

Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission
Full Commission Meeting
Hilton Richmond Downtown
501 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219
Monday, January 7, 2025
10:30 a.m.

Commissioners Present

Delegate James W. Morefield, Acting Chair	Mr. Jay D. Jennings (Remote)
Senator Lashrecse D. Aird (Remote)	Delegate Terry G. Kilgore
Delegate Jonathan “Jed” Arnold	Secretary Matthew Lohr
Mr. Edward Blevins	Senator L. Louise Lucas (Remote)
Mr. H. Wayne Carter, III	Delegate Daniel W. Marshall, III (Remote)
Ms. Gretchen Clark	Secretary Caren Merrick
Ms. Amanda Cox	Delegate Israel D. O’Quinn
Mr. Joel Cunningham	Honorable William A. Pace
Mr. Lee "Randy" Everett	Deputy Secretary Jason Powell
Mr. Watt R. Foster, Jr. (Remote)	Mr. Walter “Buddy” Shelton
Dr. Sandra Frederick	Mr. Hampton Wilkins
Mr. Richard T. Hite, Jr.	Mrs. Sarah L. Wilson (Remote)

Absent

Delegate Thomas A. Garrett, Jr.	Mr. Arthur “Dale” Moore
Senator T. Travis Hackworth	Senator Todd E. Pillion

Staff

Honorable James Campos	Ms. Stephanie Kim
Mr. Stephen Versen	Mr. Jerry Silva
Mr. Jordan Butler	Ms. Roz Stein
Ms. Sarah Capps	Ms. Emily Van Pelt
Ms. Adrian Chapman	Ms. Sara Williams
Ms. Vicki Humphreys	

Counsel for the Commission

Ms. Elizabeth Myers, Assistant Attorney General

Guests

Judson Hill, former member of the Georgia State Senate

Commission Acting Chair Morefield opened the Tobacco Commission meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Commissioner Kilgore moved to approve the remote participation of Commissioners Aird, Foster, Jennings, Lucas, Marshall, and Wilson; Commissioner Merrick seconded the motion; all members voted to approve the motion.

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

Commissioner Pace moved to approve the minutes from the previous full Commission meeting on September 26, 2024; Commissioner Arnold seconded the motion; all members voted to approve the motion.

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

Pace moved to postpone the election of Chair and Vice-Chair until the end of the meeting; Commissioner Lucas seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Campos presented the Executive Director Report on TRRC's thirteen strategic initiatives and invited Judson Hill, formerly of Georgia State Senate, to speak about the value of developing a fishing lodge in the footprint.

Arnold presented the report for the Energy Ingenuity Committee.

Commissioner Aird moved that the Commission accept as a block the Energy Committee's recommendations for Energy Catalyst-Planning Grant project numbers 4317, 4311, 4322, 4323, and 4320; and for Energy Execution Grant project numbers 4312 and 4315; Arnold seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Aird moved that the Commission approve the Energy Committee's recommendation to table Energy Catalyst-Planning Grant project number 4318; Arnold seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Commissioner Cox presented the Education Committee report and moved that the Commission accept as a block the Committee's recommendations for the Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training project number 4301; Workforce Training Program project numbers 4305, 4302, 4304, 4307, 4306, and 4308; Commissioner Frederick seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Commissioner Cox moved that the Commission accept the Education Committee's recommendation to approve the Talent Attraction Program (TAP) exception request from M. Dianis; Commissioner Lohr seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Commissioner Shelton presented the report for the Southern Virginia Committee and moved that the Commission accept the Committee's recommendations to approve a

final, one-year extension to January 31, 2026, for project number 3590; Commissioner Kilgore seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Pace presented the report for the Incentives & Loans Committee and moved that the Commission accept the Committee's recommendations to authorize staff to alter the current guidelines of the Commission's new Economic Development Workforce Housing Incentive Pilot Program by increasing the maximum per-unit incentive to \$50,000 and changing the income level target for these new units to generally be between 80 and 150% of Area Median Income; Commissioner Wilkins seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Pace moved that the Commission accept the Incentives & Loans Committee's recommendations to approve a Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund (TROF) award of up to \$50,000 for Project Maggie with the exceptions for wages, performance period, and award amount as discussed in closed session of the Incentives & Loan Committee; Kilgore seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Kilgore presented the Southwest Virginia Committee report and moved that the Commission accept as a block the Committee's recommendations to make the following awards for: Agribusiness project numbers 4293 and 4294; Business Development project number 4239; Other Economic Development project numbers 4292 and 4288; Sites and Infrastructure project numbers 4295 and 4297; and Tourism project numbers 4290, 4299, and 4289; and to table Business Development project number 4296; ; Arnold seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Commissioner Blevins presented the report of the Strategic Planning Committee. The Committee received updates from Virginia Tech on the Strategic Plan process; no actions were taken by the Committee.

Morefield informed the Commission that there would be no discussion on the Special Tourism Opportunity Request.

