

1 VIRGINIA TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION
2 701 East Franklin Street, Suite 501
3 Richmond, Virginia 23219
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7 FULL COMMISSION MEETING
8 Thursday, October 12, 2023
9 11:34 a.m.

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14 The Inn at Blackstone
15 707 4th Street
16 Blackstone, Virginia
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24 FULL COMMISSION MEETING
25 October 12, 2023

1 APPEARANCES:
2 Senator Frank Ruff, Jr., Chair
3 Delegate James W. Morefield
4 Delegate Leslie Adams
5 Secretary Steve Cummings
6 Joel Cunningham, Jr.
7 Amanda Cox
8 Gretchan Clark
9 Lee Everett
10 Watt Foster, Jr.
11 Richard Hite, Jr.
12 Jay Jennings
13 Delegate Terry Kilgore
14 Secretary Matthew Lohr
15 Secretary Caren Merrick
16 Dale Moore
17 William Pace
18 Sandy Ratliff
19 Walter Shelton
20 Gary Walker
21 Sarah Wilson

22 ABSENT:
23 Edward Blevins (medical)
24 Senator John Edwards
25 Julie Hensley
26 Senator Louise Lucas
27 Delegate Danny Marshall (medical)

28 OTHER STAFF:
29 James Campos Stephen Versen
30 Vicki Humphreys Stephanie Kim
31 Sarah Capps Sara Williams
32 Jerry Silva Jordan Butler
33 Emily Van Pelt Sarah Goodwyn
34 Suzette Patterson Hannah Franke-
35 Ms. Joyce Knight

36 COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION
37 Elizabeth Myers

38 Full Commission
39 October 12, 2024

1 SENATOR RUFF: Call the roll.

2 MR. CAMPOS: Senator Frank Ruff.

3 SENATOR RUFF: Here.

4 MR. CAMPOS: (Inaudible.) (No response.)

5 DELEGATE Will Morefield.

6 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Here.

7 MR. CAMPOS: Delegate Leslie Adams.

8 DELEGATE ADAMS: Here.

9 MR. CAMPOS: Edward Blevins. (No
10 response.)

11 Gretchan Clark.

12 MS. CLARK: Here.

13 MR. CAMPOS: Amanda Cox.

14 MS. COX: Here.

15 MR. CAMPOS: Secretary Steve Cummings.

16 SECRETARY CUMMINGS: Here.

17 MR. CAMPOS: Joel Cunningham.

18 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Here.

19 MR. CAMPOS: Senator John Edwards. (No
20 response.)

21 Randy Everett.

22 MR. EVERETT: Here.

23 MR. CAMPOS: Wyatt Foster. (No response.)

24 Julie Hensley. (No response.)

25 Richard Hite, Jr.

1 MR. HITE: Here.

2 MR. CAMPOS: Jay Jennings.

3 MR. JENNINGS: Here.

4 MR. CAMPOS: Delegate Terry Kilgore.

5 DELEGATE KILGORE: Here.

6 MR. CAMPOS: Secretary Matt Lohr.

7 SECRETARY LOHR:

8 ~~MR~~reCAMPOS: Senator Louise Lucas. (No
9 response.)

10 Delegate Danny Marshall. (No response.)

11 Secretary Caren Merrick.

12 SECRETARY MERRICK: Here.

13 MR. CAMPOS: Senator Joe Morrissey. (No
14 response.)

15 William Pace.

16 MR. PACE: Here.

17 MR. CAMPOS: Sandy Ratliff.

18 MS. RATLIFF: Here.

19 MR. CAMPOS: Walter Shelton.

20 MR. SHELTON: Here.

21 MR. CAMPOS: Gary Walker.

22 MR. WALKER: Here.

23 MR. CAMPOS: Delegate Will Wampler. (No
24 response.)

25 Sarah Wilson.

1 MS. WILSON: Here.

2 MR. CAMPOS: Chair, we have a forum.

3 SENATOR RUFF: Thank you, James.

4 The first order of business is the
5 approval of the May 18th meeting published on
6 the website.

7 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

8 SENATOR RUFF: Properly moved and seconded.
9 All in favor say aye (Ayes.)

10 Motion moved.

11 Next up is Honorable Caren Merrick, who is
12 Secretary of Commerce and Trade, and she will
13 give a briefing of the Governor's
14 Compete-to-Win.

15 SECRETARY MERRICK: Thank you.

16 Good morning. I want to thank the
17 Commission for its agility and its
18 responsiveness because we've had several deals
19 in the pipeline where I've had calls with
20 Delegate Kilgore to turn around the CEO calls
21 with the Governor. The Governor likes to speak
22 to CEOs who are looking at Virginia and he's a
23 good closer. And so we've done several of
24 those. And the team members of the Commission
25 have also been very responsive so I want to

1 commend them as well.

2 Commerce and Trade. I have the great
3 privilege of overseeing 13 agencies.
4 Everything from housing to tourism. We have
5 two housing agencies, tourism, broadband,
6 Virginia Energy, Virginia Innovation
7 Partnership, Go Virginia, the Virginia Economic
8 Development Partnership. All of these agencies
9 are essential in the tobacco region. We
10 partner very closely in the tobacco industry.

11 I want you to know that I have three main
12 goals in my roll as directed by the Governor,
13 but I would do them because they make good
14 business sense. One of them is to leverage our
15 resources better. There's a lot of
16 duplication. And so what I do is every other
17 week all of the agency heads in Commerce and
18 Trade meet, and we talk together about the
19 projects that we're working on. And I can not
20 number for you the occasions where we found out
21 there was duplication of information
22 overlooked, there was a lack of information
23 sharing. And we had silos and so we're
24 bringing down those silos to better leverage
25 our resources, and you will see much more of

1 that. And it's going to help the tobacco
2 region for us to take a look at the other
3 initiatives that we're doing and (inaudible).
4 It will save us time and save us money, and
5 we'll get better results.

6 We are also looking at our budget right
7 now. We're in our own budget season and our
8 policies season in the government, and we're
9 looking at all the programs that we're doing.
10 Every secretary has been asked by the governor
11 to know our budgets, to be expert on our
12 budgets, to know what every program is, what
13 are its goals, when did it start, is it
14 achieving these goals, do we need this program?
15 Where we can, we will invest more in the
16 industries that are working. What we need to
17 do, though, is to eliminate programs that don't
18 work and reinvest that funding into programs
19 that will work.

20 And so we're doing this with all the
21 secretaries in all of our agencies and we're in
22 the middle of that right now. And Secretary
23 Cummings is here as well as the Secretary of
24 Finance. And it's very important for us to
25 understand what we should be investing in.

1 We know we have some major workforce
2 issues. We know there's a whole new
3 (inaudible) that you all helped us, supported
4 us to form, that's going to consolidate, to my
5 earlier point, where is the duplication of
6 effort and how to better align our resources.
7 So we're doing that. Go Virginia and Virginia
8 Division of Partnership Corporation has been
9 very helpful to us and will continue to be.

10 We are also looking at housing. And we
11 are working with the governor and the chief of
12 the staff and our policy team right this week
13 on some bold housing proposals. We know that
14 we have a shortage of housing, and we have it
15 in the tobacco region as well. And I do
16 wonder, it's not in the charter of the
17 Commission, but I do wonder what role we have
18 to fulfill.

