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

Tuesday, October 7, 2025 at 8:30 AM

Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/93445241012>

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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 | absent |
| Lai Lee | High Meadows Strategies, LLC | absent |
| Conrad Helsley | NSVRC Commissioner | ✓ |

*Guests in attendance: Alison Varner-Denbigh (Region 8 Executive Director), Keith Holland (JMU presenter), Marguerite Landenburger & Kelly Nemzek (SU presenters), and Jeremy Crute (CSPDC presenter).*

At 8:32am, 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 September meeting minutes was not needed (no votes at prior meeting).

James Madison University presented an executive summary on a proposed Shenandoah Valley Innovation Commercialization Network grant. The executive committee suggested they reach out to more educational institutions to secure commitment letters, to develop a more detailed sustainability plan beyond the 2-year period, and a few other opportunities for improvement.

Shendandoah University presented on the Commercial Kitchen Planning Grant of their Buzzin’s (Old Perkin’s Restaurant) location. Janet requested that they include more data from the 2021 Ag Feasibility study and comparable data from other regional commercial kitchens such as the Carver location.

Growth & Diversification Plan Final Draft was approved on October 1, 2025 by R8 G&D committee to be considered by executive committee for review. Jeremey Crute (CSPDC) presented the plan and noted three major changes from the 2021 full version. 1) Removed Business/Professional Services as a target industry, 2) added skill needs by target industry (TPI report was helpful resource), and 3) some minor changes to the goals & strategies section that include TPI recommendations. Janet Clarke requested that the target industries to be listed in a standard order throughout the document unless a table calls for prioritization of data points. The plan will be presented to the regional council on 10/28/25 to be approved for submission to the DHCD by 10/31/25 deadline.

Alison stated the annual report had been submitted to DHCD for the 10/1/25 deadline and did not plan on publishing on the website/distributing to the public. She noted that the annual report has not historically been posted to website. Making the Annual Report a public document can be considered for FY26. The annual report included the current project pipeline. Alison opened the floor for questions around the projects. Janet inquired about the Per-Capita vs Competitive funding pool and the timing of the projects. There was discussion and Alison proposed updating the pipeline to reflect the type of project along with the ongoing funding balance remaining before Competitive Grant Applications can be submitted. Will be discussed at next meeting.

No other business was presented.

The Executive Committee adjourned at 9:54 am.

*Next Executive Committee meeting – Tuesday, November 4, 2025 at 8:30 AM (Virtual)*