Campos introduced the review of the Commission's meeting schedule and the possibility of adding a fourth round of meetings in a year. Deputy Director Versen addressed the Executive Committee's November 25, 2024, discussion on the addition of a fourth meeting, which covered several possible approaches, including: increasing the number of grant rounds per year; changing the grant cycles to accept rolling applications; and, if adopted, scheduling that fourth meeting virtually and during the summer.

Versen introduced an updated electronic meeting policy that reflects the updated requirements at the state level.

Pace moved to adopt the updated electronic meeting policy; Lohr seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Versen reminded the Commission's citizen members that they must submit a financial disclosure form by the February 1 deadline; they should have received an email from the Ethics Council with information on filing this form online.

Morefield moved on to the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chair of the Commission, noting that members of the administration would abstain from this vote and calling for nominations.

Pace nominated Commissioner Will Morefield for the position of Chairman of the Tobacco Commission; Marshall seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Pace nominated Commissioner Lashrecse Aird for the position of Vice-Chair of the Tobacco Commission; Marshall seconded; all members voted to approve the motion.

Campos confirmed there was no new business.

Pace noted that the General Assembly Session was scheduled to start the next day and relayed that legislation was being put forth to expand the Commission's footprint, which he opposes.

Chair Morefield adjourned the meeting at 1:09 p.m.

Winter 2025 Tobacco Commission Meeting – Summary of Final Motions

The following tables summarize the actions the Full Commission made at its January 7, 2025 meeting regarding recommendations from the Energy Ingenuity Committee, Education Committee, Southern Virginia Committee, Incentives & Loans Committee, and Southwest Virginia Committee. These tables will be attached to and made a part of the minutes of the meeting. All motions were unanimously accepted by the Commission.

Energy Ingenuity Committee

The Commission took action on the following recommendations from the Energy Ingenuity Committee:

Req #	Organization	Project Title	Requested Amount	Recommended Amount	Commission Decision
Energy Catalyst – Planning Grants					
4317	A. L. Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership d/b/a GENEDGE Alliance	E-3 Assessment for Industrial Training Assessment Center (ITAC) Implementation Grant Qualification Pilot Program - Southern Region	\$49,250	\$49,250	Grant award of \$49,250, contingent on cash match amounts to be supplied by participating companies.
4311	Commonwealth Center for Advanced Logistics Systems (CCALS)	Understanding Potential Hydrogen and Hydrogen-Hybrid Electric Use-Cases in Southern Virginia.	\$50,000	\$50,000	Grant award of \$50,000
4322	Commonwealth Center for Advanced Logistics Systems (CCALS)	CCALS & IVDA Developing a UAS (Drone) Energy Center in the TRRC Region	\$49,560	\$49,250	Grant award of \$49,250
4318	Energy DELTA Lab	WiseliNK	\$50,000	\$50,000	Table
4323	Virginia Ed Strategies	Energy Workforce Needs Assessment	\$50,000	\$50,000	Grant award of \$50,000
4320	Virginia's Gateway Region	Dinwiddie Energy Innovation Campus Planning Study	\$50,000	\$50,000	Grant award of \$50,000, contingent on receiving full matching funds for the project.

Energy Execution – Implementation Grants					
4312	Town of Altavista	Altavista Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement Project	\$750,000	\$250k Loan \$500k Grant	Grant award of \$500,000 and a \$250,000 loan from the Commission’s Lending Partnership Program, contingent on loan approval by the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority
4315	Central Virginia Electric Cooperative	Appomattox Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project	\$1,500,000	\$750k loan \$750k Grant	Grant award of \$750,000 and a \$750,000 loan from the Commission’s Lending Partnership Program, contingent on loan approval by the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority

Education Committee

The Commission took action on the following recommendations from the Education Committee:

Req #	Organization	Project Title	Requested Amount	Staff Recommendation	Commission Decision
Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Training					
4301	Central Virginia Community College Educational Foundation, Inc.	CVCC Meets Workforce Demand through NC3 Training and Advanced Manufacturing Expansion	\$243,464	\$243,404	Grant award up to \$243,404 for up to 50% of equipment costs contingent on securing 1:1 Matching Fund
Post-Secondary Programs with a focus in STEM-H					
4303	Southern Virginia Higher Education Center	Expanding Educational Access: The Learning Resource Center at the SVHEC	\$172,827	No Award	No Award

