

1 VIRGINIA TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION

2 707 East Franklin Street, Suite 501

3 Richmond, Virginia 23219

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8 EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

9 Wednesday, October 11, 2023

10 2:45 p.m.

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14 The Inn at Blackstone

15 707 Fourth Street

16 Blackstone, Virginia

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21 EDUCATION COMMITTEE

22 OCTOBER 11, 2023

1 APPEARANCES

- 2 Gretchen Clark, Chair
- 3 Amanda Cox
- 4 Richard T. Hite, Jr.
- 5 Joel Cunningham, Jr.
- 6 Sandy Ratliff
- 7 Senator Frank Ruff, Jr. Randy
- 8 Everett
- 9 The Hon. Gary D. Walker

8 ABSENT

- 9 Senator Louise Lucas Delegate
- 10 William Wampler, III

11 COMMISSION STAFF:

- 12 The Hon. James Campos
- 13 Mr. Stephen Versen
- 14 Ms. Stephanie Kim
- 15 Ms. Vicki Humphreys
- 16 Sarah Capps
- 17 Sara Williams
- 18 Jerry Silva
- 19 Jordan Butler
- 20 Suzette Patterson
- 21 Emily Van Pelt
- 22 Hannah Franke-Fuller
- 23 Ms. Joyce Knight

22 COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION

- 23 Elizabeth Myers

24 EDUCATION COMMITTEE
25 OCTOBER 11, 2023

1 MR. VERSEN: Good afternoon. Welcome
2 everyone to the Education Committee
3 meeting. We are operating currently
4 without a chair so Director Campos call the
5 roll at which we will ask the committee to
6 elect a temporary chair for the meeting.
7

8
9 MR. CAMPOS: Senator Louise Lucas.

10 SENATOR LUCAS: (No response).

11 MR. CAMPOS: Gretchen Clark.

12 MS. CLARK: Here.

13 MR. CAMPOS: Amanda Cox.

14 MS. COX: Here.

15 MR. CAMPOS: Joel Cunningham.

16 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Here.

17 MR. CAMPOS: Richard Hite.

18 MR. HITE: Here.

19 MR. CAMPOS: Sandy Ratliff.

20 MS. RATLIFF: Here.

21 MR. CAMPOS: Senator Frank Ruff.

22 SENATOR RUFF: Here.

23 MR. CAMPOS: Gary Walker.

24 MR. WALKER: Here.

25 MR. CAMPOS: Randy Everett.

1 MR. EVERETT: Here.

2 MR. CAMPOS: Thank you. We have a
3 quorum.

4 MR. VERSEN: The protocol in the
5 absence of a chair is that the committee
6 members present would elect a temporary
7 chair for that meeting. If someone would
8 like to make a motion to nominate a
9 temporary chair.

10 MS. COX: I'd make a motion to nominate
11 Gretchen Clark as the temporary chair.

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

13 MR. VERSEN: All in favor? (Ayes).
14 Any opposed? (No response). Clark is
15 chair.

16 MS. CLARK: Thank you guys. I've never
17 done this before. So we'll start with the
18 approval of the minutes of our May 17
19 meeting. Does anyone have comments or
20 corrections from those minutes? They were
21 published online. Anyone? Hearing none,
22 call for a motion. Anyone want to make a
23 motion?

24 MR. CUNNINGHAM: I'll make a motion to
25 approve those minutes.

1 MS. CLARK: Thank you. Second?

2 UNIDENTIFIED: Second.

3 MS. CLARK: All those in favor?

4 (Ayes.) Thank you. Those minutes are now
5 approved.

6 Now we'll open the floor for public
7 comment. If anyone in the public has
8 something they would like to speak with us
9 about, please come forward, state your name
10 and what entity you're with. Come on up.
11 The podium is right over here.

12 DERICK SIMPSON: Good afternoon,
13 everyone. I'm Derick Simpson. I am a
14 physical therapist from Gretna, Virginia.
15 I'm a recipient of the Talent Attraction
16 Program Scholarship.

17 I'd just like to take a few moments if
18 it's okay with you guys to, I guess, really
19 lobby for--I got a new position that I feel
20 that the scholarship would still be
21 justified for, and I would like to present
22 that to you guys just a few moments if
23 that's okay.

24 You know, I just want to say thank you
25 for that scholarship because it's truly been

1 life changing for me and my family and
2 allowed me to do a lot more in the
3 community.

4 So when I got the scholarship, my first
5 two years as a treating physical therapist
6 at an outpatient clinic I was able to do a
7 lot of community health things on a
8 volunteer basis, but also do sports medicine
9 stuff for Pennsylvania County.

10 I don't know if you guys know
11 Pennsylvania County does not have staff
12 athletic trainers, the biggest county in
13 Virginia, so they rely a lot on volunteer
14 folks like myself and there's a foundation
15 based out of Danville that helps us out.

16 So I was able to do that there, but
17 then I got an opportunity--we fast forward
18 to today--at Patrick Henry Community
19 College. They got a grant from you guys to
20 start a physical therapist assistance
21 program, which is fantastic because we are
22 in need of rehab professionals and health
23 care professionals in Southern Virginia. So
24 I accepted the position as an educator with
25 that program, but also clinical coordinator.

1 So that's part of why I'm here, why I
2 drove two hours today to lobby for this,
3 this scholarship. It means a lot. It helps
4 us out. But, you know, I think it still
5 qualifies because I think my impact is so
6 much greater in this role.

7 As an educator I'll get 16 students
8 every year to--they're going to be potential
9 physical therapist assistants. So not only
10 am I educating future health care
11 professionals, but I'm also the clinical
12 coordinator. So I am negotiating contracts
13 with hospitals, skilled nursing facilities
14 outpatient clinics where I'm putting
15 students in these places to get their in the
16 field experience but also get jobs.

17 So I think the mission of the Talent
18 Attraction Program is to keep talent local
19 to that region, and I think I'm able to do
20 that on a bigger scale because I'm putting
21 these students in these clinical sites, but
22 they're coming away with jobs and they're
23 staying local. I'm able to keep them in the
24 tobacco region and serving the community.

25 I think the bigger impact is that we're

1 serving the health needs of our community
2 because, you know, we're still on the tail
3 end in kind of the part dealing with the
4 epidemic.

5 Also, you know, a lot of the things
6 that take away folks from the community are
7 preventable diseases, heart disease, stroke,
8 diabetes, and as rehab professionals we're
9 able to impact that.

10 I think that as much as I love being in
11 the clinic to, you know, help folks, I think
12 I can make that impact 16 fold every year.
13 So in this role, you know, if you grant me
14 the scholarship these next two years, it
15 allows me to continue to push that and
16 change the, you know, community.

17 So, you know, if you need anymore
18 information, you know, on what that looks
19 like and how to put that into action, I'm
20 happy to catch up with you guys afterwards.

