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TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION

701 East Franklin Street, Suite 501
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Education Committee Meeting

Monday, September 28, 2020
11:45 o'clock a.m.

(Electronic Conference Call Meeting)

1 APPEARANCES:

2 Ms. Rebecca Coleman, Chairman

3 The Honorable Lashrecse D. Aird

4 Ms. Gayle F. Barts

5 Ms. Gretchen Clark

6 Mr. Joel Cunningham

7 Dr. Alexis I. Ehrhardt

8 The Honorable Franklin D. Harris

9 The Honorable Chris L. Hurst

10 The Honorable Louise Lucas

11 The Honorable Sam Rasoul

12 Ms. Sandy Ratliff

13 Mr. Cecil E. Shell

14 The Honorable Roslyn C. Tyler

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16 COMMISSION STAFF:

17 Mr. Evan Feinman, Executive Director

18 Mr. Andy Sorrell, Deputy Director

19 Ms. Joyce Knight, Administrative Supervisor

20 Mr. Michael Kaestner, Grants Program Administration Director

21 Ms. Michele Faircloth, Grants Assistant - Southern

22 Ms. Jessica Stamper – Grants Assistant - Southwest

23 Ms. Sarah K. Capps - Grants Program Administrator - Southern

24 Ms. Sara G. Williams, Grants Program Administrator - Southwest

25 Ms. Stephanie S. Kim, Director of Finance

1 COMMISSION STAFF (Continued):

2 Ms. Stephanie S. Kim, Director of Finance

3 Mr. Jordan Butler, Public Relations Coordinator

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5 COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION:

6 Ms. Elizabeth B. Myers, Assistant Attorney General

7 Richmond, Virginia 23219

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1 September 28, 2020

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MS. COLEMAN: The meeting of the Education Committee of the Tobacco Commission will come to order, and I'll turn it over to Andy for discussion of the ground rules of the electronic meeting.

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MR. SORRELL: Thank you, Ms. Chairperson.

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Due to the Governor's declared state of emergency, this meeting of the Education Committee is being held electronically without a quorum of the public body physically assembled in one location. The nature of the pandemic makes it impractical and unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location.

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In addition, the purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact business that is reportedly required to continue the operations of the Commission. Notice of this meeting complies contemporaneously with the notice provided the Commission members, and a recording of this meeting, as well as minutes, shall be posted on the Commission's website as soon as practical after the conclusion of the meeting.

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The agenda and other meeting materials can be found on our website, and there'll also be an opportunity for public comment in this meeting. As mentioned before, the meeting will be recorded. All participants are unmuted at the beginning of the meeting, and participants will be returned to mute unless a

1 disruption occurs. If that happens repeatedly, we may need to
2 remove a person from a meeting.

3 Public comments, as I mentioned, will be provided at
4 the end of the meeting. And if someone from the public desires
5 to address the Commission, please reserve your questions until
6 that portion of the meeting. And we will ask for comments at
7 that point, and you can use the raise-your-hands feature on
8 WebEx or send a comment to the chat box where you can speak
9 up during that portion.

10 At the time of public comment, please state your full
11 name, your location, and the organization you may represent.
12 Please keep your comments to two minutes each. And if you're
13 on your phone, please remember that Star 6 can mute yourself
14 or unmute yourself.

15 MR. FEINMAN: Thank you, Andy.

16 MS. COLEMAN: Evan, would you like to call the roll?

17 MR. FEINMAN: Yes, ma'am, Madam Chair.

18 Ms. Coleman.

19 MS. COLEMAN: Here.

20 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Aird.

