferencing. The December 21, 2020, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Zoom Video Conference was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Dull.

Public Comment

Vice Chairperson Dull opened the floor to the public for comments. There were no public comments.

Minutes

Vice Chairperson Dull presented the minutes from the October 19, 2020, CSPDC Commission Zoom Video Conferencing meeting. Mr. Fitzgerald moved, seconded by Mr. Short, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director’s Report

Under Executive Director’s Report, Ms. Riedesel reported on “CSPDC Investments in the Region – FY 2017-2020.” She stated that one of the more important services provided by the CSPDC to its member jurisdictions is writing grants and finding ways to bring additional financial resources into

the region. Ms. Riedesel noted that the CSPDC has worked to help find and create investments for a multitude of public projects and programs including economic and community development, flood mitigation, disaster preparedness training, broadband, water and sewer projects, environmental planning, transportation planning, public transit, affordable housing, recreational facilities, and bicycle and pedestrian planning. She explained that for every \$1 the CSPDC receives in local dues, it has leveraged approximately \$61 in state and federal funds over the last four years. Ms. Riedesel noted that over the past four fiscal years, CSPDC efforts have brought in more than \$51 million in new investments to the region.

Treasurer's Report and FY21 Budget Revision

Vice Chairperson Dull presented for consideration the Treasurer's Report and FY21 Budget Revision (attached to file minutes). Mr. Short gave a brief review on the Treasurer's Report and FY21 Budget Revision. He noted that the FY21 Revised Budget included impacts of staff turnover, lower than anticipated administrative costs, and several new awards and expanded programs. Mr. Fitzgerald moved, seconded by Mr. Hirschmann, to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. Fitzgerald moved, seconded by Mr. Wells, to approve the FY21 Budget Revision. Motion was carried by unanimous vote.

GO Virginia Region 8 Update

Mr. Short, GO Virginia Region 8 Council member, gave an update on GO Virginia. He reported that to date, 11 projects totaling \$1.5 million in GO Virginia funds have been approved and funded by the Region 8 Council. Mr. Short reported that the State GO Virginia Board met and deferred the application for Region 8's Site Enhancement Project that requested funds to conduct site assessments of 10 properties in the region. He stated that the application is being revised and will be resubmitted for consideration at the State's GO Virginia Board meeting in March 2021. A question was raised and responded to regarding why the application was deferred. Mr. Short reported that every two years, GO Virginia regions are required to update their Economic Growth and Diversification Plans. He stated that the Plan update is due August 2021. Mr. Short noted that the next meeting of the Region 8 Council is scheduled for January 26, 2021.

Recognition of Outgoing Commissioner and Introduction of New Staff

Vice Chairperson Dull recognized Mr. Brent Trumbo, Rockingham County's representative for his outstanding leadership and notable service to the Planning District Commission and to the people of the District, shown during his term as Commissioner. Ms. Riedesel introduced Nathan Garrison, new CSPDC Regional Planner.

Consideration of FY20 Audit Report

Vice Chairperson Dull welcomed and introduced Ms. Megan Argenbright, CPA, Brown Edwards and Company, LLP, who presented the CSPDC Audit Report for the year ended June 30, 2020. Ms. Argenbright gave a brief review on the Audit Report, noting that the audit includes an unmodified clean opinion. She stated that adequate controls and procedures were in place and no management letter was needed. Mr. Fitzgerald moved, seconded by Mr. Lewis, to accept the CSPDC FY20 Audit Report as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Purchase of Lewis Street Transit Hub (BAF #20-21)

Vice Chairperson Dull presented for consideration Purchase of Lewis Street Transit Hub. She noted that the Executive Committee had reviewed this item at their December 7, 2020, meeting and unanimously agreed to recommend that the Full Commission enter into a purchase agreement with the American Shakespeare Center for the purchase of the Lewis Street Transit Hub property for \$185,000. Ms. Riedesel explained that the CSPDC/BRITE has an opportunity to purchase the two-acre property located at 240 North Lewis Street in downtown Staunton, currently owned by the American Shakespeare Center (ASC) for \$185,000. She stated that the property is currently leased by the City of Staunton as a parking lot, and has served as the location of the BRITE Transit Hub since the CSPDC assumed responsibility for the transit service in 2014. She stated that the property is critical to the functioning of the BRITE bus system. Ms. Riedesel stated that the City of Staunton has confirmed that they will continue to lease the portion of the property that is used for public parking, with those lease payments directed to the CSPDC. She noted that routine maintenance such as snow removal, trash pickup, and utilities will continue to be provided by the City of Staunton at no cost to CSPDC/BRITE, and that a contract to that effect will be provided.

Ms. Gourley provided background in the purchase of the property, noting that the Lewis Street Hub is essential to public transportation service delivery providing a safe and secure location where four buses and the Downtown Trolley meet each hour. She stated that the two bus shelters on the lot afford waiting riders weather protection and the off-street location and sidewalk connections allow riders safe access to the buses, and provides Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility. Ms. Gourley noted that the Hub anchors the 250 Connector Route on the western end, the Blue Ridge Community College Shuttle Route on the southern end, and the Staunton bus routes. She stated that prior to the pandemic, passenger counts confirmed that 2,286 riders accessed or departed a bus at this location during a one-week period. Ms. Gourley noted that another location has not been found that is nearly as optimal as the Lewis Street Hub. Mr. Bowman briefed the Commission on the details relative to the contract and the process of purchasing the property.