21 I just want to thank you for your time
22 and thank you for the scholarship that you
23 granted me and also my students, friends,
24 and colleagues, because a lot of the tobacco
25 funding that you sent that way, I've seen it

1 change their lives. So thank you guys so
2 much for your time.

3 MS. CLARK: Thank you. Stephanie--

4 MS. KIM: Just to explain some
5 background information, the Talent
6 Attraction Program rules state that we give
7 for certain occupations that are hard to
8 fill, one of which is a physical therapist.

9 So, you know, in our role as we grant
10 them to practicing physical therapists, but
11 in his new role he is training physical
12 therapists, which is not exactly the same
13 thing, and so I told him if he wanted to
14 request an exception from this committee
15 that he could do that.

16 So it's a little bit different. It
17 doesn't exactly fall into our rules so
18 that's why we wanted to bring this to you.

19 DERICK SIMPSON: And if I may add, to
20 be in this role you have to be a physical
21 therapist. That's the job qualifications.
22 So you can't be an assistant. You can't be
23 an M.D. or anything. You have to be a
24 physical therapist.

25 If you look on the governing body, the

1 American Physical Therapy Association, it
2 lists five roles for physical therapists.
3 We treat, we consult, we do education, we
4 are research and administration.

5 So, I mean, I guess you're getting into
6 technicalities but, you know, for me it's
7 the greater good of impacting the community,
8 but I feel like I meet that in a roundabout
9 way. I'd just like to add that.

10 MS. CLARK: Thank you for that
11 addition.

12 Does the committee want to discuss this
13 now or we can push it down to when we
14 actually talk about the Talent Attraction
15 Program? What are your thoughts? Anyone
16 have any questions?

17 SENATOR RUFF: Madam Chair.

18 MS. CLARK: Yes.

19 SENATOR RUFF: I think we can deal with
20 this at the same time when we deal with any
21 other issue with the Talent Attraction.

22 MS. CLARK: Okay. All right. Then we
23 will talk about that after we discuss our
24 grants here.

25 Okay. So we'll move into the

1 Competitive Education applications. Let's
2 talk about those.

3 MS. HUMPHREYS: Thank you. The
4 Commission received 12 applications by the
5 July 28 deadline for the fiscal year '24
6 Competitive Education program. One of
7 those applications was withdrawn and won't
8 be considered at this time.

9 I would be discussing the application
10 of my focus area, and I don't know if it
11 pleases you to vote after each focus area,
12 if you want to do that.

13 MS. CLARK: I think that makes sense.

14 Yes.

15 MS. HUMPHREYS: Okay. Wonderful.

16 Our first focus area is Advanced
17 Manufacturing Workforce Training. We
18 received an application from Central
19 Virginia Community College Educational
20 Foundation for their CVCC Advanced
21 Manufacturing with Energy Technology
22 Expansion. They requested \$220,878. I'm
23 just going to round up.

24 CVCC is recognized as the leading
25 workforce trainer throughout the Central

1 Virginia region. They are requesting funds
2 to purchase and install equipment for their
3 Advanced Manufacturing Workforce training
4 programs that will expand their program
5 capacity and also advance training of the
6 students on state-of-art equipment that
7 accurately simulates their future work
8 environment so that they can complete their
9 programs job ready.

10 The CVCC is putting--Education
11 Foundation is putting forth about \$235,000
12 in private company and private foundation
13 funding.

14 This will result in students completing
15 credentials annually. This will increase
16 that by 45 from present baseline of 60 to
17 105 in the following areas: Mechatronics,
18 Machine Tool CSC, Nuclear Technology
19 Associates, Industrial Maintenance CSC, and
20 Computer and Electronics Technology
21 Associates.

22 The grant funds will support equipment
23 purchases for those programs. This project
24 does support the Lynchburg regions
25 manufacturing sector, including companies

1 that are part of the nuclear energy hub
2 there. It will allow for expansion in their
3 class size.

4 A letter from the Central Virginia
5 Workforce Development Board identified a
6 regional demand for almost 1,500 production
7 workers with almost 400 openings specific to
8 metal fabrication. A list of high demand
9 occupations specifically for the nuclear
10 energy hub was included and shows those
11 entry level salaries ranging from \$50,000 to
12 \$80,000. Employer letters supporting the
13 project were from Deltra, BWXT, Framatone,
14 American Hoffmann Corporation, and AMB, Inc.

15 Staff recommendation is approval of a
16 \$220,877.86 award.

17 Our next project submitted by the
18 Central Virginia Planning District
19 Commission entitled the ACA Classical & CTE
20 Institute Welding Program. They are
21 requesting \$318,255.

22 The Appomattox County Government is
23 partnering with the Appomattox Christian
24 Academy, ACA for short, and Central Virginia
25 Community College to create the ACA

1 Classical & CTE Academy. These partners are
2 renovating, upfitting, equipping the
3 historic Carver-Price School in the town of
4 Appomattox and looking at establishing phase
5 one, which will include welding, emergency
6 medical technician training, and performing
7 arts.

8 The county has provided the building.
9 The Appomattox Christian Academy is
10 renovating and upfitting the space and
11 operating the classical education
12 programming. The Central Virginia Community
13 College will operate the career and
14 technical education programs.

15 This will allow CVCC to expand its
16 footprint in Appomattox to provide that CTE
17 education for dual-enrollment students,
18 adult certificate candidates and workforce
19 training participants alike. They propose
20 to house 22 welding booths and fabrication
21 space that will simulate the real-world
22 working environment.

23 And let's see. The matching funds that
24 they're putting forth for this \$318,000
25 project total out to be a little over \$1.1

1 million. Most of it is--I would say about
2 half of it is committed at this time.

3 The project outputs, this will increase
4 welding enrollment by 39 students annually,
5 bringing them up from a baseline of 143 to
6 182.

7 This particular application is
8 supporting the welding sector. It
9 establishes the 22-booth welding and
10 fabrication space and it will be used--the
11 grant funding will be used for equipping
12 costs for welding training space and for an
13 additional six welding booths. Seven
14 private sector employers were submitted
15 along with other letters of support from
16 organizations in the region.

17 The staff recommends approval of a
18 \$318,255 award.

19 MS. CLARK: Thank you. Does anyone
20 have any questions about this grant from
21 the committee on either of these two? Any
22 questions?

23 Is there anyone that would like to
24 speak--I'm sorry.

25 MS. RATLIFF: Just a quick question. I

1 see they have \$500,000 of grant application
2 to Go Virginia. If that should not
3 materialize, is the project still a go?
4 The project doesn't hinge on that does it?