21 DELEGATE AIRD: Present.

22 MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Barts.

23 MS. BARTS: Here.

24 MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Clark.

25 MS. CLARK: Yes.

1 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Cunningham.
2 MR. FEINMAN: Dr. Ehrhardt.
3 DR. EHRHARDT: Here.
4 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Harris. I believe he's here.
5 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Hurst.
6 DELEGATE HURST: Present.
7 MR. FEINMAN: Senator Lucas.
8 SENATOR LUCAS: Here.
9 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Rasoul.
10 DELEGATE RASOUL: Present.
11 MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Ratliff.
12 MS. RATLIFF: Present.
13 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Shell.
14 MR. SHELL: Here.
15 MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Tyler.
16 DELEGATE TYLER: Here.
17 MR. FEINMAN: You have a quorum, Madam
18 Chairman.
19 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Evan.
20 It appears we need to elect a Vice Chairman.
21 MR. FEINMAN: The Chair can accept a motion, or in
22 the absence of a motion, the Chair can request Delegate Kilgore
23 appoint somebody.
24 MS. COLEMAN: Do we have a motion?
25 DELEGATE RASOUL: Madam Chair?

1 MS. COLEMAN: Yes.

2 DELEGATE HURST: Madam Chairman, I will yield to
3 Delegate Rasoul.

4 DELEGATE RASOUL: I would like to nominate
5 Delegate Lashrecse Aird as Vice Chair.

6 MS. COLEMAN: Is there a second?

7 SENATOR LUCAS: I'll second that motion.

8 MS. COLEMAN: Excellent. All in favor, signify by
9 saying aye. (Ayes.) Any opposed? (No response).

10 Congratulations, Delegate Aird.

11 MR. FEINMAN: Madam Chair, I believe procedurally
12 that would just a nomination, there would still need to be a,
13 other nominations and then have a vote to accept.

14 MS. COLEMAN: Okay, say that again, Evan.

15 DELEGATE HURST: Madam Chair, if I could make a
16 motion to close the nomination process.

17 MS. COLEMAN: Second? Could we have a second to
18 Delegate Hurst's motion to close the nomination process?

19 UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

20 MS. COLEMAN: All in favor, signify by saying aye.
21 (Ayes). Opposed? (No response).

22 DELEGATE RASOUL: And then, Madam Chair, if I
23 could make a motion to appoint Delegate Aird as Vice Chair of
24 the Education Committee through acclimation.

25 MS. COLEMAN: We have a motion. Is there a

1 second?

2 UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

3 MS. COLEMAN: All in favor, signify by saying aye.
4 (Ayes). Opposed? (No response.).

5 All right, thank you.

6 We have the minutes from the May 18th meeting that
7 have been posted on the website. Do we have a motion to
8 approve those minutes?

9 MR. SHELL: So moved.

10 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Cecil. Do I have a
11 second?

12 DELEGATE AIRD: Second.

13 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you. All in favor of accepting
14 the May 18th minutes be approved, please say aye. (Ayes).
15 Opposed? (No response). That motion is adopted.

16 We have, I believe, two extensions and modifications
17 to be considered. I'll turn it over to Sarah Capps.

18 MS. CAPPS: Madam Chair and members of the
19 Committee, the first project to consider is the New College
20 Institute for their Center of Excellence grant, Number 2882. New
21 College is requesting a one-year extension on this grant. This
22 grant award was approved back in May of 2014, when the
23 Commission established three Centers of Excellence for advanced
24 manufacturing in our region. New College was one of those.

25 The grant faced delays for a number of reasons,

1 including a freeze on the grants from the Foundation to the
2 college, and then just turnovers with the staff. New College
3 Institute is under new leadership now, and they have worked
4 attentively to redefine the value that NCI can offer and recently
5 presented an overview of its updated plan for the Center of
6 Excellence to the Staff.

7 There remains a balance of about \$453,000 on the
8 grant, and this supports costs at both New College and Patrick
9 Henry Community College. The Staff is supportive of the
10 extension, and we do recommend the extension to September
11 30, 2021.

12 MS. COLEMAN: Are there any questions or concerns
13 with respect to this particular project before we move on?
14 Hearing none, we'll move on.

15 MS. WILLIAMS: Good morning. I've been asked to
16 provide a little bit of an update on the status of the Southwest
17 COE project. This update will also include a request for a small
18 extension for this project, so I will just do my best to quickly
19 summarize where this project is and where it has been over the
20 past year.