19 One of the agencies within the secretary
20 is called the Virginia Small Business Finance
21 Authority. And I'm wondering how can that
22 authority, which makes loans -- and by the way,
23 we hired a new director and we are unleashing
24 more and more capital to small businesses
25 because this new director who is a former bank

1 CEO in Virginia is now running that agency.
2 And I'd like to explore how this agency, the
3 financial authority, can partner with the
4 Tobacco Commission to see what we could do on
5 the business side.

6 But I'm also curious about the supply
7 chain for housing. Are there smaller
8 businesses in the housing supply chain that we
9 should be looking at how to shore those up.
10 There's so many issues in the workforce
11 housing, and we want to address those. At the
12 very least, we as commissioners, should have a
13 good understanding of what's happening in the
14 workforce housing. That's a key barrier to
15 economic growth in the tobacco region.

16 I will conclude my remarks and my report
17 for now, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

18 SENATOR RUFF: Thank you, Madam Secretary.
19 Any questions? (None.)

20 Hearing none, you did a great job. Thank
21 you.

22 SECRETARY MERRICK: Thank you.

23 SENATOR RUFF: All right. Next is the
24 Executive Committee; and Delegate Morefield,
25 would you make the report?

1 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Yes, sir.

2 MR. VERSEN: There are two people who are present
3 that were mistakenly left off the role, and I
4 wanted to announce they're here.

5 Ms. Sandy Ratliff and [Dale Moore.]

6 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
7 The Executive Committee. Some time ago,
8 and as many of you know, the Commission has
9 been looking at creating a nonprofit branch of
10 the Commission in order to provide us greater
11 flexibility applying for other resources that
12 are potentially available to us. Federal
13 funding, for example.

14 If Director Campos would like to give the
15 Full Commission a brief summary and how that
16 works.

17 MR. CAMPOS: The foundation is --
18 actually, I wish I could claim it all my own
19 but I can not. It was something that would
20 have been talked about in previous
21 administrations but never enacted.

22 As many of you know, my previous position
23 was at the federal government, and I understand
24 the process and the amount of money that flows
25 currently in our environment. And I felt the

1 foundation would be a phenomenal opportunity to
2 access to actually gather and to promote, just
3 awareness of what we've done in the foundation,
4 but also means to acquire these great resources
5 by the federal government. This is a once in a
6 lifetime opportunity, as I mentioned earlier.
7 And it's not always going to be there. It's
8 going to be there for a little longer as we go.
9 But while it's there we thought as a team at
10 the Commission to bring forward a foundation
11 and to do so in good practice and be pragmatic
12 about this and to set it up, and obviously, get
13 approval of the Commission moving forward. But
14 it's vital that we do something like this. It
15 should have been done at the onset but it
16 wasn't. And now we have the opportunity to do
17 so with a very good environment out there with
18 federal dollars.

19 Energy is something that so many of you
20 know that I have a certain passion for. But
21 it's also because it's really on economic
22 stability. And why I mention that is because a
23 lot of the money flowing from the federal
24 government is for energy projects. And it's
25 not just the Department of Energy. It's the

1 Department of Commerce. It's the Treasury. It's the
2 SBA. It's all authorities that have their hands,
3 seems like more and more, in the Department of
4 Defense, for example. So this is a median in which
5 we can go after and capture and really develop a
6 solid foundation and hopefully in cooperation with
7 other initiatives that are going forward at the
8 moment such as the rural (inaudible) something
9 that's worthy of the process right now. But this
10 foundation is meant to be holistic. It's meant to
11 work with all the state agencies that are involved
12 with the Southwest and Southern Virginia region.
13 So it's something that's going to happen. It's
14 going to be, I believe, a great addition to what
15 we're doing. And now it's just the format of how we
16 construct it.

17 Thank you.

18 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I move to create
19 a private nonprofit foundation called the Foundation
20 for the Advancement of Southern and Southwest
21 Virginia to help them build a commission to lead to
22 alternative funding for its citizens, provide start-
23 up funds of \$100,000 in un-obligated account funds,
24 and delegate authority to the Executive Committee
25

1 to approve final documents on appointing a
2 commission moving forward.

3
4 (The motion, having been made,
5 was seconded.)

6 SENATOR RUFF: Motion was properly seconded.

7 Are there any questions about what James just
8 went through or about the motion?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is the plan to contract
10 with a grant writer or working with a staff person?
11 How does that work?

12 MR. CAMPOS: So that's correct. So there was
13 a (inaudible) by the Commission to have a grant
14 writer that's going to be working on this, correct.

15 SENATOR RUFF: Any further discussion?
16 (None.) Hearing none, all those in favor say aye.
17 (Ayes.) All opposed? (None.)

18 Thank you.

19 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Mr. Chairman, the Executive
20 Committee, as many of you know, we've been on the
21 search for a deputy director. Andy left to go onto
22 another organization. And the Executive Committee
23 is recommending the hiring of Stephen Versen.
24
25

1 And Mr. Versen, if you would like to
2 introduce yourself.

3 MR. VERSEN: Thank you. This is Stephen
4 Versen. I've had the opportunity to work with
5 many of you all. Most of you know me from 15
6 years I served on the Virginia Department of
7 Agriculture and Human Services under Secretary
8 Lohr where I worked primarily with Agriculture
9 Development Opportunity to create and
10 administer the governor's Agriculture
11 Development Fund. Throughout that time I
12 worked very closely with the Tobacco Commission
13 and really came to a tremendous appreciation
14 for the impact this organization has, the
15 quality and experienced staff this organization
16 has. And when the opportunity to join the
17 Commission came up I could not be happier. In
18 my entire career, 20 plus years, there has been
19 various forms of rural focus, economic and
20 community development, and to have the
21 opportunity to work for an organization that
22 focuses with this tremendous Commission is
23 really everything I've wanted from a career
24 standpoint. So I'm so grateful for the
25 opportunity and look forward to working with

1 the tremendous team here and the Commission helping
2 us with that.

3 Thank you.

4 SENATOR RUFF: Thank you, Stephen. You heard the
5 motion on the hiring. Is there a second?

6 (The Motion was moved and seconded.) SENATOR

7 RUFF: Any further discussion?

8 (None.) Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

9 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

10 All right.

11 Next is the Education Committee, and
12 Gretchan Clark has a presentation.

13 MS. CLARK: Sure.

14 We had an Education Committee meeting
15 yesterday and had some really good discussion
16 about our education grants, and I have some
17 motions to bring forward.

18 SENATOR RUFF: Before you bring the
19 motions, if you would refer to the page.

20 MS. CLARK: Yes. Pages 47. I move that
21 the Commission accept the Education Committee's
22 recommendation to approve \$539,133 for
23 education grants for advanced manufacturing
24 workforce training as described on pages 28
25 through 30 with respect to the following

1 projects: 4176 and 4178 also due to the
2 conditions listed on the above pages of the
3 book.

4 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

5 MR. RUFF: Any questions about any of
6 these items? (None.)

7 Hearing none, all in favor say aye.
8 (Ayes.) Opposed. (None.)

9 Motion carries.

10 MS. CLARK: I move that the Commission
11 accept the Education Committee's recommendation
12 to approve \$820,346 in education grants for
13 Post-Secondary Programs with a focus on STEM-H
14 as described on pages 32 through 36 of the
15 Commission book with respect to the following
16 projects: 4170, 4171, and 4177.

