



Region 8

Cities of: Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, Waynesboro, & Winchester
Counties of: Augusta, Bath, Clarke, Frederick, Highland, Page, Rockbridge, Rockingham, Shenandoah, & Warren

GO VIRGINIA REGION 8 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, October 10, 2023, 10:00 am to 12:00pm
 Shenandoah Valley Center for Advanced Learning
 Hybrid Full Council Meeting
 49 Hornet Rd, Fishersville, VA 22939

FIRST	LAST	AFFILIATION	ATTENDED
Jon	Alger	James Madison University	
Devon	Anders	InterChange Group	X
Emily	Marlow Beck	Marlow Auto Group	X
Kim	Blosser*	Lord Fairfax Community College	
Janet	Clarke	Clarke Consulting, LLC.	X
Robin	Crowder	Retired K-12 Superintendent	
John	Downey	Blue Ridge Community College	X
Ashley	Driver	AG Stacker, Inc.	X
Joanie	Eiland	Elk Trucking, Inc.	X
Tracy	Fitzsimmons	Shenandoah University	
Mike	Goertzen	Serco, Inc.	X
Conrad	Helsley	NSVRC Board	X
Chris	Kyle	Shentel	
Lai	Lee	High Meadow Strategies	X
Connie	Loughhead	Des Champs Technologies	
Keith	May	Cottonwood Commercial	X
Mary	McDermett	Shenandoah Valley Angel Investors	X
Mark	Merrill	Retired - Valley Health System	X
Kathy	Moore	Moore Public Relations	
Doug	Moyer	Sentara RMH Medical Center	
Yolanda	Shields	YesBuilds	X
Jeff	Stapel	Shickel Corporation	
Robin	Sullenberger	Highland County Economic Development Authority	X

*Council Member briefly attended after roll call

Support staff attending included: Cody Anderson (DHCD), Brandon Davis (NSVRC), Deborah Flippo (Region 8 Executive Director), Joel Hensley (Region 8 Administrative Coordinator), Jay Langston (SVP), and Elizabeth McCarty (CSPDC).

In person guests included: Jason El Koubi (CEO, VEDP), Dr. Lee Ann Whitesell (Director of the Shenandoah Valley Center for Advanced Learning), Rebekah Castle (Director of Economic Development, Augusta County), Kristina Ramsey (Director of Economic Development, City of Buena Vista), Brandy Flint (Director of Economic Development, Rockbridge County), Amanda DiMeo (Assistant Director of Economic Development, City of Staunton), Debbie Melvin (Assistant Vice President, VEDP), Dr.

Keith Holland (Associate Vice Provost for Research and Innovation, JMU), Dr. Jeff Cassell (Superintendent for Waynesboro City Public Schools), Jen Weaver (Administrative Manager, SVP), Dr. Eric Bond (Superintendent for Augusta County Public Schools), Alison Denbigh (CFO and Co-Owner of the Staunton Innovation Hub), Delegate Chris Runion (Member, House of Delegates), Dr. Sharon Johnson (CEO, Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board). Virtual guests included: Lisa Botkin (Executive Director of the Shenandoah Airport Commission).

Call to Order and Welcome

The October 10, 2023, Council meeting for GO Virginia Region 8 was called to order by Vice-Chair Joanie Eiland at 10:02 a.m.

Roll Call

In lieu of a roll call, Council and support staff introduced themselves and a quorum was confirmed.,

Welcome to SVCAL

Vice-Chair Eiland welcomed everyone to the Region 8 Council meeting and welcomed the special guests in attendance including Delegate Chris Runion. Vice-Chair Eiland asked for a moment of silence for Chair Kyle and his family. Vice-Chair Eiland introduced Dr. Lee Ann Whitesell, Director of the Shenandoah Center for Advanced Learning (SVCAL).

Dr. Whitesell welcomed guests to SVCAL. She provided a background on the Center and the successes the school has enjoyed. She discussed the benefits GO Virginia funding will bring to the school.