21 So, those of you that are less aware of the COE
22 projects, the Southwest Virginia Alliance for Manufacturing was
23 the applicant and the grantee for the Southwest Virginia
24 Advanced Manufacturing Center of Excellence. This project's
25 main location was in Abingdon at the business incubator here and

1 also had satellite locations in Duffield, Virginia and in Bluefield,
2 Virginia. For the life of the grant, especially during the second
3 phase of the grant, Staff had identified concerns about the
4 limited number of trainings that were taking place. And as a
5 result of that, there was only a small amount of revenue that was
6 being generated by the COE.

7 That revenue was important because we knew that at
8 some point the Commission funds for the grant would run out,
9 and we were the primary source of cash for that project. There
10 was a great deal of match and in-kind contributions and some
11 other grant funds in terms of day-to-day operating expenses.
12 The majority of those funds came from the Commission grant.

13 The Commission Staff met with the COE leadership
14 many times going back two to three years to try address this, to
15 try to see what changes needed to be made in order to get them
16 on a more sustainable track in order to increase revenues. We
17 did some strategic planning for the COE through Genedge
18 Alliance. As time went on, we did not see that there was a
19 significant increase in revenues that would be sufficient to fully
20 support the COEs once the grant funds were depleted.

21 So, in March, recognizing that there was only a limited
22 balance remaining in the grant, Staff made the fiscal decision to
23 communicate to the COE leadership that they would no longer
24 have access to the grant funds as of June 30, 2020. This was
25 done in order to preserve some of that balance to help with

1 close-out types of expenses, such as moving the equipment,
2 repairs to the facilities. The Southwest Virginia Alliance for
3 Manufacturing has also requested funds be available to help for
4 the COE's portion of their upcoming audit. At that time, we also
5 began to reach out to others in the region to try to find homes
6 for that equipment, a significant amount of machining and
7 mechatronics, welding equipment, which was the purpose of those
8 three locations. It was important to us that we find homes that
9 would continue to allow it to be used for training purposes on a
10 regional scale.

11 And, finally, in May, 2020, we were approached by the
12 Manufacturing Technology Center, which is a nonprofit
13 organization comprised of manufacturing and educational
14 partners. They are housed at Wytheville Community College,
15 and their membership includes Wytheville Community College,
16 New River Community College, Virginia Highlands Community
17 College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Mountain
18 Empire Community College. They proposed a model, it was
19 called a "hub and spoke" model, where each of the participating
20 colleges would assume some responsibility for the equipment
21 that was best suited for the areas of training that they excelled
22 in. We've been working very hard over the past few months.

23 And there have been MOUs signed with all the
24 participating schools. And just recently, a lot of the equipment
25 has been moved. The equipment in Abingdon has been moved

1 mainly to Virginia Highlands. There is some that remains, there's
2 a large machine equipment that must still be moved. Part of the
3 MOU required that the colleges receiving the equipment would
4 have to pay for the cost to move the equipment. The equipment
5 that was located in Duffield, the equipment there that was owned
6 by the Commission, but only the Commission's equipment has
7 now been moved to Mountain Empire. I believe they are moving
8 it to their center in Appalachia. I believe that move took place
9 mostly last week.

10 A positive update to the Bluefield facility is that it
11 appears that equipment may stay in place and will be leased to
12 Southwest Virginia Community College, to leave it in place and it
13 continues to serve the region through trainings there. So, we
14 feel that was a very positive development for the project. We
15 think that working with MTC and the community colleges really is
16 a wonderful possibility for us to see this equipment put into use
17 for training purposes. And the same types of training purposes
18 and outcomes and certifications that we hope to see under the
19 COE grants, we feel will be accomplished under this model, but in
20 way that is absorbed into the colleges' operating budgets and will
21 be sustainable.

22 So, again, that is just a very brief background on
23 where we are with the project. Again, we do need a small
24 extension just to allow, to continue that close-out, to make sure
25 the lead facilities are returned to their original state. There is a

1 small balance, it's approximately \$199,533.70. Staff
2 recommends an extension through December 31st, 2020 to allow
3 the remaining balance to be used for project closeout expenses.