17 Also due to the condition of (inaudible)
18 on the above pages of the Commission book.

19 MR. RUFF: Is there a second?

20 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

21 MR. RUFF: Is there any discussion?
22 (None.) Hearing none, all in favor say aye.
23 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

24 MS. CLARK: I move that the Commission
25 accept the Education Committee's recommendation

1 to approve \$1,121,086 in competitive education
2 grants for workforce training programs as
3 described on pages 37 through 43 in the
4 Commission book with respect to the following
5 projects: 4172, 4173, 4174, 4175 and 4179 all
6 together listed on the above pages.

7 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

8 SENATOR RUFF: Properly moved and
9 seconded. I'm going to ask, the conditions, are
10 the conditions including what's going on in the
11 governor's office with workforce training?

12 MS. CLARK: There's some additional items
13 (inaudible)

14 SENATOR RUFF: Okay.

15 MS. CLARK: Those three motions are in
16 line with Staff recommendations. There's one
17 project in the High School Equivalency Program
18 Grant, 4169, as described on pages 31 to 32 of
19 the Commission book with the Committee
20 recommending funding with one additional
21 condition which is to add the tracking and
22 reporting requirements for individuals who have
23 received a grant.

24 Therefore, I move the Commission to accept
25 the Education Committee's recommendation to

1 approve the grant under 4169 on the condition
2 that that be conditioned as described by Staff
3 on page 32 of the Commission book; also present
4 a plan for tracking the employment status and
5 the approximate salaries for individuals
6 participating in the program to share with the
7 Commission, and that this reporting is done on
8 a quarterly basis.

9 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

10 SENATOR RUFF: And we will pass those as a
11 group unless there's any questions. (None.)

12 Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

13 (Ayes.) All opposed? (None.)

14 MS. CLARK: All right. On the Pilot
15 Accelerator Program I move to rescind the
16 remaining balance of \$969,000 for the 2022
17 Virginia Department of Health State Loan
18 Repayment grant; 3937.

19 SENATOR RUFF: You heard the motion. Is
20 there a second?

21 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

22 SENATOR RUFF: Any further discussion?

23 (None.) Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

24 (Ayes.) All opposed? (None.)

25 Okay.

1 MS. CLARK: And my final recommendation, I
2 move to make an exception to the Talent
3 Accelerated Program funds for Garrett Simpson
4 to be eligible for renewal as the physical
5 therapy program coordinator.

6 SENATOR RUFF: You might want to explain that.

7 MS. CLARK: Sure.

8 So Mr. Simpson came before us yesterday
9 and explained that he is a physical
10 therapist -- and he's actually been mine
11 before. He's great.

12 So now he has moved into a new role where
13 he is teaching students, and he's got about 15
14 students now that he's with and placing them in
15 the community. He's still in a physical
16 therapy role. He's just not practicing
17 physical therapy. So he was awarded...

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 24,000 for the
19 first two years. And then he's asking for a
20 renewal for the additional two years. And
21 technically, as he's not a practicing physical
22 therapist, he wouldn't be eligible so he was
23 requesting an exception for his new role as a
24 physical therapist programmer to be eligible.

25 SENATOR RUFF: We don't normally like to make

1 exceptions, but his situation was that he was
2 not qualified to be an instructor unless he
3 held that degree or title or whatever. Is
4 there a second to pass those?

5 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

6 SENATOR RUFF: Properly moved. Any further
7 discussion? (None.) All in favor say aye.
8 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

9 Thank you. That concludes the Education
10 Committee.

11 We're going to pause the committee
12 reports. We have invited some folks from the
13 poultry industry to come and give some overview
14 of their desires recognizing the development
15 was not quite ready to take any action. But we
16 wanted the Commission to fully understand.

17 In case you haven't read the news in the
18 last year, Tyson's Food made the decision to
19 close their processing plant in Henrico County
20 which part of what was Holiday Farms operation
21 which has mills in Nottoway County and range
22 from I would say Appomattox to Prince George.
23 And a lot of counties are affected by it. And
24 then also a number of chicken houses that sort
25 of left that in a very awkward situation that

1 made investments to produce for Tyson's and
2 without a ready buyer became much more
3 difficult for them to survive farming.

4 So who is going to make the presentation?

5 TONY BANKS: Me, Mr. Chairman.

6 SENATOR RUFF: Come on up.

7 TONY BANKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of
9 the Commission and Staff. My name is Tony
10 Banks. I'm with the Virginia Farm Bureau
11 Federation as well as the Virginia Foundation
12 for Agriculture Innovation and Rural
13 Sustainability.

14 I'm here this afternoon speaking on behalf
15 of the Central Virginia Poultry Group. That is
16 a group that, as the chairman eluded to, has
17 formed as a result of Tyson's closure of the
18 Glen Allen Complex in Henrico County. That
19 closure resulted in the shutting of 265 broiler
20 houses in Central Virginia, primarily the
21 Southside. So the team members for the group
22 are all here today: John Baptiste from
23 Cumberland County, Trent Johnson from
24 Lunenburg, Taylor Lee from Dinwiddie and Pete
25 Watson from Nottoway County.

1 And since March they've been actively
2 working trying to locate a replacement broiler
3 company so that they can continue raising meat
4 birds in what they're accustomed to.

5 Given the current market conditions and
6 supply in the United States for broiler meat,
7 that has proved to be a serious uphill
8 challenge. Recently, the group came in contact
9 with Dutch Country Organics, a cage-free table
10 like producer based in Indiana, and this is
11 what we're here to talk about today.

12 Just a little bit more background on the
13 Tyson's closure because it's going to play into
14 some of the potential impact for this project.
15 You can see here for broiler farm income,
16 Tyson's was paying approximately 18 million a
17 year. And you can see some of the other
18 expenditures such as cost to feed at
19 48 million.

20 The screen is not up. I'm sorry. I'll
21 just turn and talk this way.

22 So looking just in the tobacco region
23 footprint here in Southside we estimate the
24 annual total economic loss at 339,000 just here
25 in Southside alone. The potential business

1 solution and model that the growers are looking
2 at involves Dutch Country Organics as I
3 mentioned earlier. Dutch Country sells eggs
4 under contract with major retailers such as
5 Kroger, Albertson's, Target, all of these just
6 to name a few. And I might mention Kroger is
7 the second largest buyer of U.S. table eggs
8 here in the country. So Central Virginia
9 Poultry Group or its successor would become an
10 affiliate with Dutch Country. The group would
11 then form a farmer owned cooperative. And the
12 co-op would then contract with Dutch Country.
13 The co-op and its members would produce and
14 sell eggs, cage-free table eggs and eventually
15 organic cage-free table eggs back to Dutch
16 Country.

17 Now, in the immediate near future those
18 eggs would be collected here and shipped to a
19 cleaning and sorting facility that Dutch
20 Country has in Indiana. In the future the hope
21 is that as the business begins to mature and
22 the volume takes off that they would be able to
23 establish their own cleaning and sorting
24 facility here in Central Virginia.

25 So cage-free -- I know a lot of you, you

1 go into the grocery store, and they have all
2 these different labels on food products and it
3 just pulls your hair out; right? So cage-free
4 as defined by the USDA is the following: They
5 are eggs packed in the USDA grade marked
6 consumer packages labeled cage-free and are
7 laid by hens that are able to roam vertically
8 and both horizontally in the indoor houses in
9 the production house and naturally have access
10 to fresh water and food. But the hens are also
11 allowed to scratch, dust, do the things that
12 hens do normally that they may not be typically
13 able to accomplish in a traditional
14 conventional battery production house where you
15 have stacks and stacks and stacks of cages.