On behalf of Rockingham County, Ms. Cooper stated that while the County supports the purchase of this property as an integral part of the BRITE transit system, the County does not think that the PDC should be in the business of operating a bus program. She noted that the County feels that the goal should continue to be, as initially established, an interim solution where this would eventually become a part of either Staunton, Augusta or Waynesboro, or some entity formed by them as an authority. Discussion ensued regarding future expansion plans, zoning and other opportunities such as affordable housing for use of the space. Mr. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Schofield, to authorize the CSPDC to enter into a purchase agreement to American Shakespeare Center (ASC) for the purchase of the Lewis Street Transit Hub property for \$185,000. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard

Vice Chairperson Dull presented COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard. Ms. Blanchard reviewed the COVID-19 Recovery Dashboard, noting that the Dashboard tracks the impacts of COVID-19 and recovery efforts across the Central Shenandoah Valley Region. She stated that the graphs feature data on localities' unemployment rates, unemployment benefit claims, COVID-19 cases, and tax revenues. Ms. Blanchard noted that the CSPDC began recording economic and health statistics in March 2020

and will continue through 2021. She stated that the CSPDC's recovery and resiliency plans, studies, and resources are supported by funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Broadband in the Region

Vice Chairperson Dull presented Broadband in the Region. Ms. Pam Carter, Augusta County, and Mr. Chris Slaydon, Rockbridge County, each gave a brief summary of how their respective localities were utilizing their CARES Act Relief funding for broadband projects. Ms. Carter reported on three broadband projects in Augusta County – two from MGW and Lingo Networks and one from New Hope Telephone Cooperative. She stated that the Swoope Tower Fixed Wireless Project will provide broadband service for 310 households in Swoope. Ms. Carter noted that the three projects totaled approximately \$900,000. Mr. Slaydon reported on broadband projects in Rockbridge County, noting that the County will be able to expand its broadband thanks to the CARES Act funds. He stated that Rockbridge County, the Rockbridge Area Network Authority (RANA), and BARC Connects worked to identify projects that could be completed with the time constraints set forward. Mr. Slaydon stated that the County had been awarded the BARC Connects portion of the project, totaling \$770,000.

Ms. Hunter reported on the Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI) broadband project with co-applicant BARC Electric Co-op for \$2.2 million that will provide broadband infrastructure in Rockbridge County. She stated that the VATI project will provide high speed internet to 492 residents and businesses in Rockbridge County and construction has already started in the Glasgow area. Ms. Hunter also reported on the BARC Electric Cooperative grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER Initiative program for approximately \$1 million. She stated that the funding will be used to provide broadband services to 301 households and businesses in and around the Town of Goshen, and construction is scheduled to begin early in 2021. Ms. Hunter stated that the CSPDC is providing administrative services to both grants.

Project Impact Calendars

Vice Chairperson Dull presented the Project Impact Calendars. Ms. Joyce gave a review on the Shenandoah Valley Project Impact Calendars for 2021, noting that this is the 12th such calendar. She stated that the calendar contains preparedness and mitigation information about many types of severe weather, emergencies and disasters. Ms. Joyce noted that the calendars have been distributed throughout the region including local government offices, various public organizations, and libraries.

Commonwealth Intergovernmental Review Process (CIRP)

Vice Chairperson Dull presented for consideration Commonwealth Intergovernmental Review Process (CIRPs). Mr. Fitzgerald moved, seconded by Mr. Hirschmann, to endorse the staff recommendations on agenda items 11A-11C. Motion carried unanimously. They are as follows:

- A. An application submitted by the CSPDC for 2021 ARC funds for \$81,816. Major work elements include planning and technical assistance to the ARC eligible communities of Bath, Highland and Rockbridge counties, cities of Buena Vista and Lexington, and the towns of Goshen, Glasgow and Monterey. Staff recommends endorsement.

- B. An application submitted by the CSPDC for 2021 EDA funds for \$140,000. Major work elements include comprehensive updating of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, maintenance and updating the Regional Data Center, development of various economic development related statistical reports, etc. Staff recommends endorsement.
- C. An application submitted by James Madison University (JMU) for Scaling Pandemic Resilience through Innovation and Technology (SPRINT) Challenge for \$433,532. Funding will be used for a Building Entrepreneurial Access to Resources Program, an entrepreneurial assistance program that will involve virtual entrepreneurship events, a digital hub and resources library for regional entrepreneurship resources, as well as a rigorous collection and detailed analysis of project performance metrics. Staff recommends endorsement.

Consideration of 2021 CSPDC Meeting Calendar (BAF #20-20)

Vice Chairperson Dull presented for consideration the CSPDC 2021 Meeting Schedule (attached to file minutes). Ms. Riedesel presented the meeting schedule for 2021 for the Executive Committee and Full Commission meetings. She noted that the Commission meetings would be held virtually until further notice. Mr. Hirschmann moved, seconded by Mr. Wells, to approve the 2021 CSPDC Meeting Schedule as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Vice Chairperson Dull announced that the next CSPDC meeting would be held on February 1, 2021. There being no further business to come before the Commission, a motion for adjournment was unanimously passed at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rita F. Whitfield
Clerk to the Commission

Approved:

George Hirschmann
CSPDC Secretary