Welcome to Augusta County

Vice-Chair Eiland introduced Rebekah Castle, Director of Economic Development for Augusta County. In her presentation, Ms. Castle spoke about the new CAVA & Amazon locations in Augusta County, as well as additions to the Shenandoah Valley Airport. Ms. Castle shared information on available sites in the county and provided an update on Augusta's comprehensive plan and strategic plan for economic development. She shared her marketing initiatives like "People of Augusta" and a brief video

How VEDP and Region 8 Can Align

Vice-Chair Eiland introduced Jason El Koubi, President & CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. Mr. El Koubi shared a presentation on how VEDP and Region 8 can align. He shared recent VEDP successes around the Commonwealth and goals for the future. Other topics of interest included how VEDP's current strategy is centered around three core industries: Knowledge Work, Manufacturing, and Logistics. Mr. El Koubi reminded Council about three VEDP funding resources to support job creation that are currently available, which are the: Virginia Jobs Investment Program, Virginia Talent Accelerator Program and Virginia Office of Education Economics. Mr. El Koubi spoke on the need for coordination between and among state initiatives, such as transportation, to support economic development. Q&A included much discussion from the Region 8 Council. All three presentations are available upon request.

Approval of July 2023 Council Meetings

The minutes for the July 25, 2023 hybrid Council meeting were reviewed. Keith May motioned for the minutes to be approved; seconded by Dr. Downey. The minutes were approved unanimously by voice vote.

Financial Status Report

Brandon Davis of the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission provided a brief update on Region 8's financial status and provided an overview of the financial statements from Region 8 inception to present day and how much money is left unspent for FY2024. Mr. Davis took a few questions but offered to go into more detail with council members over the phone or by email should they have more questions.

Growth & Diversification Plan Review

Elizabeth McCarty from the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission presented the bi-annual update/review of the G&D Plan. Ms. McCarty explained the history of the plan and the current review process, discussed survey sent to all Region 8 council members and stakeholders, and how responses were used to inform updates to the plan. The survey had a 39% response rate. The economic outlook for the region shows that wages, population, and employment have increased. Further challenges in the region include the need for skilled workers, housing availability, childcare services and transportation issues. Ms. McCarty also mentioned the 27 potential project ideas that emerged from the three pipeline development meetings held in the spring. Following Ms. McCarty's presentation, council members asked questions and discussed whether any targeted sectors needed to be included or excluded in the update. Dr. Downey motioned for approval of the 2023 G&D update and Yolanda Shields seconded. The motion was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Talent Pathways and Pipeline Prioritizations

Executive Director Deborah Flippo and Cody Anderson from DHCD spoke on the Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI). Mr. Anderson informed the Region 8 Council about the reason for the creation of this new grant initiative. He also discussed the framework qualification to receive the funding. TPI allows for an additional \$250,000 to be allocated to conduct a planning study regarding workforce issues in the region and a gap analysis. The results of that study can inform council on how best to allocate a potential \$450,000 in future implementation funding.

Ms. Flippo spoke on the TPI process. Applications must be submitted by December 2024 to the GO Virginia State Board. The planning study must be completed within one year of that submission. Ms. Flippo suggested a Request For Proposal advertisement in April 2024 with the council approving a coordinating entity at either the June or September 2024 meeting. Some discussion and questions were asked by the council.

Joel Hensley provided a brief post-closed project update on the Rockbridge Area Advanced Manufacturing Program since the project closed in 2020. By the end of the school year in 2024, the program will have an additional 102 graduates, 37 of which will have graduated from the welding program.

Executive Committee Report

Vice-Chair Joanie Eiland provided a report regarding forthcoming nominations. This included a recommendation by the committee to vote to extend the term of Ashley Driver to 2025. The recommendation was approved unanimously by voice vote. The Committee intends to propose Mark Merrill as Chair and Dr. Yolanda Shields as Vice-Chair at the 2024 meeting in January. Both members have expressed enthusiasm to serve if that motion is approved. The January meeting date is still to be determined and will be entirely virtual. Ms. Eiland recognized the departures of Mary Lou Bourne and Elizabeth McCarty and acknowledged their respective contributions to GO Virginia Region 8.

Executive Director Reports and Updates

In the interest of time, Ms. Flippo agreed to submit her report to include Mr. Hensley's Marketing & Communications Committee Update, to the Region 8 Council via email.

Other Business

Mike Goertzen invited everyone to the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council Fall Tech Mixer on Wednesday, October 18 at 5:30 at Jack Brown's Middle Space in Harrisonburg.

Public Comment

No public comment was given.

Next Council Meeting:

January TBD, 2024, starting at 10:00am. VIRTUAL ONLY.

Adjournment:

There being no further business before the Council, Vice-Chair Eiland adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

GO Virginia Region 8 October 2023 Council Meeting