

GO Virginia Region 2 Council
Meeting Minutes
July 25, 2017 10:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Location Roanoke Higher Education Center Room 715
108 North Jefferson Street
Roanoke, VA 24016

Council Members in Attendance: Marla Akridge, Dr. N.L. Bishop, Dr. John Capps, Kenneth Craig, Dr. John Dooley, William Fralin, Dr. Michael Friedlander, Dr. Victor Iannello, Doug Juanarena, Debbie Petrine, John Putney, Dr. Ray Smoot, E.W. Tibbs, Shannon Valentine, John Williamson

Council Members in Attendance via Conference Call: Mike Hamlar

Council Members Not in Attendance: Dr. Eddie Amos, Ab Boxley, Patrick Collignon, Beverly Dalton, Sandy Davis, Michael Fleming, Watt Foster, Don Halliwill, Dr. Brian Hemphill, Terry Jamerson, Floyd Merryman

Others in Attendance: Darlene Burcham, Beth Doughty, Vicki Gardner, Jake Gilmer, Rebekah Gunn, Devon Johnson, Jill Loope, Dr. John Provo, Morgan Remeo, Wayne Strickland, Dr. Scott Tate, Joyce Waugh, Sheri Winesad, Dwane Yancey

I. Call to Order

- a. Chairman Smoot convened the meeting of the GO Virginia Region 2 Council on July 25, 2017 at the Roanoke Higher Education Center at 10:00 a.m.

II. Presentation – Roanoke-Allegheny Region

- a. Wayne Strickland of the Roanoke-Allegheny Regional Commission, Jake Gilmer of Virginia Blue Ridge Works (formerly the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board), and Beth Doughty of the Roanoke Regional Partnership presented to the council
- b. Mr. Strickland presented a brief overview of the Roanoke-Allegheny Regional Commission, including an introduction to population demographics, migration patterns, and educational attainment in the Roanoke-Allegheny region.
- c. Mr. Gilmer of Virginia Blue Ridge Works (formerly the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board) presented on workforce trends in the Roanoke-Allegheny region.
- d. Ms. Doughty presented a summary of the Roanoke Regional Partnership, covering talent attraction, venture capital investment, livability, and the availability of real estate sites.

- e. Discussion – In response to Ms. Doughty’s discussion of venture capital investment in Roanoke, Mr. Juanarena asked that the council remember Intrexon and New River Pharmaceuticals, which raised significant venture capital funds.

Mr. Williamson asked for further clarification on Ms. Doughty’s presentation regarding attraction of millennials to the Roanoke region. Mr. Strickland responded by clarifying that while the City of Roanoke has attracted millennials, the surrounding region has not been as successful. Council members discussed the importance of attracting and retaining young people to the area.

Mr. Williamson then asked for more clarification on unemployment statistics, requesting a measure of the number of underemployed workers. Ms. Doughty noted that while it’s hard to quantify “underemployment,” there are measures available that she considers in her work.

In reference to Ms. Doughty’s discussion of talent attraction, Dr. Dooley asked for clarification as to the exact way talent attraction programs work. Ms. Doughty responded that some programs focus on improving quality of life and others employ a direct recruitment strategy.

Ms. Valentine asked Mr. Gilmer about the Virginia Blue Ridge Works effort to establish a Governor’s School.

III. Discussion of GO Virginia Funding Streams

- a. The Council moved into a discussion of the various funding streams to support GO Virginia programs. Dr. Provo summarized a “Funding Program Areas” document, explaining the difference between GO Virginia per capita money, state competitive grants, and the collaborative jobs act.

IV. Update on GO Virginia Working Groups

- a. Mr. Putney explained that the Unique Sites and Buildings group will meet Thursday and has done follow up interviews.
- b. Dr. Iannello noted that the Capital Access group will meet Friday.
- c. Mr. Juanarena noted that the Technology group will meet today (July 25) and is focused on the technology clusters that have created the most high-paying jobs in our region in the past several decades.
- d. Dr. Capps noted that the Skilled Talent group will meet Monday and the themes discussed in Mr. Gilmer’s workforce development presentation are particularly relevant to his group.

V. Update on Growth and Diversification Plan

- a. Dr. Smoot requested that Dr. Provo provide an overview of work on the Growth and Diversification Plan and Dr. Provo deferred to Dr. Tate to discuss the “Growth and Diversification Plan Outline and Next Steps” document. Dr. Tate explained the document, which outlines Council staff’s plan for developing the Growth and Diversification plan.
- b. Dr. Smoot clarified that the plan will be developed by the Council and Council staff, then sent to Richmond for initial review.
- c. Discussion-- Dr. Iannello asked if there is a monitoring agency to oversee execution of the plan and Dr. Provo responded that council staff will monitor and report.

Mr. Williamson asked for clarification on the thirteen manufacturing clusters referenced in the plan document; Dr. Tate and Dr. Provo responded by noting that there are only 3-4 clusters with multiple connected parts. Mr. Fralin asked about the way the state will score our plan according to a points system and was directed to the “Economic Growth and Diversification Plan Evaluation Criteria” document in the board packet.

VI. Administrative Updates

- a. Dr. Smoot asked that the representatives of each region converse among themselves and nominate a recommendation to fill each of the two vacant council seats to discuss at the next meeting. Dr. Smoot noted that the regional council will make a recommendation to the state GOVA board for each of the vacancies on the regional council.
- b. Dr. Smoot raised the idea of changing the date of the next meeting because it conflicts with the solar eclipse.

VII. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Dr. Smoot directed the council to the remaining agenda items, noting the need to approve four sets of meeting minutes, from the June 29 council meeting, the May 22 council meeting, the June 23 New River Valley meeting of interest, and the June 16 working group breakout meeting.
- b. Ms. Valentine asked for clarification on the “connectedness study” mentioned on page 2 of the May 22 meeting notes.
- c. Mr. Williamson moved that the Council approve the group of minutes. Ms. Petrine seconded the motion. All those present were in favor and none were opposed.

VIII. Public Comment

- a. Dr. Smoot called for comments from the audience

- b. Ms. Burcham noted that the availability of housing added to Roanoke's ability to attract and retain millennials and emphasized the importance of diversified housing options. She also noted that while we should be concerned about attracting people to the region, we should also be concerned about the people living here, who might have limited access to transportation. Finally, she noted that we need to do a good job marketing our workforce training programs and ensuring that people know they don't need to go to college to be successful.
- c. Ms. Waugh noted a recent piece of legislation that expanded the ability of high schools to promote career technology classes. In reference to the discussion of Asheville, Ms. Waugh noted that it's more the perception of coolness that draws young people, and it remains a challenge to get young people to see the Roanoke region in that way.
- d. Ms. Gardner commented that this region does have amenities to offer, though when businesses want to move here, they often find there are not enough workers and move elsewhere. She referenced Franklin County High School's technical education program, which has had to turn interested students away because it is not big enough to accommodate them, and she noted the need to help students realize there are career path options besides college.

IX. Adjournment

- a. Dr. Smoot reiterated the uncertainty about the location and time of the next council meeting, scheduled for August 21 and noted that council staff will be in touch
- b. Meeting Adjourned at 12 noon