Workforce Training Programs					
4305	The Bridge Ministry, Inc.	Heavy Equipment Operator/ Technician and CDL Driver Building	\$200,000	\$100,000	Grant award up to \$100,000 for 50% of equipment and concrete slab expenses contingent on 1:1 Matching Funds
4302	Patrick & Henry Community College Foundation	P&HCC Building Trades Expansion: Electrician Training	\$129,527	\$129,527	Grant award of up to \$129,507 for up to 50% of equipment costs, marketing, and professional development
4304	Southside Virginia Community College Foundation	SVCC's Occupational Technical Center Expansion	\$400,000	\$400,000	Grant award up to \$400,000 towards construction of a training center at the Occupational Technical Center Complex
4307	Southwest Virginia Community College	Automotive Technology Program Expansion to Include Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Technology	\$105,142	\$105,142	Grant award of \$105,142 to support the expansion of SWCC's automotive technology program
4306	Virginia Highlands Community College Educational Foundation	Electrical Technology Program Modernization Initiative	\$313,022	\$313,022	Grant award of \$313,022 to support the Electrical Technology Program Modernization Initiative project
4308	Wytheville Community College	Wytheville Community College Certified Clinical Medical Assistant Program	\$188,820	\$188,820	Grant award of \$188,820.29 to support the establishment of a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant program

TAP Exception Request
The Commission granted an exception to Morgan Dianis, that Ms. Dianis is not required to repay the first half of her TAP award from April 2022 in the amount of \$12,000 for only working 21 out of 24 months in the tobacco region as a physical therapist and that no other disbursement for this award be made.

Southern Virginia Committee

The Commission took action on one extension request from the Southern Virginia Committee:

Item	Commission Approved Action
Institute for Advanced Learning and Research Controlled Environment Agriculture; Increasing and Diversifying Agribusiness in Southern Virginia (#3590)	The Commission approved a final, one-year extension to January 31, 2026

Incentives & Loans Committee

The Commission took action on the following recommendations from the Incentives & Loans Committee:

Item	Commission Approved Action
Economic Development Workforce Housing Incentive Pilot Program	The Commission authorizes staff to alter the current guidelines of the Commission's new Economic Development Workforce Housing Incentive Pilot Program by increasing the maximum per unit incentive to \$50,000 and changing the income level target for these new units to generally be between 80 and 150% of Area Median Income.
TROF Exception	The Commission approved a Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund award of up to \$50,000 for Project Maggie with the exceptions for wages, performance period and award amount as discussed in closed session of Incentives & Loan Committee.

Southwest Virginia Committee

The Commission took action on the following recommendations from the Southwest Virginia Committee:

Req #	Organization	Project Title	Requested Amount	Recommended Amount	Commission Decision
Agribusiness					
4293	Appalachian Sustainable Development	ASD Agricultural Campus Phase I: Food Hub Expansion	\$610,000	\$610,000	Grant award of \$610,000
4294	Lee County Livestock Association	Round Two: Forage Improvement Initiative for Southwest Virginia	\$145,000 \$240,000	\$240,000	Grant award of \$240,000
Business Development					
4239	Town of Pennington Gap	Pennington Gap Multi-Purpose Building Kitchen Incubator	\$515,000	\$515,000	Grant award of \$515,000 to support 50% of direct project expenses related to the development of the kitchen incubator space
4296	Tazewell County - Tourism Department	Route 16 Billboard	\$65,709	No Award	Table
Other Economic Development					
4292	LENOWISCO Planning District Commission	SCTC / Verizon Wireless 5G Initiative	\$405,480	\$405,480	Recommends a loan of \$405,480 from the Virginia Resources Authority, contingent on loan approval
4288	Virginia Coalfield Coalition, Inc.	Buchanan/Tazewell Wireless Communication Job Growth Corridor Project (460 Wireless)	\$1,401,335	\$1,401,335	Grant award of \$1,401,335

Sites and Infrastructure					
4295	Lee County	Western Lee Sewer Phase I-A	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	Grant award of \$1,000,000
4297	Smyth County Economic Development Authority	Groseclose Sewer/General Shale Infrastructure Improvements Design	\$257,450	\$257,450	Grant award of \$257,450
Tourism					
4290	Town of Abingdon	Abingdon Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan: Abingdon's History is America's History	\$50,000 \$30,000	\$30,000	Grant award of \$30,000 for no more than 50% of third-party contractual expenses related to the development of the Abingdon Cultural Heritage Tourism Strategic Plan
4299	Tazewell County - Tourism Department	Northwestern District Campground	\$25,000	\$25,000	Grant award of \$25,000
4289	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources	Cumberland Outdoor Access Legacy	\$500,000	\$500,000	Grant award of \$500,000

Item	Commission Approved Action
Lee County Livestock Association Grain Production Initiative for Far Southwest Virginia (#3689)	Commission approved a five-month extension through June 1, 2026.
Blue Ridge Discovery Center, Inc. Blue Ridge Discover Center Visitor Center (#3696)	Commission approved a one-year extension through January 2026.
Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority Project Thoroughbred (#3737)	Approved 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. The grant will also be extended through January 1, 2026.

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

The Commission unanimously nominated Delegate Will Morefield for Chair and Senator Lashrecse Aird as Vice-Chair, then unanimously voted both into those positions to serve a two-year term.

Other Business

The Commission unanimously adopted a revised Electronic Meeting Policy.