4 Are there any questions about any of that?

5 DELEGATE HURST: Madam Chair, Delegate Hurst.
6 Sara, what are those community colleges you mentioned again
7 that are being able to use the equipment?

8 MS. WILLIAMS: The five community colleges that are
9 members of MTC are Wytheville Community College, New River
10 Community College, Virginia Highlands Community College,
11 Southwest Virginia Community College, and Mountain Empire
12 Community College.

13 MS. COLEMAN: Sara, is there any potential that some
14 closeout money to be recaptured?

15 MS. WILLIAMS: I believe so. We don't know exactly
16 what the repairs will cost. They do appear to be relatively minor.
17 We believe that some of that will be recaptured. We just, until
18 the equipment is fully moved, it's hard to really determine what
19 needs to be done. Staff will be monitoring that to make sure it's
20 done correctly, but also reasonable costs.

21 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you. Are there any other
22 questions or concerns? Okay, then we need to vote on these two
23 projects. Can we just vote on them together? Anyone like to
24 make a motion in that regard?

25 DELEGATE RASOUL: I'd so move.

1 UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

2 MS. COLEMAN: We have a motion and a second to
3 accept the recommendation on both of these projects. All in
4 favor, signify by saying aye. (Ayes). Opposed? (No response).
5 Okay.

6 Next up is a discussion of our Health Care and Talent
7 Attraction Program from Stephanie Kim.

8 MS. KIM: I'm Stephanie Kim, I'm the Director of
9 Finance. I wanted to just give you a little bit of an update on the
10 Four-Year Scholarship Program. For those who have not been
11 part of the Commission for very long, but historically we have
12 provided funding for the four-year colleges, and we've had
13 scholarships over the past 20 years. And last year, we decided
14 to change that, and we were trying to target more specific
15 occupations that are desired in the group, and try to retain that
16 talent or attract that talent to our region.

17 So, we had two programs, we discovered in the
18 process of developing our programs that the Virginia Department
19 of Health already had a Student Loan Repayment Program for the
20 health care professions and allocated \$2 million. We'll partner
21 with them and let them leverage a million dollars in Federal and
22 State and private funding and try to attract medical professionals
23 to the Tobacco Region.

24 They are a statewide program, but our funds are
25 specifically designated for those programs. Also, developed a

1 Talent Attraction Program where we allocated \$4 million to target
2 non-medical, hard-to-fill occupations. We had a study done on
3 hard-to-fill occupations in our region, we had come up with
4 certain occupations that we would target.

5 The Department of Health Program is for qualified
6 medical, dental, behavioral health, and pharmaceutical
7 professionals that would receive funding for two years of
8 commitment. And it is handled by the Office of Health Equity of
9 the Department of Health, and they have awarded 56 awards, 30
10 of which are Tobacco Region residents, and they're required to
11 both live and work in the Tobacco Region. They have awarded
12 \$2 million in June just recently.

13 Just to give you an idea of how those were allocated,
14 this shows what the particular professions they awarded funds
15 awarded funds in, just to give you an idea of what types of
16 professions are being attracted to the region. We've had to
17 modify workforce areas and generally follow workforce areas, but
18 we had to make some modifications. We had one or two outliers
19 that we just added into an existing workforce area. This will give
20 you an idea of how the Virginia Department of Health funds were
21 allocated by district, by workforce area.

22 The Talent Attraction Program, which we run
23 internally, the occupations that we had determined were the
24 hardest to fill were public school teacher, science, math,
25 technology, technical ed., special education teacher, speech and

1 language pathologist, and physical and occupational therapist,
2 industrial and electrical engineer, and information and security
3 network analysts. Those were the occupations determined to be
4 the hardest to fill in our area.

5 A second round in 2020, we received 91 applications
6 and made 77 awards, totaling \$1.3 million. About 21 percent of
7 the recipients were not originally from the Tobacco Region, so
8 these are people who were from other areas who, because of this
9 funding, would be considering to move to the area and work in
10 our region. As you can see, this is the allocation by occupation
11 of award that made this past cycle.

