

**Minutes for the GO Virginia Region 2 Council Meeting**  
**April 27, 2017**  
**10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

**Location**

Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center  
1880 Pratt Drive, Suite 2018, Blacksburg, VA

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**Call to Order**

A meeting of the GO Virginia Region 2 Council was held on April 27, 2017 at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center. Chairman Ray Smoot convened the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

**Attendees**

Council members: Dr. Nathaniel Bishop, Kenneth Craig, Sandy Davis, Dr. John Dooley, William Fralin, Don Halliwill, Michael Hamlar, Dr. Brian Hemphill, Doug Juanarena, Dr. Michael Friedlander, Dr. Victor Ianello, Floyd Merryman, Debbie Petrine, John Putney, Dr. Ray Smoot

Staff and Guests in attendance were Dr. John Provo, Dr. Joe Meredith, Marla Akridge, Darlene Burcham, Kevin Byrd, Allison Homer, Jonathan Lanford, Dwayne Yancey, and Duncan Adams

**Introductions**

Dr. Smoot asked for introductions of council members Ms. Debbie Petrine and Kenneth Craig. Ms. Petrine is the Chairman and CEO of Commonwealth Care in Roanoke, is involved with the Health Technology corridor, and is a member of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors. Kenneth Craig is Director of Government Relations for Liberty University. Dr. Smoot also introduced Ms. Marla Akridge, who is the Executive Director of the Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation. It is intended that the State Board will appoint Ms. Akridge to the Regional Council at their next meeting. Dr. Smoot then asked Dr. Joe Meredith, the President of the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (CRC), to provide an overview of the CRC. Dr. Meredith provided this overview, and explained the relevance to Go Virginia.

**Report from State GO Virginia Orientation Conference**

Dr. Smoot and Dr. John Provo provided an update on the State GO Virginia Orientation Conference that occurred in Richmond, VA on Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. At the conference, members learned more about the operational and administrative work of GO Virginia. Dr. Provo emphasized that the state's core missions for the GO Virginia Program are high wage jobs and new investment. There is ongoing discussion about the ability of regions to develop "wins" that can be articulated and proven early to enhance chances of continued political support. William Fralin stated that he was impressed with the level of attendance (350 people) at the orientation. In response to Dr. Provo's statement, Mr. Fralin said that regional "wins" would be difficult to prove early, because success cannot be determined until after implementation.

Dr. Smoot and Dr. Provo also provided the council with key pieces of administrative guidance from the state board, and the council discussed these items. The discussion is summarized below:

- ❖ **Formal and informal meetings "Rule of Three":** If there is a discussion of GO Virginia topics involving three or more members of the Council, even in a casual setting, that counts as a formal meeting, and is not allowed unless public notice has been given in advance.
  - To avoid potential issues, it is advised that:

- Any exchanges or presentations on GO Virginia should be mediated by staff (VT OED), to avoid “formal meeting” issues for council members.
- Only two members of the Council should participate in briefings or meetings about GO Virginia topics outside of Council meetings.
- If there are unrelated meetings where more than two GO Virginia regional council members are in attendance, those members should avoid GO Virginia topics.
- Council members should be careful with email correspondence, and avoid inadvertently causing issues by clicking the “reply all” button, which would constitute an email discussion with more than two members.
- Dr. Dooley asked about meetings that include two members of the regional council and one member of the state board (for a total of three). Dr. Provo will follow up with an answer.
- ❖ **Public record:** Any discussion involving at least three members of this council pertaining to GO Virginia, including email exchanges, text messages, or discussions, are public record. All meeting minutes will be public and posted online.
- ❖ **Closed meetings:** There are special exceptions for types of work (such as project proposals) that may be conducted in closed meetings.
- ❖ **Electronic participation:** Each council member is permitted to participate in meetings electronically a limited number of times. There are exceptions to electronic participation rules for people who must travel over 60 miles to participate in person.
- ❖ **Conflict of interest:** The council is bound by conflict of interest laws. The state will be providing full guidance soon. Disclosure forms will be required, and if any member has a financial or business interest that relates to the work of the council, that interest must be disclosed. In cases where conflicts of interest exist, the council members with those conflicts will be recused from the discussion at hand.
  - Mr. Craig asked if the conflict of interest rules apply to personal interest or organizational interest. Dr. Smoot replied that additional guidance would be needed. Dr. Provo stated that it seems intuitive that there would be a difference between personal and organizational interest. Ms. Petrine mentioned that an online conflict of interest training is available.