5 MS. HUMPHREYS: I don't think so.
6 They're significantly over matched with
7 what they're proposing.

8 MS. CLARK: All right. Is there anyone
9 in the audience that would like to speak to
10 either of these two grants? If so, come
11 forward and state your name. Anyone?

12 Okay. Seeing none, what's the
13 Committee's pleasure on doing this in a
14 block? Does anyone need to pull either of
15 these two out?

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Ms. Chairman, I make a
17 motion that we accept the staff
18 recommendation for both projects, for 4176
19 and 4178.

20 MR. WALKER: Second.

21 MS. CLARK: Motion has been made and
22 seconded. Is there any discussion?
23 Hearing none, all those in favor. (Ayes).
24 Any opposed? (No response).

25 Okay. Those two are approved.

1 Let's move on to the High School
2 Equivalency Program section.

3 MS. HUMPHREYS: We have one application
4 in this focus area from Washington County
5 Public School System doing business as
6 Mount Rogers Regional Adult Education
7 program.

8 This proposal requests funds for the
9 Southwest Virginia RACE to GED/NEDP Program.
10 NEDP stands for National External Diploma
11 Program. So both of these being high school
12 diploma equivalents.

13 Washington County is requesting
14 \$140,000 to cover the cost of both on-demand
15 practice testing and GED tests for
16 participants. Students on the NEDP track
17 will receive tuition assistance and
18 commission funds will also cover the cost of
19 the National Career Readiness Certificate as
20 well as the National Career Readiness
21 Certificate Program site licence fees. It
22 also includes support for marketing the
23 program.

24 Matching funds are coming from three
25 regional adult education programs. Wise

1 County Public Schools, Russell County Public
2 Schools, and Washington County Public
3 Schools. Those contributions reflect
4 federal funds to pay part-time instructors
5 who will work with students in the testing
6 pipeline.

7 The projected outputs would be to
8 increase annual enrollment by 40 each year
9 so that will develop 120 folks with high
10 school equivalent degrees over the
11 three-year grant period. They intend to
12 award 110 GEDs, two NEDPs, and 160 National
13 Career Readiness Certificates.

14 The Commission has a long history of
15 supporting these programs. It's served 16
16 localities in Southwest Virginia, and since
17 2004, 20 years ago almost, 10 awards from
18 the Tobacco Commission totaling over \$1.3
19 million have assisted thousands of
20 residences in this region to obtain high
21 school equivalency diplomas.

22 The application noted that 71 percent
23 of those aged 24 to 64 without high school
24 diplomas aren't participating in the labor
25 force. The last Commission grant ended in

1 May 2022. The organization wants to
2 reestablish this resource and to increase
3 the number of students participating.

4 They did ask for marketing support, and
5 if it's included in the future applications,
6 it's important that the plan be evaluated to
7 determine how effective their marketing
8 methods are for attracting students. So as
9 a condition of this award the grantee will
10 be required to track the referral source of
11 each participant and include that
12 information with the final reporting at the
13 end of the grant period.

14 The staff recommends a grant award of
15 \$140,000 contingent upon the following:
16 One, verification of all matching funds are
17 approved and available, and, two, the
18 grantee will track the referral source for
19 each participant and report that information
20 at the project's end.

21 MS. CLARK: Okay. Thank you. Are
22 there any questions for Vicki from the
23 Committee? No one? No questions.

24 Is there anyone that would like to
25 speak to this grant from the audience?

1 Okay. Seeing none, is there a motion
2 for this--

3 SENATOR RUFF: Madam Chair, we've been
4 doing this for a lot of years. Do we have
5 any track record that those people are
6 actually getting jobs? Anything more
7 than--

8 MS. CLARK: Anyone that can answer,
9 answer that question?

10 MS. HUMPHREYS: The Commission itself
11 has not tracked that information. I
12 believe that the Adult Education Programs
13 may have that information. But you make a
14 great point.

15 KATHY HODGES: The ones from Southside,
16 that has been tracked. When I managed that
17 grant--

18 MS. CLARK: Could you come up and state
19 your name and tell us who you--I know who
20 you are, but everybody else might not. But
21 I know you have good information to share
22 with us.

23 KATHY HODGES: Good afternoon. My name
24 is Kathy Hodges and I'm the executive
25 director at the Franklin Center in Rocky

1 Mount and we formally had a GED grant from
2 the Commission. I managed it for years and
3 that currently resides with Southside
4 Virginia Community College.

5 The entire time that I was managing
6 it--and it was actually because of Senator
7 Ruff. He asked for some of that data. We
8 started tracking it so we did have
9 information documented on employment. And I
10 know the individual GED programs track that
11 as well. So it's information that could be
12 obtained, but we tracked it at the time.

13 MS. CLARK: Okay. Thank you. That's
14 good information.

15 KATHY HODGES: Thank you.

16 SENATOR RUFF: Madam Chair, I will
17 support it conditional that we may have the
18 requirement to start putting together that
19 information.

20 MS. CLARK: Okay. And provide to us.

21 SENATOR RUFF: Yes. Employment and
22 wage.

23 MS. CLARK: Employment and wage. Okay.
24 And the suggestion was just made that those
25 statistics be provide on a quarterly basis,

1 so if we could write that in the
2 recommendation.

3 Are there any other questions or
4 comments from the Committee?

5 MS. COX: Madam Chair, I'd make a
6 motion that we approve the grant with
7 Senator Ruff's recommendation to reporting.

8 MS. RATLIFF: Second.

9 MS. CLARK: Thank you. Any discussion?
10 All those in favor? (Ayes). Any opposed?
11 (No response). Okay. Thank you.

12 All right. Let's move on to the
13 Post-Secondary Programs starting with 4171.

14 MS. HUMPHREYS: Okay. We have three
15 applications in this focus area. The first
16 one from Patrick & Henry Community College
17 Foundation for their Healthcare Training
18 Expansion. They're requesting \$149,140 for
19 this endeavor.

20 The community college is seeking
21 assistance with expanding healthcare
22 training capacity including Nurse Aide,
23 Clinical Medical Assistant, Medication Aide,
24 and Phlebotomy Technician training. These
25 programs lead to short-term credentials that

1 quickly allow students to enter healthcare
2 careers in high demand in the region.

3 The need for expansion was provided and
4 it's twofold. One, to expand the number of
5 classes offered, the community college
6 requires an additional instructor, and,
7 second, the Franklin Center has a growing
8 waitlist of students interested in pursuing
9 nurse aide and other healthcare training and
10 they'll partner with Patrick Henry Community
11 College to expand the training for those
12 healthcare career offerings both in the
13 number of students served and the number of
14 service locations offered.

15 As matching funds they're presenting
16 \$130,909 in state funding from the community
17 college and \$20,000 in-kind funding from the
18 Franklin Center for use of their training
19 laboratory and office space.