12 We did also as a requirement of living and working in
13 the region, require that they volunteer 50 hours per year with
14 any local community, nonprofit, it could be the library or the
15 schools, and that's pretty open as to how you could volunteer.
16 But that has become a problem with the quarantine. We are
17 allowing them to potentially waive this year's volunteer hours
18 with the thought that they could make it up next year.

19 A lot of, I think a lot of people were planning to help
20 coach spring sports and some summer camps and things like
21 that. So there were a lot of people who had volunteered that
22 now had found that their volunteer hours were not able to
23 happen. We require them to graduate by a certain point of time,
24 but they may not graduate on time, so we may have to allow
25 some extensions on graduation because a lot of them had to do

1 field studies that were canceled.

2 Today, what we're looking at is providing funding for
3 the Virginia Department of Health Student Loan Repayment
4 Program, which last year we funded for \$2 million, and federal
5 and state monies, as well, this year. And then also for the
6 Tobacco Commission Talent Attraction Program.

7 MS. COLEMAN: I'll take them in order. The first
8 motion is funding for the 2021 VDH Student Loan Repayment
9 Program. Do I have a motion?

10 MR. FEINMEL: You have before you on the other side
11 of our Talent Attraction Program that was funded last year at \$2
12 million. That, it turns out, is a little more than the total value of
13 that program. I think there is certainly a lot of merit, and we
14 should continue with our support. And we're getting more folks
15 in the Talent Attraction side that we run ourselves. And our
16 recommendation for those two motions would be that we fund
17 the VDH at \$1.5 million, and the Talent Attraction Program at an
18 additional \$1.5 million, or however the Committee sees fit to
19 maintain our level of funding for the VDH at \$2 million, and you
20 have the budget to consolidate that.

21 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, I might have been getting
22 ahead of myself. Are there any questions about these two
23 wonderful programs?

24 MR. FEINMEL: Madam Chair, I think this is one of the
25 best things the Commission has done since I arrived here, and its

1 benefit to the employers in the region being able to advertise
2 payment of student loans up to \$12,000 a year and help them in
3 filling hard-to-fill jobs, and I think everyone understands that the
4 dearth of civic leadership in our community is hurting them, as
5 well. And so the requirement that these students are specifically
6 engaged, really helping drive new and young educated members
7 of our community to get engaged in our communities.

8 So, we're proud of the outcome. I just wish we could
9 get a couple of years so that we could report this data out and
10 really show what the benefit would be.

11 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you, Evan. The door is open
12 on the VDH Student Loan Repayment Program. What's your
13 pleasure, do we have a motion?

14 DR. EHRHARDT: I'll make that motion, Madam Chair.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: I'll second it, Madam Chair.

16 MS. COLEMAN: In what amount?

17 DR. EHRHARDT: \$1.5 million for each.

18 MS. COLEMAN: \$1.5 million for each. Thank you.

19 And the second, I'm sorry, who was the second?

20 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Joel.

21 MS. COLEMAN: Thanks, Joel. Okay. We have a
22 motion and a second. All in favor, signify by saying aye. (Ayes).
23 Opposed? (No response). All right, thank you.

24 Now, that takes us to other business, do we have any
25 other business?

1 MR. FEINMAN: You do not, Madam Chair.

2 MS. COLEMAN: I'm sorry?

3 MR. FEINMAN: No, ma'am.

4 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you. Is there any public
5 comment? All right, hearing none, do we have a motion to
6 adjourn?

7 UNIDENTIFIED: So moved.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: I'll second that motion.

9 MS. COLEMAN: Thank you. All in favor, signify by
10 saying aye. (Ayes). Opposed? (No response).

11 Thank you very much. We're adjourned.

12 MR. FEINMAN: Thank you, everyone. We'll be
13 adjourned until 2:00 p.m.

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16 **PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED.**

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CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT REPORTER

I, Medford W. Howard, Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public for the State of Virginia at Large, do hereby certify that I was the Court Reporter who took down and transcribed the proceedings of the **Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission, Education Committee Meeting**, when held on Monday, September 28, 2020, at 11:45 o'clock a.m., (By Electronic Conference Call).

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

Given under my hand this _____ day of October, 2020.

Medford W. Howard
CCR