### **Review and Discussion of GO Virginia Region 2 Work Plan**

Dr. Smoot introduced the GO Virginia Region 2 Work Plan, which is the most immediate matter before the council, and must be approved at the state level.

### **Topical Working Groups**

Dr. Provo presented the draft work plan, which includes the formation of four topical working groups. These working groups will assist the council in connecting the data to the “ground truth” in the regions, and will stimulate interest and awareness in the GO Virginia program.

The four topical working groups are as follows (detailed descriptions can be found in the meeting handouts):

- 1) **Skilled talent at all levels**
- 2) **Technology innovations for targeted industry clusters**
- 3) **Development of unique sites and buildings**
- 4) **Capital access and business mentorship**

### **Next Steps for Working Groups and Plan Development**

Dr. Provo described next steps for the working groups, which are as follows:

- ❖ **Recruitment:** VT OED will send out an electronic call for expressions of interest in the four working groups. Participants will be persons who have been engaged at the local or sub regional level in these topics. Persons nominated but not appointed for this council will receive this notice. Council members and regional partners may help with recruitment of participants.
- ❖ **Working Groups:** VT OED will facilitate the working groups throughout the summer. In each group, staff will work to create an activity matrix, detailing project types, champions, and deliverables. Two council members may participate in each working group, to avoid the “rule of three.” If three or more council members wish to participate, public notice can be issued in advance.
- ❖ **Plan Development and Delivery:** With the results of the working groups, the regional council will develop the regional plan. The final deadline for plan delivery has yet to be confirmed, but the council should aim for completion by late July.
- ❖ **Solicitation of Proposals:** Once the plan is submitted, staff and the council will be composing a solicitation for proposals for projects that aim to achieve the goals of the plan. Staff would appreciate feedback on elements the council would like to see in this solicitation.

#### Discussion

Dr. Smoot discussed the state’s focus on workforce development, higher wage employment, and the topic of job clusters. Dr. Provo reminded the group that VT OED has “taken a first run” at identifying these clusters, and that staff presented data relevant to this in the snapshot presentation at the last meeting.

Mr. Fralin commented that he believes the council should first have a finalized budget from the state, and confirmed a contract with VT OED. He emphasized also the importance of the council’s coordination with the workforce organizations already in place. He would like to see the working groups achieve concrete numerical goals by the end of the summer, to guide the RFPs for projects. Dr. Provo clarified that the “work plan” in the agenda will not be the full work plan, but is instead meant to be a rich outreach plan, connecting the dots between our work and the community.

Dr. Friedlander stated that he would like to see an inventory of trainers (community colleges and universities), and what their goals are. Some universities may not be focused on local workforce development.

Dr. Dooley stated that there are great regional plans in existence already that can help guide the Go Virginia regional plan. Dr. Provo reminded the group that in the presentation at the last meeting, VT OED provided a compilation of “very fresh” regional plans, so some of this inventory has already been completed, and there exist solid resources to build upon.

John Putney added that we should also pay attention to bringing in investment from out of the state, and have that aspect on the council’s minds throughout.

#### **Administrative Updates (Budget, By-laws, and Other)**

##### Approval of Minutes

Dr. Smoot called for discussion of the previous meeting’s minutes. Dr. Dooley moved for approval. Don Halliwill seconded. Council members voted for approval.

##### Coverage of Initial Operation Costs

Dr. Smoot informed the council that the state would be providing \$5,000 to each regional council for initial administrative operation costs, to cover what the council has already been doing since March. Expenses

incurred by members of the regional council in council business are reimbursable in accordance with state policies. Travel is governed by state reimbursement regulations. Dr. Provo's office will be the point of contact for any questions. VT OED received a contract template that will allow for reimbursements; that form is currently in legal review at Virginia Tech.

