**GO Virginia Region 8 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, August 5, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/98018374112?pwd=MWw1wxQcsfLD3RCgQa1D2brpWScMYp.1>

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| **Committee Member** | **Representing** | **Attendance** |
| Yolanda Shields, Chair | YesBuilds! | ✓ |
| Janet Clarke, Vice Chair | Clarke Consulting, LLC | ✓ |
| Kim Blosser | Laurel Ridge Community College | ✓ |
| Mike Stolartz | UTS Systems | ✓ |
| Lai Lee | High Meadows Strategies, LLC | absent |
| Conrad Helsley | NSVRC Commissioner | ✓ |

*Guests in attendance: Alison Varner-Denbigh (Region 8 Executive Director) and Brandon Davis (NSVRC)*

At 8:32, Chair Yolanda Shields welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. Executive Director Alison Varner-Denbigh called roll, and a quorum determination was made. Approval of July’s meeting minutes was not needed (no votes at prior meeting).

Alison stated that the Talent Pathways Initiative (TPI) report was reviewed/discussed during the 7/31/25 SVWDB meeting. The asset listing was identified as not comprehensive regarding academic institution programs and student completions. WorkED Consulting will reach out to each R8 academic institution directly to receive the needed data to incorporate into the report before the end of August. Upon completion, the TPI report will be distributed to DHCD and R8 community. A follow-up Q&A virtual session will be scheduled early September. Sharon Johnson, director of SVWDB has given notice of retirement for June 2026 after 22 years of service.

Blue Ridge Technical Center submitted an executive summary for an Engineering Implementation & Scale-up Program. The committee’s feedback (Not all inclusive): The need to connect with LRCC regarding career pathways, clarify the internal program steps towards manufacturing focus and civil engineering focus, identify the success factors, define the industry acronyms (CIM vs CAM), where do the current program students go upon completion, and ensure safety/permitting needs will be approved. Alison will work with the applicant regarding the feedback and resubmit an updated executive summary in September. A virtual meeting with Warren County School Administration is scheduled for 8/7/25 to discuss the grant request, timeline, and the support letter from the School Board regarding the funding of the instructor going forward to prove sustainability.

The project pipeline was reviewed regarding the potential applications for the next three quarters and projects not yet known on timeline. The cancellation of the Page County Meat Process Cooperative Grant was discussed and explained that the cancellation in this case is a good thing. During the feasibility process, it was discovered by the grant legal consultant that the cooperative model (primarily used for low margin outcomes) is not the best fit for the high profit margin projections for this project. Alison will submit a cancellation letter to DHCD signed by GoVaR8 Chair, Yolanda Shields on behalf of the council.

A GoVaR8 locality requested grant application documentation citing FOIA requirement. Alison requested a review by DHCD and NSVRC to ensure GoVaR8 are meeting FOIA requirements. It was determined that no missteps have occurred and in compliance. Brandon Davis (GoVaR8 fiscal & FOIA agent) discussed the process of document distribution to the public and council.

Alison stated that annual DHCD reporting deadlines are August 27th and October 1, 2025. The NSVRC CEDS report has been posted for public comment and encouraged for committee members to review.

The Executive Committee adjourned at 9:52 am.

*Next Executive Committee meeting – Tuesday, September 2, 2025 at 8:30 AM (Virtual)*