16 So the market opportunity is very
17 promising. Since 2010 the percent of cage-free
18 eggs being produced in the United States has
19 increased from 4 percent to roughly 35 percent.
20 There's several states that are requiring eggs
21 be sourced from cage-free hens such as
22 California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan,
23 Washington and others. McDonalds, Chick-fil-A
24 and several other national chains have efforts
25 underway by 2030 to be 100 percent cage-free.

1 Currently the demand for cage-free eggs out
2 paces supply in this country.

3 Organics. The organic market is expected
4 to grow over the next ten years by about
5 roughly 300 percent growth in economic value.
6 So Dutch Country and Central Virginia Poultry
7 Group here in Central Virginia we're within 8
8 hours of 65 percent of the United States
9 population. So there's tremendous opportunity
10 for market demand there. There are not enough
11 eggs. Regardless of their source, there are
12 not enough eggs produced here on the East Coast
13 to cover demand. So there's another
14 opportunity.

15 Central Virginia Group faces some
16 challenges. Their recent meeting they had over
17 3,500 former Tyson's growers who expressed an
18 interest in wanting to raise eggs looking at
19 this business venture. But that comes with a
20 cost. To convert those broiler houses to a
21 facility where they can actually lay the eggs,
22 collect the eggs and stuff, the typical price
23 estimated for that conversion is over \$900,000
24 per house. We also will need pullet houses.
25 The conversion for a broiler house to a pullet

1 house is roughly \$132,000. The estimated total
2 producer cost of investment in the housing
3 conversion is right at \$57 million. That's to
4 establish a 2-million hen flock here for the
5 table cage-free eggs.

6 But there's local competition. There are
7 other integrators out of the valley who are
8 working here in Central Virginia trying to
9 secure additional production, whether that be
10 for turkeys or other breeder operations up in
11 the valley. There's also some potential for
12 out-of-state competition. We lost the facility
13 here in Virginia with Tyson's. Tyson's has
14 since announced either the closure or cut-backs
15 at at least six other facilities around the
16 country including one in Indiana.

17 So we're interested to make sure we can
18 move quickly on this opportunity as
19 negotiations move forward.

20 The goal, as I said, a 2-million hen flock
21 producing 66 million dozen eggs over a 76-week
22 period. The annual estimated gross revenue for
23 a 2 million flock is \$52 million. We believe
24 that member grower contracts will be set up
25 for -- the plan is to be set up for five years.

1 We estimate that the total average net income
2 to each grower per house would be \$86,000. And
3 that would reflect a total income of \$304,000.
4 And the anticipation -- or the expectation,
5 rather, is that the contracts with the growers
6 would be set up or that they could fully
7 service their debt with the conversion during
8 the course of the five-year contract.

9 Now, I did mention 2 million birds. We
10 have the capacity to increase this flock to 5.5
11 million birds here in Central Virginia with the
12 existing (inaudible) housing that's in place.

13 There's also opportunity for grain
14 farmers. I see we have a few here in the room.
15 As I mentioned, organic grain -- there will be
16 a need for corn for 2-million hen flock. We
17 estimate roughly 26,000 acres of organic corn
18 would be needed locally. And that would
19 represent roughly \$1 million premium over
20 conventional corn prices relative to market
21 experience.

22 The estimated total economic impact for a
23 co-op like this would be \$100,001 million per
24 year. We expect this project would create 146
25 new jobs, and the estimated total employment

1 impact would be right under 400 jobs.

2 The next steps, the group needs to finalize the
3 agreement with Dutch Country. They need to organize
4 officially as a
5 co-operative. The co-op itself would need to raise
6 \$3 million for its initial start-up costs. And the
7 member growers, they're going to need to secure their
8 financing for the
9 \$57 million in order to begin those conversions as
10 early as January. Right now the goal in theory is to
11 begin placing pullets in May next year with the first
12 eggs being laid probably somewhere in September.

13 And before I forget to, I've already forgotten
14 to mention, Mr. Lemar with Dutch Country is the CEO.
15 He's here with us today as well as Deon Scott,
16 President of Dutch Country. And with that, Mr.
17 Chairman, we appreciate the opportunity, and the
18 floor is open for questions.

19 SENATOR RUFF: Anybody have any questions?MR.
20 CUMMINGS: Mr. Chairman, I'd just like to ask. As
21 you know, this has been a big emphasis by the
22 (inaudible) and farmers big group in that area and to
23 find some

1 opportunities for the community so I want to applaud
2 them for their efforts and sure am hopeful that we
3 find a way to make it happen.

4 SECRETARY LOHR: I have a question. Did you
5 say \$900,000 conversion per house?

6 TONY BANKS: That would be for a 62 X 500 foot
7 house, yes. 42 X 440 is right at \$530,000 for a
8 conversion. Roughly 13 to 15 percent of the cost is
9 concrete for the labor site.

10 SECRETARY LOHR: Second question. You said
11 over 400 jobs. Where are those primarily coming
12 from? And are they including the farm labor?

13 TONY BANKS: No. These would be within the
14 community for other businesses that are support
15 businesses. This estimate is based off of some of
16 the data that is present. Weldon Cooper's Virginia
17 Agri-Forestry economic impact study, we used those
18 same multipliers.

19 SECRETARY LOHR: Okay.

20 SENATOR RUFF: You mentioned 2,600-acres owned
21 locally. Does that include the facility coming back
22 online here? Or would that be locally processed?

23 TONY BANKS: So in order to have a need
24 for this local organic corn, the group is going
25

1 to have to identify a local feed mill whether
2 that's a third-party who's going to perform
3 some pole milling, or it could include the
4 acquisition potentially of Tyson's feed mill
5 there in Amelia County. Potentially five.

6 SENATOR RUFF: That was where I was going.
7 Was that a possibility to incorporate that
8 existing facility back into the plan?

9 TONY BANKS: There is that possibility. I
10 believe the 2-million bird flock is probably
11 going to need roughly 11 tons of feed per year.
12 So it's not the same feed demand you would have
13 for broiler production. But it is steady and
14 consistent. Those chickens got to eat.

15 SENATOR RUFF: Tony, as far as the
16 conversion of the houses and structures there, I
17 thought I heard you say 13 percent was concrete.

18 TONY BANKS: For the hen houses,
19 approximately 13 percent of the conversion cost
20 is just concrete. The remainder is primarily
21 new equipment, the new nesting boxes, the
22 automatic egg collecting systems. On the
23 pullet houses, depending on the size of the
24 facility, the concrete cost could be as much as
25 50 to 55 percent of the actual conversion.

1 SENATOR RUFF: In the optimistic look down
2 the road, when could we imagine that there might
3 be a facility to locate not in Indiana but in
4 Virginia.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Two years. SENATOR
6 RUFF: Okay. Thank you.

7 And that does not include in that the 400
8 jobs issue?

9 TONY BANKS: No, sir.

10 SENATOR RUFF: How many jobs would
11 that produce?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 35.

13 TONY BANKS: For 2-million. UNIDENTIFIED
14 SPEAKER: 70 jobs.

15 SENATOR RUFF: Okay, thank you. Any further
16 questions. (None.)

17 Tony, we appreciate you coming in and look
18 forward to working with you in the future.

19 TONY BANKS: Thank you, sir. And we look
20 forward to working with the Commission.

21 SENATOR RUFF: All right.

22 Delegate Kilgore, Incentives and Loan report?

23 DELEGATE KILGORE: You'll find the Incentives
24 and Loan if you look in your packet on pages 45
25

1 through 64. We actually looked at three different
2 projects this morning. The first project was the
3 Blue Star project in Wythe County. And based on the
4 grant agreement with TROF 3892 received by the
5 Commission on the 7th which was past the deadline
6 that we gave them to get the agreement in. So
7 basically, this motion I'm going to make would just
8 allow us to accept that agreement which we got on
9 September 7th, sent to the director or staff to sign
10 that and approve.