#### Contract Negotiation with VT OED

Dr. Smoot reminded the council that the council authorized the Chair and Vice Chair to enter into contract negotiations with VT OED to conduct support work for this council. It is critical that there is quorum at the next regional meeting in May, because the budget will need to be approved by the state GO Virginia board in their June meeting. Mr. Craig asked if the \$400,000 is part of that contract. Dr. Provo responded that the state subdivided the budget for some groups into planning support funds, financial funds, and research support funds. VT OED is prepared to offer all three of those services to the council, to provide a simple, one contract approach.

#### Guidance on Project Approvals

Mr. Fralin asked if there is a "match" requirement for the planning money provided. Dr. Provo responded that in Year 1 there is not, but in Year 2, there may be.

Dr. Ianello asked if the regional council has the authority to approve projects, or if the state holds that authority. Dr. Provo stated that the planned guidance at the state level will soon be finalized, but the group's actions align with the state guidelines so far. Dr. Dooley added that the council needs to be intentional, and should select projects that advance the goals established by the working groups. Dr. Provo said that the state wants this to be a data driven process, so Dr. Dooley's point is well taken.

#### Changes to Bylaws

Dr. Smoot suggested two changes to the bylaws:

- 1) **Committee Powers:** Rather than stating that committees only have powers designated to them, Dr. Smoot suggested that the bylaws state simply that *"committees are advisory to the council,"* and therefore cannot take action by themselves.
- 2) **Role of the Executive Committee:** Dr. Smoot suggested that the Executive Committee be authorized to *"act on behalf of the board on all matters when time is of the essence when quorum is not feasible, and on administrative and operational matters."*
  - a. In response to concerns about expanded powers, Dr. Smoot explained that he certainly does not want the Executive Committee operating on its own. He does not see the Executive Committee being used for anything other than situations where time is of the essence, or on matters that are too small to convene 29 people.
  - b. Currently the Executive Committee has five members. Dr. Dooley proposed six members of the Executive Committee, and a quorum of four.

Dr. Provo read the revised proposed amendments as follows: ***"Committees are advisory to the council," and "The executive committee may act for the board in matters when time is of the essence and it is not feasible to obtain quorum of the full board, and on operational and administrative matters, and on other duties assigned by the council. The Executive Committee will promptly notify the full board on the Committees' actions. The Executive Committee shall be composed of six members, and quorum for the Executive Committee shall be reached with four members.***

Mr. Halliwill made a motion for approval. Dr. Ianello seconded. The Board approved the amendments unanimously.

### **Next Steps and Actions for Council Members**

Dr. Smoot and Dr. Provo described the next steps for the Regional Council, which are as follows:

- ❖ **May 22<sup>nd</sup>** 1:00, Regional Council Meeting, Lynchburg
- ❖ **June 29<sup>th</sup>** Time TBD, Regional Council Meeting, NRV Business Center in Fairlawn
- ❖ **July 25<sup>th</sup>** Time TBD, Regional Council Meeting, Roanoke Higher Education Center

Official invitations to these meetings will be sent out as soon as possible. The May and July meetings are particularly important for quorum, because they will involve critical approvals of the budget and contracts. There will be options for electronic participation.

- ❖ VT OED will send out calls for expressions of interest for the four working groups.

### **Council Discussion**

Dr. Smoot announced that he has received resolutions from the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors, Clifton Forge, and Iron Gate for area representation on the regional councils. The state board is responsible for appointments to this regional body and Marla Akridge will be recommended to the state board. The council members had no further discussion on this matter.

### **Public Comment**

Dr. Smoot opened the meeting for public comment. Mr. Jonathan Lanford, County Administrator for Alleghany County thanked the council for the opportunity to attend the meeting, and invited visitors to the Alleghany Highlands. Ms. Darlene Burcham, Town Manager for the Town of Clifton Forge stated that she was interested in the Council's comments about transportation. She hoped that the Council would be anti-political, but in the spirit of economic development, would go on the record in opposition to the President's agenda to eliminate the Amtrak service in the region, because passenger rail is a critical element in the economic development for this area. Ms. Burcham also emphasized the importance of targeted and effective workforce development, and attention to job openings from retirements.

### **Adjournment**

Dr. Smoot adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am.

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