20 They plan to increase by 29 credentials
21 annually for Nurse Aide certifications.
22 Clinical Medical Assistants. That would be
23 an increasing by 15 credentials from 70 to
24 85. Certified Medication Aide would be and
25 increase of 21 credentials. They have zero

1 now. That will take them to 21. Certified
2 Phlebotomy Technician would be an increase
3 of 17 credentials granted from 28 to 45.

4 It's expanding on a successful Nurse
5 Aide program that the Commission actually
6 helped establish. An additional instructor
7 is going to allow the college to address
8 capacity limitations at their main campus
9 and allow them to expand with a second
10 location at the Franklin Center. Both
11 locations currently have a waitlist.

12 Grant funds will support a portion of
13 the salary for the additional healthcare
14 instructor in the first two years. That
15 will be 70 percent in year one, 50 percent
16 in year two.

17 The Virginia Board of Nursing limits
18 the instructor to the student ratio to 1:10,
19 and the instructor is required prior to
20 consideration of approval of the second
21 training location at the Franklin Center.

22 The application reported 329 nurse aide
23 job advertisements in their service region
24 and confirmation of employer demand provided
25 for LifePoint Hospitals, Martinsville Health

1 and Rehab, Carilion Clinic, and Sovah Health
2 of Martinsville.

3 Staff is recommending approval of a
4 \$149,140 grant award.

5 Next is Southwest Virginia Community
6 College. They're requesting \$71,206 for
7 EquipEMT: Strengthening Emergency Medical
8 Training through Advanced Equipment project.
9 This would support the purchase of training
10 equipment to serve its EMS programs.

11 The college operates the program at the
12 Southwest Virginia Community College campus,
13 as well as Wytheville Community College.
14 The proposed equipment is going to serve the
15 programs at both locations.

16 The application is seeking our support
17 for 50 percent of the cost of multiple
18 simulation manikins and related equipment.

19 The Southwest Community College
20 Educational Foundation will contribute
21 \$37,000 as matched toward the equipment
22 purchases and they'll also use \$34,206 in
23 Perkins Federal Grant Funding to directly
24 match Tobacco funds as well.

25 The project will result in a 20 percent

1 enrollment increase in three program tracks.
2 That would be the Associates degree in
3 Emergency Medical Services Technology
4 increase of six; Career Services Certificate
5 in Advanced EMT, that will be an increase of
6 three, and Career Services Certificate in
7 basic EMT skills.

8 So the Southwest Virginia Paramedic
9 Program is comprised of basically all of the
10 community colleges serving Southwest
11 Virginia region, Southwest Virginia
12 Community College, Wytheville and Mountain
13 Empire and Virginia Highlands. Collectively
14 it's the only EMS program west of Radford
15 and serves adult learners from around the
16 regions who want to become EMTs.

17 Over the next seven years the demand
18 for EMTs is expected to grow by 11 percent.
19 And the application notes that 14 EMS crews
20 in Southwest Virginia have a need for 103
21 EMT positions, 27 Advanced EMT positions,
22 and 56 paramedics.

23 As we know from considering other
24 healthcare programs in this region, the
25 opportunity for clinical learning

1 opportunities is extremely limited. A lot
2 of the hands-on training must be done in a
3 simulated healthcare setting, and unlike
4 other simulation equipment available
5 throughout the region which simulate a wide
6 variety of medical situations, the equipment
7 requested in this proposal is targeted to
8 simulating the traumatic and emergency
9 events typical for those in the EMS field.

10 We are recommending approval of a
11 \$71,206 grant award.

12 Next we have a request from the
13 Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
14 Foundation for their Regional Simulation Lab
15 for Nursing and Allied Health. This is a
16 request of \$600,000.

17 You might remember from our January
18 meeting--our May meeting at the higher
19 education center you toured the simulated
20 cadaver lab. That was a project that we
21 funded and this sort of expands on that.

22 This would support the development of
23 the Regional Simulation Lab and this is a
24 1,200 square foot lab. It will support
25 multiple existing healthcare programs and

1 provide additional clinical training space
2 these health and nursing careers.

3 The Commission funds will be used for
4 equipment purchases including high, medium,
5 and low adult fidelity and pediatric
6 manikins, audio visual equipment, and other
7 items required for simulated medical
8 facilities, like a hospital room, home care,
9 and simulated ambulance.

10 The Commission funds will also be used
11 for the renovation of space at the higher
12 education center in the amount of \$173,730
13 to house the lab.

14 Matching funds are coming from a
15 variety of sources to also fund this effort.
16 They have a pending application with the
17 Wellspring Foundation for \$400,000, \$300,000
18 from ARC, and Smith County \$25,000, and
19 Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center
20 is matching with \$75,000, and its Foundation
21 with \$100,000. So they've got a lot of
22 sources that are buying into this, to the
23 establishment of this lab.

24 It's anticipated to serve approximately
25 450 students across several programs. These

1 would include 170 students from the Linwood
2 Holton Governor's School; 60 students from
3 Emory & Henry College's lab school; RN to
4 BSN and Family Nurse Practitioner programs
5 from King University, Radford, UVA-Wise 52
6 students; Appalachian College of Pharmacy 42
7 students; the EMT/EMS credentials would
8 support 100 students; and VCU Certified
9 Registered Nurse Anesthetists and Doctor of
10 Nurse Anesthesia program 20 students;
11 Clinical Lab Technicians six students.

12 So you can see that there is--it's
13 going to get a lot of usage.

14 This is a well-known--the fact that
15 clinical opportunities need to be expanded
16 is well-known issue for healthcare programs
17 in the region. Simulation labs are going to
18 serve an important role for training these
19 students to practice clinical
20 decision-making skills.

21 And let's see. The proposed regional
22 lab will provide additional capacity for
23 programs across the region while creating
24 space for programs which don't currently
25 have a dedicated lab.

1 The application noted eleven existing
2 organizations and programs likely to use the
3 facility. Because this facility serves
4 existing training programs, it is not likely
5 to result in a substantial new education
6 outcome like new degrees or credentials, but
7 will provide essential training
8 opportunities to people in the allied health
9 and nursing pipelines.

10 There is very strong demand for
11 healthcare providers in all positions and at
12 all levels. The application documented
13 almost 1,400 open positions with Ballad
14 Health, 52 openings with Holston Medical
15 Group, and 178 openings with Carilion
16 Clinic, and as we know healthcare fields
17 typically pay above average wages.

18 The requested amount is quite large
19 relative to other requests received during
20 this funding round, but the amount is 38
21 percent of the estimated \$1.6 million total
22 project cost.

23 The staff is recommending approval of
24 \$600,000 in grant award.

25 MS. CLARK: So we heard about three

1 grants for the post-secondary programs.
2 Does anyone on the Committee have questions
3 about those you would like to ask?
4 Comments?