11 So my motion would be that we approve the
12 accepted grant agreement for Project 3892 locality
13 received by the Commission
14 September 7th, be accepted and Staff directed to
15 execute the agreement.

16 SENATOR RUFF: Is there a second?

17 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

18
19 Is there discussion? (None.)

20 Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

21 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

22 DELEGATE KILGORE: The second Incentive Loan
23 issue we talked about was dealing with the Southern
24 Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill. This is a request
25 for loan, contingent on successful attraction

1 of a major tenant for Berry Hill. The problem
2 at Berry Hill, we don't have natural gas
3 ability. So what this motion would allow would
4 be Incentive and Loan Committee recommends to
5 the Commission approval for community business
6 lending, CBO program, loan which would be
7 described today in further Committee discussion;
8 and also that we direct Staff to research
9 additional funding opportunities including any
10 and all federal opportunities that may be
11 appropriate for a project. That recommendation
12 would be subject to the conditions described by
13 Staff, the Commission enter into a customary
14 loan agreement, continuing appropriate
15 performance, qualified and security provisions
16 as needed.

17 But as we discussed in the meeting
18 yesterday, this is very necessary. We've been
19 so close at getting some big projects but with
20 gas. We would be able to close some big deals
21 I think. So that's the motion.

22 Is there a second?

23 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

24 SENATOR RUFF: The advantage of doing that is
25 they can go ahead and start getting things

1 lined up and be prepared so that when thE prospect
2 comes we won't have to delay that in that approval
3 process because of the government and the gas
4 industry. Any discussion? (None.)

5 Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

6 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

7 All right.

8 DELEGATE KILGORE: Mr. Chairman, the final issue
9 we discussed was the Grayson County Economic
10 Development Authority in Oak Hall Industries. Oak
11 Hall Industry is a company that makes I believe caps
12 and gowns and things of that nature. And actually,
13 they have five other locations in Virginia, and as
14 such, is very invested in the Commonwealth as it
15 relates to job creation and taxable property, et
16 cetera. And, you know, they got the loan from us,
17 TROF Form 2199. They invested all their capital that
18 they said they would do. The problem was, of the 100
19 jobs to be created, it created only 53 jobs. We had a
20 discussion and we found out they may be paying more
21 than what they told us they were going to agree to.
22 So what we asked -- subject to the Full Commission --
23 that we give an extension for
24
25

1 another year to June 30, 2024; and direct Staff to
2 get with other kill industries to make the
3 determination as to the amount of salary that they're
4 paying to see if that doesn't reduce the clawback and
5 also give them an opportunity to create more jobs.
6 They made the representations to the Committee that
7 they are out trying to get jobs, have fliers out,
8 going to high schools, doing whatever just trying to
9 get workers, and they've been unable to do so.

10 So the motion would be just to direct Staff to
11 work with them on that issue and get more information
12 on the employment numbers and employee wages, as well
13 as continue it and give them an extension to June 30,
14 2024.

15 SENATOR RUFF: Is there a second?

16 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

17
18 SENATOR RUFF: All in favor say aye.

19 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

20 DELEGATE KILGORE: That concludes my report.

21 SENATOR RUFF: All right. Buddy, are you ready?

22 MR. SHELTON: Yes, sir. Thank you,
23 Mr. Chairman.

24 So we had a meeting yesterday afternoon.
25

1 We had several requests for grant approval and a
2 couple of extension requests. So
3 Mr. Chairman, I will move that the Commission accept
4 the Southern Committee's recommendation to accept
5 Staff recommendations found on pages 7 through 23 of
6 the Commission book and award 2,760,461 in funds to
7 the following projects: 4167. 4161, 4166, 4163, 4164,
8 4159, 4155, 4160 and 4156.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You might have been
10 referencing --

11 MR. SHELTON: I have two different lists. The
12 correct number is \$2,723,261.

13 The pages in the list of the application numbers
14 were correct.

15 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

16 SENATOR RUFF: Is there any discussion on any of
17 the projects? Is there anyone who has any reason to
18 abstain from any of those? (None.)

19 Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

20 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

21 MR. SHELTON: Mr. Chairman, finally, I would
22 move that the Commission approve the Committee's
23 recommendation to accept Staff recommendations for
24 extensions of Project 3457

25

1 and 3281 as found on page 24 of the Commission book.

2 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

3 SENATOR RUFF: Properly moved and seconded, is
4 there further discussion? (None.) Hearing none,
5 all in favor say aye. (Ayes.) Opposed?(None.)

6 MR. SHELTON: And that concludes our business
7 that we have.

8 SENATOR RUFF: Thank you, Buddy.

9 DELEGATE Morefield, are you ready to
10 discuss?MR. MOREFIELD: Yes, sir;

11 Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, members of the
12 committee the Southwest Committee met this
13 morning. There's no objections. You'll see on
14 page 67 the description of the projects.

15
16 And Mr. Chairman, I move that we adopt the
17 Committee recommendations and move forward on
18 Project No. 4154 and Project No. 4154.

19 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

20 SENATOR RUFF: Properly moved and seconded.
21 Any further discussion? (None.) All in favor say
22 aye. (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

23 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Mr. Chairman, we also have
24 a number of extension modifications. You'll
25

1 see those listed in your packet, and I would
2 move that we adopt the Committee
3 recommendations.

4 SENATOR RUFF: Any further discussion?
5 (None.) Hearing none, all in favor say aye.
6 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

7 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: And Mr. Chairman, one
8 final item. We did make a recommendation to
9 adopt the Committee's extension on the meat
10 processing application to extend the deadline to
11 the application deadline.

12 And Sara, I don't believe we set a date;
13 is that correct?

14 MS. WILSON: For the application? They
15 said they could do it fairly quickly so I don't
16 know. Two weeks? We can work with them for a
17 reasonable date.

18 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I move
19 to extend the deadline to the 31st.

20 MS. WILSON: For that one project.

21 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Yes, correct.

22 MR. VERSEN: Mr. Chair, for the process --

23 SECRETARY MERRICK: We would need it earlier
24 than that. Can we just work with them on an
25 appropriate date?

1 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Mr. Chairman, I move
2 to authorize Staff to extend the deadline and
3 make it work at their discretion.

4 SENATOR RUFF: I think this is a good
5 first step. Any further discussion? (None.)
6 Hearing none, all in favor say aye. (Ayes.)
7 Opposed? (None.)

8 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Thank you, Mr.
9 Chairman. That completes the report.

10 SENATOR RUFF: All right. Mr. Blevins.

11 MR. BLEVINS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 The Strategic Planning Committee, just as
13 a matter of the strategic planning for the
14 existing biennium that's been delayed, the
15 adoption has been delayed for various reasons.
16 It includes some of the major components of the
17 changes that the Committee is recommending to
18 the Commission. It includes the governor's
19 Compete-to-Win initiative; language with
20 respect to the foundation, and I think the only
21 subtraction from the initial draft was the
22 Community Lending Program that was altered.

