



Glenn Youngkin  
Governor

Caren Merrick  
Secretary of  
Commerce and Trade

# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Bryan W. Horn  
Director

## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Minutes

### Interagency Task Force to Support Economic Development in SWVA

Thursday, September 8, 2022

3:00 - 5:00 PM

SWVA Cultural Center & Marketplace, Abingdon

#### Attendees:

Bryan Horn, DHCD  
Kristen Dahlman, DHCD  
Andrew Malloy, DHCD  
Vince Barnett, VEDP  
Lindsay Barker, VEDP  
Will Clear, Virginia Energy  
Steve Galyean, VATC  
Becky Naye, VTC  
Kim Davis, Friends of SWVA  
Laura Blevins, Sen. Kaine's Office  
Delegate Will Wampler  
Jeffrey Hurst, DEQ  
Jim Baldwin, VCEDA

Jonathan Belcher, VCEDA  
Joseph Guthrie, VDACS  
Sarah Williams, TRRC  
Delegate Terry Kilgore  
John Kilgore, Scott County Economic  
Development Authority  
Shane Clem, Sen. Warner's Office  
Jake Holmes, Delegate Israel  
O'Quinn's Office  
Scotty Wampler, Cumberland Plateau  
PDC  
John Matthews, Wythe County

(Virtually)

Anthony Reedy, Deputy Secretary of Labor  
Heidi Hertz, Virginia Rural Center

#### 1. Introductions

Chairwoman, Dep. Sec. Reily called the meeting to order, gave opening remarks, and lead the meeting in introductions

#### 2. Public Comments

Robert Kell, New Economy Program Manager, Appalachian Voices

- Thankful for support of Youngkin administration.



- Very important to follow up on the Re-Energize SWVA report. Large amounts of federal funding coming to the region from ARPA and Infrastructure Bill.
- Justice 40 initiative: Federal agencies must flow certain percentage of funds to disadvantaged
- Regular stakeholder engagement is needed of the task force. Essential to win federal funds.
- Recommend the task force build a planning subgroup comprised of community action agencies, workforce development board, advocacy groups, nonprofits.
- Recommended DHCD create a webpage and host community listening sessions in all 7 counties in SWVA.
- Highlighted West Virginia's model creating a matching fund for lower capacity communities
- Recommended task force include county administrators.

### 3. Report on Programs & Discussion

Dep. Sec. Riley introduced four programs under review. Highlighted the importance of bringing state agencies together and breaking the silos in state government.

- Downtown Revitalization Matching Fund Concept
  - Matt Weaver, Associate Director of Community Development, DHCD, presented on a matching fund concept.
  - Scotty Wampler: recommended focusing on incorporated towns, not population.
  - Jim Baldwin: For localities with populations under 2,000, matching fund would be critical. Projects could be any size. Projects go to bid, 2 years later and 3 bid cycles
  - Talent Attraction Program
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  - Sara Williams, SW Regional Director, TRRC, presented on the Talent Attraction Program.
  - In its 4<sup>th</sup> year, nearly 350 individuals received funding.
  - Common occupations include: special edu teachers, science teachers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists.
  - Does not include doctors, nurses: covered by VDH
  - Main reasons people didn't reapply are loans paid off or left the area.



- Based on applications this year, not a lot of interest from students with engineering & science degrees

### *Questions*

- There will still be a need after federal loan forgiveness? -Yes, recent graduates will be seeking aid.
- How easy is it to add or remove occupations from the list? -Education committee updates list. Original list came from surveyed school districts as hardest to fill positions.
- How do you connect with businesses in the region? -Computer science is hard to fill.
- How do you market this? -Through universities, student initiated.
- Keeping track of students? New or from the region? -Did outreach within a reasonable radius to other universities.
- How to get the word out, increase participation in the program? - Engagement with businesses in the community, more outreach with universities.
- Southwest Virginia Energy Park aka “Energy Lab”
  - Will Clear, Dep. Director, Virginia Energy, presented on the SWVA Energy Park.
  - Delegate Kilgore carried legislation to get the Research & Development authority off the ground.
  - SWVA’s two main industries are energy and ag.
  - Recently named the Energy DELTA (Discovery, Education, Learning & Technology Accelerator) Lab.
  - Modeled after a project in Germany using reclaimed mine land.
  - Keys to project include: commercialization, EDA, Go Virginia investment, Project Oasis: mine water as cooling for data centers, Project Energizer: pump storage hydro storage facility
  - Go Virginia: lab concept, best way to set up the lab, outside traditional academic research institute setting.
  - Next steps include acquiring resources and getting access to properties. Coal fields or brownfields to reclaim and deploy these assets
  - Ownership of property is difficult to manage
  - Deploying federal funding to get access to the projects
- Energy Storage and Electrification Manufacturing Project
  - Kristen Dahlman, DHCD, presented on GO Virginia region 1’s energy storage and electrification manufacturing project.
  - Helps legacy companies take advantage of new emerging industries



- Jonathan Belcher spoke to how region is attracting jobs for battery technologies and helping existing companies to move to electrical and battery. Spoke with a dozen companies about the efforts.
- Recruiting of new companies in battery sector is ongoing

## **5. Other Initiatives for Interagency Task Force Consideration**

### **6. Group Exercise**

Task Force members participated in a brainstorming exercise to identify the top challenges for economic development in SWVA. Most common responses included workforce, infrastructure, sites/buildings, and housing.