5 SENATOR RUFF: I'd move them to be
6 approved in block.

7 MS. CLARK: Okay. Motion is made that
8 they be approved in a block. Does anyone
9 have any discussion on that? Second?

10 MR. HITE: Second.

11 MS. CLARK: All those in favor?
12 (Ayes). All right. Any opposed? (No
13 response).

14 Okay. So we made a motion they need to
15 be approved in a block. Do I have a motion
16 to specifically approve these grants?

17 SENATOR RUFF: So move.

18 MS. CLARK: Okay. Thank you. Is there
19 a second?

20 MR. HITE: Second.

21 MS. CLARK: All those in favor.
22 (Ayes.) All right.

23 The next section is the Workforce
24 Training.

25 MS. HUMPHREYS: We have five

1 applications to consider. The first one is
2 from the Danville Community College
3 Educational Foundation to establish a
4 Class-B Commercial Driver's License
5 Non-Credit Workforce Program and they are
6 requesting \$291,000 for this project.

7 They established a Class A or CDL A
8 program during the spring 2023 semester, but
9 since creating that their Workforce Services
10 group have received many requests from
11 community partners to create a Class B CDL
12 program to meet the area needs, and DCC has
13 located and preliminarily secured a
14 potential site in the City of Danville to
15 offer this training.

16 They intend to place a modular building
17 on this site which will provide an office
18 for a faculty member, a classroom for
19 instruction, and an onsite bathroom for the
20 instructor and students, and also will allow
21 additional space to house a new CDL
22 simulator that's designed for these CDL
23 students. The modular building will also be
24 temperature controlled so that they can
25 provide these training opportunities year

1 round.

2 The funds will be matched with \$343,000
3 from Danville Community College to support
4 new staff position, supplies, continuous
5 charges, and equipment during that two-year
6 start-up period for the program, and they're
7 going to request \$15,000 from the City of
8 Danville for site development costs.

9 They're expecting to award 60 CDL B
10 credentials annually.

11 The modular classroom is 24 feet by 50
12 feet. It is--the cost of that is \$122,081
13 and the CDL B simulator with related
14 training services which is required for the
15 start-up of the program is \$111,000. So
16 that will play into their support for
17 operating the program.

18 This is a short-term workforce
19 credential. They can complete it within
20 three weeks and that provides workforce
21 opportunities for jobs with average wages
22 ranging from \$15 to \$40 an hour depending on
23 the company, the hiring company.

24 SENATOR RUFF: Madam Chair.

25 MS. CLARK: Yes.

1 SENATOR RUFF: Vicki, can you tell us
2 the difference between a Class A and Class
3 B?

4 MS. HUMPHREYS: Yes. You're trying to
5 stump me, aren't you?

6 Yes. The CDL A is for driving tractor
7 trailers and large buses. The CDL B is for
8 a lot of the big box trucks that you see
9 Amazon using, Federal Express. So those
10 things that provide delivery services that
11 are very popular right now.

12 SENATOR RUFF: But that doesn't
13 describe B.

14 MS. HUMPHREYS: I'm sorry?

15 SENATOR RUFF: And B?

16 MS. HUMPHREYS: Oh. That's B.

17 SENATOR RUFF: Oh. I'm sorry.

18 MS. CLARK: The box truck is B.

19 SENATOR RUFF: What's the
20 differentiation between A and B?

21 MS. HUMPHREYS: The size of the vehicle
22 I believe and the weight.

23 SENATOR RUFF: Okay.

24 MS. HUMPHREYS: Well, think about, you
25 know, a CDL A for a tractor trailer and

1 then when the Amazon delivery person comes
2 to your house, they're driving a CDL B
3 class vehicle.

4 SENATOR RUFF: Okay.

5 MS. HUMPHREYS: Okay. So let's see.
6 They're going to locate this program on
7 available property that is owned by the
8 City of Danville. This is located near
9 DCC's main campus. It meets all their
10 requirements for the program. They did
11 give us draft lease agreement for a
12 five-year term renewable annually.

13 We did ask for cost estimates for both
14 a lease and purchase option for the modular
15 classroom to determine whether leasing would
16 be a more cost-effective option, but only an
17 additional \$29,081 in grant funds would be
18 needed for the purchase option at \$122,000
19 and that would provide them longer term use
20 of the classroom facility compared to \$93,000
21 for a three-year lease.

22 The cost estimate from Boxx Modular for
23 purchasing the modular classroom was less
24 than originally budgeted, which reduces the
25

1 funding request from \$291,000 to \$233,081.

2 DCC identified six privately owned
3 businesses with identified need to fill 52
4 positions immediately. Also the Virginia
5 DMV is now requiring that all new Virginia
6 CDL drivers complete an approved Virginia
7 CDL driver education course and the licenses
8 are issued based on the class and the type
9 of commercial license.

10 No other community colleges within a
11 one-hour drive are currently offering the
12 Class B CDL certification training program.
13 They intend to offer up to ten cohorts
14 annually serving between 60 and 75 students
15 and estimates 60 students will complete the
16 program and get that CDL certification.

17 We're recommending approval of a
18 \$233,081 award grant, including cost for the
19 purchase of the mobile modular classroom.

20 Next up is Mountain Empire Community
21 College.

22 SENATOR RUFF: Before you--

23 MS. HUMPHREYS: Yeah. Okay.

24 SENATOR RUFF: Is there--in their
25 program is there any behind-the-wheel

1 training or is it strictly modular or
2 strictly--

3 MS. HUMPHREYS: Is Shannon Hair here?
4 He can explain the--

5 MS. CLARK: Mr. Hair, please come
6 forward.

7 SHANNON HAIR: Good afternoon. Thank
8 you, Madam Chair. Question, Senator Ruff?

9 MS. CLARK: State your name.

10 SHANNON HAIR: Sorry. Shannon Hair. I
11 serve as the Vice President of
12 Institutional Advancement and Development
13 for Danville Community College.

14 SENATOR RUFF: My question is: Is this
15 just in the classroom or is there any
16 requirement for on-the-road training?

17 SHANNON HAIR: Yes, sir. It's both.
18 We'll have both in the classroom and on the
19 highway.

20 SENATOR RUFF: Okay. Thank you.

21 SHANNON HAIR: Also answering your
22 question earlier on Class B size, your
23 trash trucks, your transit trucks, your
24 dump trucks, your school buses, all require
25 a Class B.

1 MS. CLARK: Is there a specific tonnage
2 definition or differentiation between A and
3 B?

4 SHANNON HAIR: It is. It's tied to
5 tonnages and size and to length. I can get
6 those, but that's the difference. Class A
7 is a much larger truck, obviously your
8 transfer trucks.