23 I would add one additional thing in
24 response to Secretary Merrick's comments to the
25 Commission earlier. She identified or brought

1 up the idea of how can the Small Business
2 Administration perhaps work with our strategic
3 plan. And that brought to my attention
4 something I had an interest in initially. The
5 initial draft referred to a Small Town
6 Initiative. That was renamed The Business
7 District Initiative. That's on pages 8 and 9
8 of the plan. But it specifically mentions that
9 the rural towns in tobacco regions serve as
10 important community focal points and economic
11 centers. And goes on to say that priority will
12 be given to projects that will canalize
13 redevelopment and investment in projects for
14 commercial and/or entrepreneurial business
15 interests. So that I think would fit well with
16 the vision we heard that morning from the
17 administration.

18 And with that, Mr. Chairman, I would move
19 that the Commission approve the October 2023
20 Strategic Plan for the Tobacco Region
21 Revitalization Commission as recommended by
22 Staff presented on pages 79 through 97 of the
23 Commission book.

24 (The motion was moved and seconded.)

25 MR. RUFF: Properly moved, any further

1 discussion? (None.)

2 Hearing none, all in favor say aye.

3 (Ayes.) Opposed? (None.)

4 All right. Stephen Versen?

5 MR. VERSEN: This is the portion we talked
6 about the opportunity to Fund and Community
7 Business Lending Loan Updates. These documents
8 are on pages 110 through 115. This is a
9 summary of the TROF loans and grants and the
10 community business lending outstanding loans
11 that are there. There's not been substantial
12 new activity since the last Commission meeting.
13 Staff continues to work with communities
14 getting reports. We've not had any new TROF
15 requests since the last meeting, although,
16 we're expecting some soon. And we do not have
17 any TROF extension requests during this period,
18 although, we expect to have some at the January
19 meeting.

20 So for the Commission here, there's
21 nothing significant we need to report on.
22 Happy to entertain any questions.

23 SECRETARY CUMMINGS: That is a little bit
24 unusual but not entirely. I wouldn't say it's
25 problematic or anything to worry about. We

1 will have a number of extensions coming up in
2 January. And we're expecting three or four new TROF
3 projects to come up in the next three or four months.

4 SENATOR RUFF: Just a couple items. Is it
5 indicative of anything going on in the economy?

6 MR. VERSEN: Yes. The Commission has noted over
7 the years that the rate of TROF projects has slowed
8 down a little bit. I'm not sure the exact reason for
9 that. I don't know if it's the way the program is
10 structured or what. But I think that would be a
11 conversation for the Commissioners to have as far as
12 if we wanted to increase the rate of the TROF
13 projects.

14 MR. CAMPOS: There's been a slow-down in some of
15 the economic project activity in the past 6 to 12
16 months with interest rates as a factor.

17 SENATOR RUFF: Any further questions on that
18 issue? (None.)

19 All right. Other Business?

20 MR. VERSEN: So in Other Business. In the
21 Commission and Committees this year there was
22 direction to develop a new Rule and Energy
23
24
25

1 Innovation Grant Program as well as
2 reinvigorating Back-to-Business Program. Any
3 other business is actually on pages -- starting
4 on page 103 of the Board Book are three
5 descriptions of those two new programs.

6 First one is a program, Tobacco Region
7 Agribusiness Project Fund, the TRAP fund.
8 Which this program, the core components of it,
9 the intention is to operate very similar to the
10 existing agribusiness program, grant programs.
11 But the innovation we are looking to accomplish
12 with this program is in the approach we take to
13 working with the projects. Permitting economic
14 development projects, they're often going to a
15 number of different organizations trying to
16 secure funds from this group, loans from this
17 group, a different type funding for this group,
18 and it complicates the numbers some. So the
19 idea behind this program is take a relatively
20 small community of individuals involved in
21 Agribusiness Development, and Virginia Tobacco
22 Commission, our friends at Virginia Department
23 of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Office of
24 Agriculture and Forestry, also USDA Rural
25 Development, Virginia FAIRS, Farm Bureau, and

1 Virginia Small Business Finance Authorities are
2 key partners; and for us to begin meeting on a
3 regular basis and working collaboratively to
4 assist with the projects so projects would have
5 one group to work with. This would allow us to
6 leverage one another's funds and resources the
7 best we can to provide really excellent
8 experience for the projects we're trying to get
9 done. So this is sort of a new approach we're
10 looking to take through the Tobacco Region. So
11 with that -- this is what we're working on.

12 With the Commission's approval we would
13 like to take this project idea and develop it
14 into a full blown grant program to present to
15 the Commission in January for your adoption of
16 getting it incorporated.

17 The intention would be for staff to work
18 with the Executive Committee in between now and
19 January to determine -- at least initially we
20 would need separate funding to make this work
21 well. We would need to have a separate
22 committee structure to have this work through
23 the existing budget and administrative
24 structure we have now.

25 So we'll continue to work with that, but

1 we wanted to present this idea to you, that
2 we're working on the priorities given to us and
3 our plan to be implemented.

4 SENATOR RUFF: We don't need to take any
5 action today.

6 MR. CAMPOS: No, sir.

7 SENATOR RUFF: I would hope that you move
8 forward and come up with a better name. TRAP
9 team?

10 MR. CAMPOS: Thank you. And then I will
11 turn to my colleague, Gary Walker, who is going
12 to be the point person for the Rural Energy
13 Fund. He wants to say a few words about that.

14 MR. WALKER: Yes. So thank you for this
15 opportunity. As one of the newest members of
16 this Tobacco organization and Commission, my
17 background is 36 years in the energy field so
18 I'm very familiar with infrastructure operations
19 and grant funding, actually, but from a
20 different format. I actually gave the money out
21 from a budget that was allocated by my former
22 employer.

23 So with that, I did have the opportunity to
24 work with the Department of Energy and was
25 actually involved with economic impact which

1 also has funding and grants available for
2 various sources. So I'm very familiar with
3 that process.

4 So with that fund, what I asked and
5 requested from the resources available from
6 Vickie and the Staff is, hey, can you give me
7 sort of a guideline as to how much money we've
8 already allocated in the past that may have
9 already been energy related. And what was
10 great to know and great to learn we've already
11 been doing this. We're just formalizing it.
12 So for example, we took one region, we took
13 Southern. We just happened to pick that one.
14 And in the last -- we did it from 2005 to 2022.
15 What we allocated in that period, 166 million,
16 was actually released to approximately just a
17 little over 170 projects. So when you look at
18 that kind of figure and you start gathering
19 that kind of data you realize that's sort of
20 our baseline.

21 So what I'm hoping to do is bring more
22 spotlight to this for everyone so they can see
23 what's available out there, look at all
24 available sites. I'm working with the
25 (inaudible) quite closely. I'm going to be

1 reaching out to the various stakeholders both
2 in the Southern and Southwest regions to
3 actually see not only what the site
4 availability is but also what's available
5 within the surrounding areas -- as we call them
6 in the areas I used to work in, load centers.
7 Because not everything is going to be
8 traditional as it used to be. There's actually
9 new technology out there that can work itself
10 off the grid in terms of electricity. There's
11 actually other technologies out there that
12 don't impact farms in terms of solar. So the
13 best use will be to know kind of what's already
14 existing and what's out there. So that's what
15 I'm hoping to bring to the Commission in the
16 footprint of both the Southern and Southwest
17 Regions. So with your input and direction
18 that's what we're hoping to do and come back
19 with.

