

March 8, 2016

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2016, at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

Pattie Cooper-Jones

Calvin L. Gray

Odessa H. Pride

Howard F. Simpson

C. Robert Timmons, Jr.

Jerry R. Townsend

Jim R. Wilck

Absent: Robert M. Jones

Also present: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; Mary Hickman, Executive Director, Commonwealth Regional Council; Melody Foster, Regional Planner, Commonwealth Regional Council; Andre Gilliam, Community Development Planner, Commonwealth Regional Council; Todd Fortune, Community Development Planner, CRC; and David Wingold, Vice-Chairman, Commonwealth Regional Council.

Chairman Simpson called the special meeting to order, stating its purpose was for discussion with the Commonwealth Regional Council.

Mr. David Wingold, Vice-Chairman of the Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC), introduced himself and then turned the floor over to Mary Hickman, Executive Director.

Ms. Hickman stated the purpose of the meeting was to discuss member's needs from the CRC. She presented a brief history of the CRC and reviewed Prince Edward County's requests for services in the past, to include grant writing, project administration, technical assistance, among other services. She said in July, the CRC discussed how they could be of greater value to its members. She and Mr. Wingold requested comments from the Board of Supervisors for improvement and services.

Supervisor Jones entered the meeting at this time.

Supervisor Timmons said the CRC is a regional planning district for this region; he said Prince Edward County is also a member of the Virginia Growth Alliance (VGA) which is another group that regionalizes the area development. He asked if the CRC and VGA work together, and in what aspect.

Ms. Hickman stated that in order to be able to market the region, the region must have the necessary assets, such as housing, infrastructure, broadband, and roads. The two organizations complement each other. One is a planning organization; one is marketing. Planning must be done to identify the needs and make it real in order for the marketing to be fulfilled. She said they are working to determine any deficiencies in the area which are keeping it from being marketable.

Ms. Hickman then stated the CRC and the VGA worked together and applied for tech assistance from the Virginia Tech Office of Economic Development. Two regional meetings were held and the CRC and VGA worked collectively to create the Regional Economic Development Strategy, which only included a portion of the CRC and VGA region. Currently they are in the process of updating the plan and bringing into the fold the Counties of Amelia, Prince Edward and Buckingham. Cumberland is being brought in as part of Planning District 14.

Supervisor Wilck questioned Cumberland and Nottoway Counties' non-participation in the CRC. Ms. Hickman gave a brief history, stating that in 2004, the Piedmont Planning District Commission and the Virginia Heartlands joined together to form the CRC. At that time Nottoway chose not to come into the organization, stating differences of opinion. At that time, the *Code of Virginia* allowed higher education entities to be members and Longwood University and Hampden-Sydney became charter members. In 2009, Hampden-Sydney College dropped out and in 2010, Longwood University dropped out due to financial constraints. Mr. Bartlett stated the previous organization had the designation of Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy; they reorganized but did not constitute the Board that was required to continue that designation. In order to get EDA grants, the locality has to be a CEDS designated organization and by not choosing to continue, they gave up the right to apply for these grants such as was used for the water line from the water tower into the Industrial Park. It would be worthwhile to seek and get that designation back. Prince Edward County qualifies as it is a low income area; that designation would be beneficial to the entire region. Some discussion followed.

Ms. Hickman stated it is a two-process step for designation. The first is that the region must have the comprehensive economic development strategy on the analysis of the region and the plan and identification of priorities of how you want to achieve your goal. She stated it is aimed at job creation on the planning side. Once that CEDS is approved, it goes to the EDA and you would be designated as an EDD, an Economic Development District. This opens the door for you, the members, to have access to Economic Development Administration funding.

Mr. Bartlett stated the funds can be used to provide pad ready sites in the Industrial Park, access roads and shell buildings.

Ms. Hickman stated that this is to strategize and prepare for future job creation. She stated the governing board must be reflective of the community and the region; after the designation, there is a working board which is all-inclusive. Ms. Hickman added the requirements have changed but they are still very similar; the changes allow a bit more flexibility.

Ms. Hickman stated that in the past, the CRC would provide services to all localities in the planning district regardless of the locality being a member of the CRC or not. The governing Board of the CRC changed that policy so only members will receive priority and services. The CRC sets the Virginia Community Development Block Grant priorities for the region. This helps localities obtain points for grants. The CRC will not consider any priorities for non-members.

Discussion on fees and charges followed.

Supervisor Gray questioned policy if several member counties applied for the same grant, how the CRC evaluates the criteria. Ms. Hickman stated the Council doesn't have the authority to determine that; it encourages regionalism and would work with the three counties to bring them together.

Ms. Hickman said the CRC brings people in, holds regional discussions to gather information and bring the stakeholders together through regional work sessions and meetings, encouraging the dialogue.

Supervisor Townsend asked if regional transportation has been discussed. Ms. Melody Foster stated money has been received from VDOT Rural Transportation Funds annually; members from each locality sit on a Technical Committee and work on transportation issues. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Gray questioned discussion regarding broadband. Ms. Hickman stated it will be addressed at their meeting next month. Ms. Foster stated some planning programs have been accomplished

for Amelia, Charlotte and Lunenburg Counties in the past. The counties went in several directions. Ms. Hickman stated there is a Telecommunications Planning Grant through Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development; this assesses the service that exists and where there may be deficiencies. The final product is a plan of action with recommendations for steps for the locality to take.

Ms. Hickman thanked the Board of Supervisors for its continued support and cooperation.

On motion of Supervisor Timmons, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones, and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	Pattie Cooper-Jones	Nay: None
	Calvin L. Gray	
	Robert M. Jones	
	Odessa H. Pride	
	Howard F. Simpson	
	C. Robert Timmons, Jr.	
	Jerry R. Townsend	
	Jim R. Wilck	

the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.