9 What we've encountered is localities
10 are more interested in the smaller trucks.
11 Again it's a little bit cheaper to cover
12 that cost. It's a little bit quicker time
13 for that student to go through a class. So
14 localities and those businesses that are
15 listed in support all have those smaller
16 trucks and need those drivers for their
17 business.

18 SENATOR RUFF: Thank you.

19 MS. RATLIFF: Question.

20 SHANNON HAIR: Yes, ma'am.

21 MS. RATLIFF: Does the employer pay for
22 this training for those students?

23 SHANNON HAIR: There's no cost to the
24 employer.

25 MS. RATLIFF: I'm sorry?

1 SHANNON HAIR: There's no cost to the
2 employer.

3 MS. RATLIFF: The student--is the
4 student--

5 SHANNON HAIR: We have fast forward
6 funding. We have state funding.

7 MS. RATLIFF: So it's free?

8 SHANNON HAIR: Yes, ma'am.

9 MS. RATLIFF: Okay. Thanks.

10 MS. CLARK: Are there any other
11 questions while Shannon is at the podium?

12 SHANNON HAIR: Is that good, Senator
13 Ruff?

14 SENATOR RUFF: I'm trying to think of
15 another one.

16 MS. CLARK: Thank you.

17 SHANNON HAIR: Thank y'all.

18 MS. HUMPHREYS: We'll move on to the
19 next project, which is Mountain Empire
20 Community College. This is their Heavy
21 Equipment Operator Program for which
22 they're requesting \$92,705 in funding.

23 It's supporting the establishment of a
24 Heavy Equipment Operator II training program
25 at the MECC Center for Workforce and

1 Innovation of Appalachia. And they're
2 currently developing a Level I program
3 that's going to provide a pipeline of
4 students for this Level II training that
5 they're trying to establish. They're
6 planning to start this Level I cohort, the
7 first Level I cohort is in January of 2024
8 and the Level II would begin in July 2024.

9 The commission funds would be used to
10 purchase equipment, supplies, including a
11 Bobcat Telehandler, safety cones and barrels
12 and a laser level, which is required for the
13 NCCER HEO Level II training.

14 The applicant is putting up a portion
15 of an existing AMLER grant in the amount of
16 four--I'm sorry--\$44,831 to match this
17 request. That's going to be used to
18 renovating some instructional space for the
19 program and a John Deere compact utility
20 tractor and tiller was purchased and that's
21 required for the HEO I program.

22 But they're going to use the purchase
23 of that piece of equipment as cash match as
24 well and they'll also be contributing
25 supplies required for Pearson Proforma and

1 NCCER instruction and testing.

2 They plan to enroll 20 students with 15
3 completing the program. The credentials
4 they'll gain are the HEO I, which is a
5 prerequisite of course, and the NCCER Core,
6 NCCER Equipment Operator Level I, and VDOT
7 Work Zone Flagger Certification.

8 This further expands offerings at their
9 Center for Workforce and Innovation in
10 Appalachia. That facility is a former
11 elementary school that houses several of
12 their programs including Lineman, CDL,
13 Dental Assisting, and newly created
14 Precision--I don't know why I can't say
15 that--Precision Machining Program.

16 Each of these programs have received
17 Commission funding in recent years. The
18 Commission has provided nearly 1.1 million
19 to support renovations and program related
20 equipment and other expenses.

21 These programs wouldn't be--could not
22 be accommodated at the main campus so having
23 this other facility has been very helpful in
24 terms of career and technical education in
25 those fields.

1 Heavy Equipment Operator Level I and II
2 programs are noncredit, short-term
3 credentials. They're available through the
4 Fast Forward Program. Employees with HEO
5 certifications are in very high demand and
6 are required to work on multiple types of
7 job sites, including those performing
8 construction, mining, and/or excavation
9 work. Compensation for heavy equipment
10 operators averages about almost \$42,000
11 annually.

12 We're recommending approval of a
13 \$92,705 grant award.

14 MS. COX: On the flagger certification
15 do we know or could we see if maybe that
16 could transfer to railroad flagger,
17 different things like that?

18 We talk about high demand. You know,
19 there are delays because of flaggers and
20 railroad crossings. Is that something that
21 we could maybe look at and see if that could
22 encompass railroads as well if they would be
23 willing to use them?

24 MS. HUMPHREYS: I can certainly check
25 into that.

1 MS. CLARK: Excellent point. Thank
2 you.

3 MS. HUMPHREYS: Okay. Next up is the
4 Southside Virginia Community College
5 Foundation. They're requesting \$316,000
6 for their Accelerating Truck Driver
7 Training project, and they're proposing an
8 expansion to their Truck Driver Training
9 program.

10 As we know, the truck driving industry
11 is rapidly changing and evolving everywhere
12 and demand for truck drivers is at all time
13 high.

14 So in response to these increased
15 workforce demands and the legislation that I
16 mentioned before about CDL test takers to
17 complete coursework through a certified
18 training facility, the Southside Virginia
19 Community College proposes adding additional
20 four trucks and four trailers to its fleet
21 and hiring an additional truck driver
22 training instructor.

23 Two of the trucks and trailers will be
24 provided by the Southside Virginia Community
25 College match. Those are to replace

1 outdated equipment in their existing fleet.
2 That will improve safety and quality of
3 instruction.

4 The Commission funds would go toward
5 the additional two trucks and trailers to
6 expand the fleet and increase the capacity
7 of the program. That will also necessitate
8 an additional instructor which Southside
9 Virginia Community College would cover
10 through match.

11 So they're proposing \$402--almost
12 \$403,000 in match to fund that additional
13 instructor and purchase those replacement
14 tractor trailers. This would help them
15 award 24 additional credentials annually to
16 bring the total program completions to 206
17 each year.

18 Their program, their Truck Driver
19 Training school is the only TDT program that
20 exists within their 4,200 square mile
21 service area. Similar programs exist in
22 Richmond and Danville, but students have to
23 drive long distances to access those
24 programs. Furthermore, many students within
25 the service area experience poverty and

1 inadequate access to transportation, making
2 these neighboring programs inaccessible for
3 many individuals. The community college has
4 provided this truck driver training since
5 1996.

6 We're recommending approval of a
7 \$316,000 grant award.

8 SENATOR RUFF: Madam Chairman, I'd like
9 to thank Vicki for that explanation. When
10 you read the title, I thought you were
11 going to teach me to drive faster.

12 MS. HUMPHREYS: I think they can do
13 that all on their own, at least the ones
14 I'm seeing.

15 Okay. Our next project is from the
16 Virginia Highlands Community College
17 Educational Foundation. This is an
18 expansion of their Diesel Technology program
19 for which they're requesting \$202,300.

20 They'll use the Commission funds to
21 purchase equipment including high-capacity
22 lift systems, heavy duty forklifts, high
23 weight capacity diesel engine stands, a live
24 front axle with air disc brake assembly, and
25 a large tire balancing apparatus. That's

1 going to allow them to modernize their
2 existing diesel programs.