20 MR. CAMPOS: Thank you, Gary.

21 I just want to add to both of these
22 initiatives. As we talked about the energy
23 side, as I mentioned earlier, this fund is
24 meant to create action items but also
25 enthusiasm and awareness to the Southwest and

1 to the South for potential, you know, new
2 entrance to the market. Within Virginia we
3 have an opportunity here to really jump on this
4 narrative, this new passion and new publicity
5 and surrounding energy. As I mentioned,
6 there's a ton of funding out there. But with
7 our funding, with our direct investment, our
8 direct involvement we can really change some
9 localities. I've seen on a national level
10 working past positions at the Department of
11 Energy what energy projects can do for
12 communities and how many good jobs,
13 sustainable, viable jobs that these projects
14 can produce.

15 So Tobacco, our Commission, and how we
16 accelerate this process in the industry how to
17 create better attention.

18 And I had a conversation with Chairman
19 Ruff a while ago when this idea first popped
20 up. I said, Chairman, I won't disclose a
21 number. It's a little higher than it is at the
22 moment. And he said, let's just take a step
23 back first. Let's not be as aggressive as you
24 want. I said that's fine. Understanding some
25 of these energy projects can be quite

1 expensive. But I think if we direct our energy
2 to sustainable, reliable and economically great
3 projects we can really do a lot to transform
4 the Southwest and South through energy.

5 So I just wanted to leave that thought
6 with you because it is our economy and energy,
7 and it's where we have the most potential.
8 Frankly, I consider it low hanging fruit that
9 we need to capture.

10 Thank you.

11 SENATOR RUFF: Thank you. I think it's a
12 good idea, but obviously it's connected with
13 bureaucracy so I'm not sure we as a team -- sound
14 with anymore excitement. So come up with a name
15 and make people excited.

16 MR. VERSEN: No other business.

17 SENATOR RUFF: The only other business we
18 have calls for a number of people who left the
19 Commission or are in the Commission that would
20 be on new assignments with committees. So I'm
21 not sure if you have a copy of that now or not,
22 but they will be circulated around in the next
23 day or two.

24 All right. Anybody else? Anything from
25 the public? Any comment?

1 (None.)

2 All right.

3 MR. EVERETT: I have one comment. I appreciate
4 everyone for being so
5 welcoming to me. I did want to comment on the
6 peanut bags here. I hope you all enjoy those.
7 I'm a producer, a tobacco producer. I'm
8 honored to be on the board with two current
9 tobacco producers, and I'm also a peanut
10 producer. I'm on the eastern edge of the
11 tobacco belt, and the western edge of the
12 peanut belt, and I'm currently the vice
13 president of the Virginia Peanut Growers
14 Association. This is one of our to-be
15 publicity efforts in our organization.

16 If you'll notice when you stop at a rest
17 area in the State of Virginia these are there.
18 They're in a lot of your alls offices, and in
19 our congressional offices. So spread the word.
20 We're harvesting peanuts on our farm today.
21 And we just want to say we've got a new
22 executive director, Kaitlyn Joiner, who's come
23 on to replace Dale Cotton who's been there for
24 well over a decade. He's been dealing with
25 some peanut issues. So a lot of excitement in

1 the peanut industry, and thank you for the
2 response and having those here.

3 SENATOR RUFF: Anything else? (None.)

4 This meeting is adjourned.

5

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7 (Meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT REPORTER

2
3 I, Mary E. Donivan, Court Reporter and
4 Notary Public for the State of Virginia at Large, do
5 hereby certify that I was the Court Reporter who
6 took down and transcribed the proceedings of the
7 FULL COMMISSION MEETING, held on Thursday, October
8 12, 2023 at 11:34 a.m. at Blackstone Inn, 707 4th
9 Street, Blackstone, Virginia.

10 I further certify this is a true and
11 accurate transcript, to the best of my ability to
12 hear and understand the proceedings.

13 Given under my hand this 20th day of
14 October, 2023.

15
16
17 _____
18 Mary Elizabeth Donivan

19
20 Virginia Notary Registration No. 270874

21 My commission expires
22 May 31, 2024

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Fall 2023 Tobacco Commission Meeting – Summary of Final Motions

The following tables summarize the actions the Full Commission made at its October 12, 2024 meeting regarding recommendations from the Executive Committee, Education Committee, Incentives & Loans Committee, Southern Virginia Committee and Southwest Virginia Committee. These tables are attached to and made a part of the minutes of the meeting. All motions were unanimously accepted by the Commission by voice vote.

Commission Action on Executive Committee Recommendations:

The Commission took the following actions based on the recommendations of the Executive Committee:

Item	Commission Approved Action
Creation of a Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Create a private, non-profit foundation called the Foundation for the Advancement of Southern and Southwest Virginia (FASS-VA) to help fulfill the Commission’s purpose through alternative funding sources, · Provide start-up funds of \$100,000 from unobligated General Account funds, and · Delegate authority to the Executive Committee to approve final documents and appoint initial board members.
Hiring of Deputy Director	Approval to hire Mr. Stephen Versen as the new Deputy Director effective August 10, 2023.

Education Committee:

The Commission took the following actions on the FY 2024 Competitive Education Program Applications:

Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training					
Req #	Organization	Project Title	Request Amount	Staff Recommendation	Commission Decision
4176	Central Virginia Community College Educational Foundation	CVCC Advanced Manufacturing with Energy Technology Expansion	\$220,878	\$220,878	Commission approved grant award of \$220,877.86
4178	Central Virginia Planning District Commission	ACA Classical & CTE Institute Welding Program	\$318,255	\$318,255	Commission approved grant award of \$318,255

High School Equivalency Program					
4169	Washington County Public School System Dba Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education Program	Southwest Virginia RACE to GED/NEDP Program	\$140,000	\$140,000	Commission approved grant award of \$140,000 contingent upon the following: 1) verification that all matching funds are approved and available, and 2) the grantee will track the referral source for each participant and report the information at the end of the project to evaluate effectiveness of marketing methods. Commission also requested applicant to track the employment status and approximate salaries for individuals participating in the program to share with the Commission, and that this reporting be done on a quarterly basis.
Post-Secondary Programs with a focus in STEM-H					
4171	Patrick & Henry Community College Foundation	Healthcare Training Expansion	\$149,140	\$149,140	Commission approved grant award of \$149,140
4170	Southwest Virginia Community College	SWCC's EquipEMT: Strengthening Emergency Medical Training through Advanced Equipment	\$71,206	\$71,206	Commission approved grant award of \$71,206
4177	Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Foundation	Southwest Virginia Regional Simulation Lab for Nursing and Allied Health	\$600,000	\$600,000	Commission approved grant award of \$600,000

Workforce Training Programs					
4179	Danville Community College Educational Foundation, Inc.	Danville Community College's Class-B Commercial Driver's License Non-Credit Workforce Program	\$291,000	\$233,081	Commission approved grant award of \$233,081 including costs for purchase of the mobile modular classroom.
4180	Ferrum College	Ferrum College Career and Technical Education Pathways	\$750,000	WITHDRAWN	
4175	Mountain Empire Community College	Heavy Equipment Operator Program	\$92,705	\$92,705	Commission approved grant award of \$92,705
4172	Southside Virginia Community College Foundation	Accelerating Truck Driver Training at SVCC	\$316,000	\$316,000	Commission approved grant award of \$316,000
4173	Virginia Highlands Community College Educational Foundation	VHCC Diesel Technology Expansion	\$202,300	\$202,300	Commission approved grant award of \$202,300
4174	Wytheville Community College	Wytheville Community College WEST – Workforce, Education, & Skills Training Center	\$277,000	\$277,000	Commission approved grant award of up to \$277,000, conditioned upon the Grants Director's approval of final documented cost estimates from vendors/contractors for equipment and renovations.

