

Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission
Southwest Virginia Committee Meeting
Hilton Richmond Downtown
501 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
Monday, January 7, 2025
9:00 a.m.

Commissioners Present

Delegate James W. Morefield, Chair
Senator T. Travis Hackworth, Vice-Chair
Delegate Jed Arnold
Mr. Edward Blevins
Ms. Amanda Cox
Dr. Sandra Frederick

Delegate Terry G. Kilgore
Secretary Matthew Lohr
Delegate Israel D. O'Quinn
Senator Todd E. Pillion
Mrs. Sarah L. Wilson (Remote)

Staff

Honorable James Campos
Mr. Stephen Versen
Mr. Jordan Butler
Ms. Sarah Capps
Ms. Vicki Humphreys

Ms. Stephanie Kim
Mr. Jerry Silva
Ms. Roz Stein
Ms. Emily Van Pelt
Ms. Sara Williams

Counsel for the Commission

Ms. Elizabeth Myers, Assistant Attorney General

Guests

Kendra Hayden, Director, Smyth EDA/IDA
Judson Hill, former member of the Georgia State Senate

Southwest Virginia Committee Chair Morefield opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

Commissioner Kilgore moved to approve the remote participation of Commissioner Wilson; Commissioner Hackworth seconded the motion; all members voted to approve.

Director Campos called roll and determined that a quorum was present.

Kilgore moved to approve the minutes from the previous Southwest Virginia Committee meeting on September 25, 2024; Commissioner Pillion seconded the motion; all members voted to approve.

The meeting was opened to public comment, and there was none.

Campos introduced Ms. Humphreys to present staff recommendations for grant awards. Kilgore requested the available amount; Humphreys confirmed that \$6M was available, total requests were just over \$5M, and recommendations totaled \$4.7M. Humphreys then presented the staff recommendations by award category, on which the group would vote in a block to take the following actions:

Agribusiness Grant requests, described on pages 58 through 60 of the Commission book: Award \$610,000 to Appalachian Sustainable Development for project #4293, ASD Agricultural Campus Phase I: Food Hub Expansion; and \$240,000 to the Lee County Livestock Association for project #4294, Round Two: Forage Improvement Initiative for Southwest Virginia.

Business Development Grant requests, described on pages 61 through 63 of the Commission book: Award \$515,000 to the Town of Pennington Gap for project #4239, Pennington Gap Multi-Purpose Building Kitchen Incubator, to support 50% of direct project expenses related to the development of the kitchen incubator space.

Other Economic Development Grant requests, described on pages 64 through 67 of the Commission book: Recommend a loan of \$405,480 of Southwest Virginia Commission funds to the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission through the Virginia Resources Authority contingent on a positive recommendation from VRA to make the loan to support project #4292, the SCTC / Verizon Wireless 5G Initiative; and award \$1,401,335 to the Virginia Coalfield Coalition, Inc. for project #4288, Buchanan/Tazewell Wireless Communication Job Growth Corridor project (460 Wireless).

Sites and Infrastructure Grant requests, described on Pages 67 through 70 of the Commission book: Award \$1,000,000 to Lee County for project #4295, Western Lee Sewer Phase I-A.

Tourism Grant requests described on Pages 71 through 74 of the Commission book: Award \$30,000 to the Town of Abingdon for project #4290 for no more than 50% of third-party contractual expenses related to the development of the Abingdon Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan; award \$25,000 to Tazewell County - Tourism Department for project #4299, Northwestern District Campground; and award \$500,000 to the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources for project #4289, Cumberland Outdoor Access Legacy.

Hackworth moved to table project #4296 from the Tazewell County Tourism Department in order to require Tazewell County to provide necessary documents; Pillion seconded; all members voted to approve.

The representative from Smyth County spoke in support of Project # 4297, the Groseclose Sewer/General Shale Infrastructure Improvements Design.

Hackworth moved to approve Project #4297 to Smyth Count Economic Development Authority for \$257,450; Pillion seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Kilgore moved that the Southwest Virginia Committee to approve in a block staff's recommendations for awards under the Agribusiness, Business Development, Other Economic Development, Sites and Infrastructure, and Tourism grants; Lohr seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Humphreys presented three requests for extensions and modifications, to be voted on in a block. Staff recommends approving the following requests: For Project #3689, a five-month extension to Lee County Livestock Association through June 1, 2025; for Project #3696, a one-year extension to Blue Ridge Discovery Center, Inc., through January 2026; for Project #3737, a one-year extension of the grant through January 1, 2026, to Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority, as well as a proposed change in project scope to support up to 50% of the cost of a mobile grain processing system contingent upon staff's approval of a detailed budget, updated operating plan, and lease agreement.

Kilgore moved to adopt the extensions and modifications in a block as recommended by staff; Commissioner Arnold seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Kilgore introduced Senator Hill from Georgia to speak about the economic impact of fly fishing in America, specifically in Southwest Virginia.

Morefield adjourned the meeting at 9:58 p.m.