3 They offer career service certificates
4 in diesel technology, as well as Associate's
5 degree, and they also offer CDL training.
6 They also will be able to create two new
7 programs, the Heavy Equipment Operator Level
8 I and II offerings. We heard a lot about
9 that for a previous project.

10 Matching equipment--I mean matching
11 funds will be used to purchase additional
12 equipment. That would be equipment
13 necessary to replace worn and obsolete
14 equipment. They want to modernize the
15 equipment that they're training these folks
16 on.

17 The source of the matching funds from
18 Virginia Highlands include \$159,300 from
19 VCCS Equipment Trust Fund and \$43,000 from
20 Perkins Funding Allocation.

21 So their outputs will be three new
22 program--or expansion of three programs for
23 diesel technology and the establishment of
24 two new programs for heavy equipment
25 operators, and that will result in 47 new

1 credentials being offered per year.

2 Virginia Highlands is the only
3 community college in the region that offers
4 diesel technologies that lead to academic
5 credentials. Other existing programs, such
6 as the one offered at Southwest Virginia
7 Community College, are non-credit programs.

8 VHCC has operated these programs since
9 2008 at off campus locations. So these
10 programs move on campus once construction of
11 their new Advanced Workforce and Technology
12 Center is complete.

13 The project will result in 52
14 additional credentials for each year. So
15 it's 52. They'll see an increase of
16 approximately six students enrolled in each
17 of those programs.

18 So we noticed on the application that
19 89 percent of students enrolled in the CSC
20 course will successfully complete and earn
21 the credential, but a much smaller number
22 will complete the Associate's degree.

23 When we asked them about that, they
24 said that due to extremely high demand for
25 diesel trained employees, 75 percent of the

1 students are employed in the field before
2 they even complete the training. Many of
3 them just choose to enter employment and
4 don't continue to complete an Associate's
5 degree. These are good paying jobs, average
6 compensation of \$40,726 a year.

7 We are recommending approval of a
8 \$202,300 grant for this project.

9 And our last project for consideration
10 is from Wytheville Community College. This
11 is for their Workforce, Education & Skills
12 Training Center. They're requesting
13 \$277,000 to assist them with the development
14 of that center.

15 The facility is a former automotive
16 dealership located in Marion. That was
17 acquired by Smyth County and then they
18 leased that facility. Smyth County leased
19 that facility to the college.

20 This is going to allow the community
21 college to open a satellite location to
22 house those Fast Forward eligible programs
23 for automotive, off-road diesel, and
24 welding.

25 Commission funds will be used for

1 facility improvements and to purchase
2 Automotive Service Excellence tools required
3 to receive accreditation for the program.

4 Wytheville Community College has
5 committed \$277,000 of HEETF, which is Higher
6 Education Equipment Trust Fund, money for
7 the project.

8 So their outputs will be establishing a
9 new satellite location and serving 38
10 students during the first year of operation,
11 achieving a total of 230 credentials.

12 Welding, just to give you an idea of
13 their program, it's currently offered at
14 another satellite location, the Crossroads
15 Institute in Galax, but by locating a second
16 program in Marion they'll be able to more
17 effectively serve students across the entire
18 service region. Moving to this new space
19 will also allow the program to accommodate
20 two additional students per year for the
21 automotive program.

22 The program has support from a lot of
23 businesses in the community--Crabtree Buick,
24 Boone Tractor, and Smyth County Machine.
25 The WEST Center will provide 38 potential

1 employees for these and other regional
2 employers.

3 Staff is recommending approval for a
4 grant award up to \$277,000. This is
5 conditioned upon the Grant Director's
6 approval of final documented cost estimates
7 from vendors and contractors for equipment
8 and renovations.

9 MS. CLARK: Okay. Thank you, Vicki.

10 So you've heard the summary of the five
11 Workforce Training Program grant
12 applications. Does anyone on the committee
13 have any questions or comments about those?
14 A lot of information.

15 SENATOR RUFF: I move that they be
16 approved in a block as recommended by the
17 staff.

18 MS. CLARK: Okay. Is there a second?

19 MR. HITE: Second.

20 MS. CLARK: Any discussion? All those
21 in favor say aye. (Ayes). Any opposed?
22 (No response). Okay. Motion carries.

23 Okay. So now we move to the Talent
24 Attraction Program. Is that right?

25 MS. KIM: Okay. So there are two items

1 on this one, one that you heard earlier
2 during public comment, but what I wanted to
3 bring to your attention is the Virginia
4 Department of Health Student Loan Repayment
5 Program.

6 I wanted to just give you some
7 background information. We had two Talent
8 Attraction programs. One was geared towards
9 primary healthcare professions that we ran
10 through the Virginia Department of Health
11 since they already had an existing program
12 with federal and state funds.

13 So we added Tobacco Commission funds so
14 that they could expand that program to those
15 in the tobacco region for basically doctors,
16 nurses, all the primary healthcare, mental
17 health professionals, dentists, pharmacists.

18 Then we had a separate program that the
19 Tobacco Commission ran that was for hard to
20 fill occupations such as teachers, specific
21 teachers, like secondary science and math
22 teachers. There's special educator.
23 There's physical therapists, occupational
24 therapists, speech therapists. So certain
25 occupations that we had concluded were the

1 hardest to fill in our region.

2 So specifically today I wanted to call
3 your attention to the Virginia Department of
4 Health grant from 2022. Yeah. 2022.

5 We had granted them one and a half
6 million dollars. We granted them a total of
7 five million since 2020, but this last grant
8 for one and a half million we ran again in
9 2023. We used our carry forward. But they
10 have only awarded \$379,000 last year and
11 \$82,000 this year.

12 There are several issues with this
13 program over the last couple of years. One
14 is that just the review process that they
15 have and the rubric scoring and the whole
16 process of selecting and applying and all
17 that has a lot of issues with it, and so
18 they were only able to award a small amount
19 and there is still a remaining balance of
20 \$969,000 on that grant.

21 Since we have paused our Talent
22 Attraction Program that the Tobacco
23 Commission is running, I am recommending
24 that we go ahead and rescind this remaining
25 balance of \$969,000 for the Department of

1 Health grant that is grant number 3937.

2 Because I think if we end up
3 reinstating the Talent Attraction Program,
4 I think we need to revamp it a little bit,
5 maybe run that through own offices rather
6 than the Department of Health and, you know,
7 looking at that in the future. But this has
8 a remaining balance and we'd like to rescind
9 that grant.

10 MS. CLARK: That balance is \$969,000?

11 MS. KIM: Right. It's grant 3937 to
12 the Department of Health.

13 MS. CLARK: Okay. Is there--

14 MS. COX: So, Stephanie, none of those
15 funds can be allocated to existing
16 recipients that are still finishing their
17 requirements?