The Commission took the following actions on the Talent Accelerator Program:

Item	Commission Approved Action
VDH TAP Balance	The Commission moved to rescind the remaining balance of the \$969,000 for the 2022 Virginia Department of Health State Loan Repayment Grant - #3937
TAP Special exception	The Commission moved to make an exception to the Talent Accelerator Program rules for Derick Simpson to be eligible for renewal as a physical therapy program clinical coordinator.

Incentives & Loans Committee

The Commission took the following actions based on the recommendations of the Incentives & Loans Committee:

Item	Commission Approved Action
Joint IDA of Wythe Co/ Blue Star NBR, LLC. (#3892)	The Commission moved that the Commission accept the Incentives & Loans Committee recommendation that the grant agreement for TROF #3892, signed by the company and locality and received by the Commission on September 7th, be accepted and staff directed to execute the agreement.
Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill	The Commission moved that the Commission accept the Incentives & Loans Committee recommendation for approval of a Community and Business Lending (CBL) program loan for up to \$25M as described by staff and per the Committee's discussion AND that the committee direct staff to research additional funding opportunities that may be appropriate for this project. The recommendation is subject to the conditions described by staff and the Commission entering into a customary loan agreement containing appropriate performance, clawback and security provisions as necessary.
Grayson County EDA / Oak Hall Industries (#2999)	The Commission moved to authorize a final extension of the performance period for TROF #2999 of one year, with a new end date of June 30th, 2023, to allow for the inclusion of additional employment data AND that the Committee direct staff to work with the locality on agreeable terms for the repayment of the unearned portion of the grant as establish by staff after the inclusion of the updated employment data.

Southern Virginia Committee

The Commission took the following actions based on the recommendations of the Southern Virginia Committee:

Agribusiness					
Req #	Organization	Project Title	Requested Amount	Staff Recommendation	Commission Decision
4167	Campbell County	Expanded Southern Virginia Precision Agriculture and Farm Efficiency	\$364,000	\$272,000	Commission approved grant award of \$272,000 grant award to support \$268,000 (rounded up from \$268,000) estimated cost-share for applicants on the waitlist and \$4,000 for direct costs related to administering the grant. This approval is made on the condition of the following: 1) cost-share funding will be limited to only first-time recipients for practices previously funded by TRRC; and 2) conditioned on unobligated funds under #3891, being de-obligated after final reimbursements are processed.
4161	Institute for Advanced Learning and Research	Connecting Southern Virginia Producers with Markets Through Value Chain Coordination	\$104,452	\$104,452	Commission approved grant award of \$104,452
4166	Institute for Advanced Learning and Research	Supporting Controlled Environment Agriculture Industry Growth in Virginia	\$145,841	\$145,841	Commission approved grant award of \$145,841 grant award, contingent on a report of best practices being provided prior to close-out of the grant.

4162	Southside Virginia Fruit and Vegetable Producers Association	Envisioning a Local Food Purchasing System for Southside TRRC	\$1,210,000	Table	Commission decided to table and allow a new application to be submitted with revised scope and budget to be considered in January 2024.
Business Development					
4163	Institute for Advanced Learning and Research	Business Development and Talent Attraction for Investment in Southern Virginia	\$325,563	\$325,563	Commission approved grant award of \$325,563 grant award, contingent on funding for the Talent Attraction and Retention Director being limited to up to 50% of personnel costs, and contingent on advance approval of event participation fees and out-of-state or international travel.
4164	Virginia's Growth Alliance	Refresh/Restart+ Focused Business Development	\$57,673	\$51,950	Commission approved grant award of \$51,950 grant award contingent on advance approval of event participation fees and out-of-state or international travel.
Sites and Infrastructure					
4159	Brunswick County	Stonewall Industrial Site Development Project	\$2,234,460	\$1,117,230	Commission approved grant award of \$1,117,230 for 50% of the A&E and construction costs for development of the pad ready site, contingent on securing full matching funds for the project.
4155	Campbell County	Seneca Commerce Park Grading Project	\$600,000	\$404,918	Commission approved grant award of \$404,918 grant award for 50% of approved site development costs.

Tourism					
4157	American Civil War Museum	National Advertising Campaign to Encourage Tourism to Southern and Central Virginia	\$41,031	\$-	\$- No award
4160	Town of Brodnax	Brodnax Depot Renovation Project	\$183,507	\$183,507	Commission approved grant award of \$181,507 grant for up to 20% of approved project costs, contingent on approval of the \$473,581 VDOT award within one year, and contingent on grantee identifying other funding if construction bids are over budget.
4165	Town of Blackstone	Making Ends Meet	\$247,217	Table	Commission decided to table
4158	Town of Lawrenceville	Tobacco Heritage Trail Trailhead Ramp	\$232,288	\$-	\$- No award
4156	West Piedmont Planning District Commission	Regional Outdoor Recreation Economy Program	\$118,000	\$118,000	Commission approved grant award of \$118,000 grant contingent on securing required Matching funds; and contingent on tourism economic outcome projections being submitted and approved by TRRC staff prior to launching the marketing campaign.

The Commission took the following actions on project extensions and modifications from the Southern Virginia Committee:

Item	Commission Approved Action
Virginia Museum of Natural History Foundation Outdoor Education Pavilion (#3457)	Commission approval of a final six-month extension to March 31, 2024.

Southwest Virginia Committee

The Commission took the following actions based on the recommendations of the Southwest Virginia Committee:

Req #	Organization	Project Title	Request Amount	Staff Recommendation	Commission Decision
4153	Blue Ridge Plateau Initiative	Blue Ridge Plateau Meat Processing Facility	\$2,500,000	Table	Commission decided to table.
4154	Tazewell County IDA	Ponderosa	\$979,000	\$979,000	\$979,000 contingent on achieving full project financing.

The Commission took the following actions on project extensions and modifications from the Southwest Virginia Committee:

Item	Commission Approved Action
Friends of Southwest Virginia Building Appalachian Spring: Growing the Economy of Southwest Virginia through Developing Outdoor Recreation Destinations (#3198)	Commission approved a final extension through June 30, 2024.
Floyd County EDA Floyd Regional Commerce Center Phase II Development (#3191)	Commission approval of a one-year extension through September 30, 2024.
Floyd County EDA Floyd Light Industrial Building and Growth Center Campus (#3558)	Commission approval of a final extension through January 31, 2024.
Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority Coalfield Regional Tourism Destination Project (#3464)	Commission approval of a one-year extension through September 30, 2024.
Southwest Regional Recreation Authority Creating a Sportsman's Economy for Southwest Virginia (#3564)	Commission approval of a nine-month extension through July 31, 2024.
Tazewell County IDA Cultural Arts of Southwest Virginia Corporation (#3557)	Commission approval of a one-year extension through October 31, 2024, contingent upon the project's solicitation and selection of a contractor through a competitive process, suitable to the project. The grant will be frozen until the contingency has been met.

<p>Virginia Highlands Community College Educational Foundation Advanced Technology and Workforce Development Center (#3465)</p>	<p>Commission approval a one-year extension through September 30, 2024, conditioned upon the Grants Director's approval to release funds to support the final phase of construction. This approval may be requested once the project is under contract and has documented that all funds necessary to complete the project are available to use concurrently with the TRRC grant.</p>
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Strategic Planning Committee

Approving October 2023 Strategic Plan

A Commission member moved that the Commission approve the October 2023 Strategic Plan for the Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission as recommended by staff and presented on pages 79 through 97 of the Commission book.