18 MS. KIM: They already received their
19 money.

20 MS. COX: Okay.

21 MS. KIM: So the Department of Health,
22 they actually give their money on the front
23 end and there's a 24-month commitment.
24 They have all kinds of federal requirements
25 so there's all kinds of fallback if they

1 don't fulfill that. I don't think they've
2 ever had anybody default on those.

3 So the money is out the door for those
4 that have already been awarded. So this has
5 not been awarded. This would go back into
6 the education funds to be determined at some
7 future date how to spend.

8 MS. COX: Okay.

9 MS. CLARK: Final questions from the
10 Committee?

11 SENATOR RUFF: I move we rescind that
12 grant, whatever the number is.

13 MS. CLARK: \$969,000 for grant number
14 3937. Is there a second for that?

15 MR. HITE: Second.

16 MS. CLARK: All those in favor.
17 (Ayes). Any opposed? (No response).
18 Okay.

19 MS. KIM: The second action item
20 was--you heard from Mr. Simpson earlier
21 about having the exception to the Talent
22 Attraction program rules that were run
23 through the Tobacco Commission.

24 So the request is a motion to grant an
25 exception to the Talent Attraction Program

1 rules for Derick Simpson to be eligible for
2 a renewal award as a physical therapist,
3 clinical coordinator as opposed to the
4 requirement that he be a practicing physical
5 therapist.

6 MS. CLARK: Is there any questions,
7 comments, discussion?

8 MS. COX: So that's just tweaking his
9 title? Is that just--

10 MS. KIM: Well, it's granting an
11 exception to the rules because we require
12 that you be a physical therapist,
13 practicing physical therapist, and this one
14 is where he's a clinical coordinator as a
15 physical therapist. So it's slightly
16 different, which is why we're asking for an
17 exception.

18 MS. CLARK: So he explained he's
19 teaching and coordinating physical
20 therapists now and he's not acting
21 currently as a physical therapist.

22 MS. COX: Okay. So I'll make the
23 motion that we make that exception.

24 MS. CLARK: Okay. Motion has been
25 made. Is there a second?

1 MR. HITE: Second.

2 MS. CLARK: All in favor? (Ayes). Any
3 opposed? (No response). Thank you.

4 SENATOR RUFF: Stephanie, while we're
5 at that point, can we recap what we're
6 doing for the homegrown folks. You know,
7 at one time we offered scholarships and we
8 went forward, then reversed that and said
9 when they come back we'll--come back to the
10 region that we would reward them.

11 Are we now doing that or are we not
12 doing that?

13 MS. KIM: We are currently not doing
14 anything for four year financial
15 assistance. We paused the Talent
16 Attraction Program in January of '23.
17 That's where we left it.

18 So we had gone to a loan
19 forgiveness--we had a loan forgiveness
20 program for a while and then we had a
21 scholarship with a back end incentive to
22 come back and live and work in the region.
23 Then we went back to loan forgiveness and
24 then we went to this Talent Attraction
25 Program where we were giving incentives if

1 they would--after they graduated if they
2 came back to the region to work.

3 SENATOR RUFF: Well, we know that it's
4 easier to keep young people in the area
5 than it is to draw somebody from New Jersey
6 to come down who may or may not like our
7 area. So we need to get back into the
8 program of if someone wants to stay and
9 they match it up with a job here, that we
10 ought to reward them for trying.

11 MS. COX: Senator Ruff, we--obviously
12 there are--we looked at several different
13 issues. The Committee talked about it two
14 or three different times. So maybe it's
15 time for a brand new program.

16 Could staff maybe come back with some
17 potential recommendations to the Education
18 Committee so that we can take a look at that.

19 Because I agree we need some type of
20 program to entice and keep our folks here,
21 keep our talent in the tobacco region, but I
22 think that there were just some concerns with
23 the way some of the funds were allocated in
24 the past.

1 So is that something maybe we can look
2 at in January, Senator?

3 SENATOR RUFF: That would be a great
4 idea.

5 MS. KIM: We can definitely do that.
6 We can also work with the newly formed
7 Workforce Development Agency, who may be
8 developing programs related to talent
9 attraction. But we will seek their advice,
10 too, and work in coordination with them and
11 see if we can come back with some type of
12 program that would attract people to the
13 area to stay and live and work.

14 MS. COX: Okay. Great. Thank you.

15 MS. CLARK: Thank you. Any other
16 comments on that?

17 Okay. I think we have other business
18 on the agenda.

19 MR. VERSEN: There is no other
20 business.

21 MS. CLARK: No other business. Okay.

22 MS. HUMPHREYS: I just want to point
23 out that everyone should have reports on
24 our active education grants in Southern and
25 Southwest Virginia. Unfortunately, I

1 forgot to mark the active grant, education
2 grants with Southwest Virginia, but I think
3 if you read through the projects it will be
4 apparent that's where they're located.

5 This Committee has 29 active projects
6 putting almost \$5.8 million out into the
7 Southern region and 18 active projects
8 putting out \$4.2 million in the Southwest
9 region.

10 MS. CLARK: Thank you. If you didn't
11 get this sheet, just see Vicki and she can
12 get that for you.

13 MS. COX: While we have a captive
14 audience here that definitely responds to
15 needs of their community, going back to my
16 comment about the flaggers. There's a real
17 issue there on the VDOT side, on the
18 railroad side, on the utility side, on the
19 construction project side.

20 You know, we know that you guys respond
21 to the needs of employers, high growth, high
22 demand. I'm only one vote, but I feel like
23 if there were, you know, some applications
24 that were brought forward to help solve that
25 problem, then there should be several votes

1 in favor. So I just wanted to throw that
2 out there.

3 MS. CLARK: Yes. Thank you. That is
4 an excellent point.

5 Is there any public comment from the
6 floor? Would anyone like to get up and
7 speak? Okay. Hearing none, do we have a
8 motion to adjourn?

9 MS. RATLIFF: I'd make a motion.

10 MS. CLARK: Thank you. Is there a
11 second? All in favor? (Ayes). Meeting
12 adjourned.

13
14 PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED
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25

1 CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT REPORTER

2
3
4 I, Holly M. Bush, Notary Public for the
5 State of Virginia at Large, do hereby certify that
6 I was the Court Reporter who took down and transcribed
7 the proceedings of the Tobacco Region Revitalization
8 Commission, Education Committee meeting, when
9 held on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 2:45 p.m., at
10 The Inn at Blackstone, 707 Fourth Street, Blackstone,
11 Virginia.

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

15 Given under my hand this 6th day of November,
16 2023.

17 _____
18 Holly M. Bush

19
20 My commission expires
21 December 31, 2026.
22 Notary Registration No. 257683
23
24
25

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