

## GO VIRGINIA REGION 8 COUNCIL

Tuesday, January 28, 2020, 10:00am to 12:00pm  
 Eastern Mennonite University, Campus Center, Strite Conference Room  
 1200 Park Road, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

FIRST	LAST	AFFILIATION	ATTENDED
Jon	Alger	James Madison University	
Devon	Anders	InterChange Group	X
Kim	Blosser	Lord Fairfax Community College	
Kathlynn	Brown	SRI International	X
Greg	Campbell	Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport	X
Robin	Crowder	Retired K-12 Superintendent	X
John	Downey	Blue Ridge Community College	X
Ashley	Driver	Howell Metal Company	X
Joanie	Eiland	Elk Trucking, Inc.	X
Tracy	Fitzsimmons	Shenandoah University	X
Frank	Friedman	CornerStone Bank/City of Lexington Mayor	X
Mike	Goertzen	Serco, Inc.	
Conrad	Helsley	NSVRC Board	X
Mike	Keyser	BARC Electric Cooperative	X
John	King	Virginia Poultry Growers Cooperative	
Chris	Kyle	Shentel	X
Connie	Loughhead	Des Champs Technologies	X
Keith	May	Cottonwood Commercial	
Jill	McGlaughlin	Classic Kitchen & Bath	
Mark	Merrill	Valley Health System	X
Kathy	Moore	Moore Public Relations	X
John	Neff	Retired - Nielsen Builders	
George	Pace	Shenandoah Valley Angel Investors	Phone
J.J.	Smith	Valley Proteins	X
Jeff	Stapel	Shickel Corporation	X
Rick	Till	HR Dynamics LLC	X
Judith	Trumbo	Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community	X

Support Staff Attending Included: Brandon Davis (NSVRC), Ashley Shickle (NSVRC), Bonnie Riedesel (CSPDC), Elizabeth McCarty (CSPDC), Faith McClintic (Program Director), Jay Langston (SVP), Jen Weaver (SVP & GOVA Administrative Coordinator); Mary Lou Bourne participated by phone.

### **Call to Order**

The January 28, 2020 Council meeting for GO Virginia Region 8 was called to order by Vice-Chair Chris Kyle at 10:00.

### **Introductions**

Vice-Chair Kyle started the meeting by mentioning the right to work legislation currently being considered in the General Assembly and encouraged everyone to voice their concerns to legislators.

All Council members and support staff then introduced themselves.

### **Welcome**

Dr. Susan Schultz Huxman, President, Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), was introduced by Region 8 Council member Judith Trumbo. President Huxman has served as Eastern Mennonite University's ninth president since January 1, 2017 and is the first female to hold that position. She shared various facts and figures regarding the University as well as recent accolades, including being named a Best Return on Investment (ROI) University by Forbes. President Huxman also shared her excitement with EMU's new brand tagline "Lead Together", introduced in October 2019. The tagline holds rich connections to EMU culture, history and legacy as it presents a fresh, compelling and countercultural call to action.

### **Presentation: Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC) Cyber Security Program Update**

Dan O'Brien, GO Virginia Cyber Security Program Manager, and Marlena Jarboe, Dean of Academic Affairs, gave an update on the BRCC Cyber Security program funded by Region 8. The program has been very successful with 38 students having completed the training. Of those, 20 graduates have obtained new or better jobs in the cyber security field after completion and 8 new high paying cyber security jobs have been created in the Valley directly due to the GO Virginia program. Not only is the program creating jobs, but the Region 8 GO Virginia Cyber Security Program works with small and medium size businesses and municipalities in the Shenandoah Valley to provide no-cost cyber risk assessments, thus enabling job training for students while helping protect its neighbors.

### **Council Action**

#### *Approval of October 15, 2019 Minutes*

The minutes of the October 15, 2019 meeting were reviewed. Frank Friedman motioned for the minutes to be approved; seconded by Greg Campbell. The minutes were approved unanimously.

#### *Amendment to By-Laws: Council Membership*

Vice-Chair Kyle reported Stacy Barrett has resigned from the Region 8 Council due to work commitments. The Nominating Committee will follow up on filling her vacancy.

Vice-Chair Kyle then directed members to the proposed by-law addition included in their packets which states: "Any member of the GO Virginia Region 8 Council who misses two or more Council meetings per year, for two consecutive years, will be asked to resign."

A motion was made by Joanie Eiland to accept the proposed addition to the by-laws regarding Council membership attendance. The motion was approved unanimously.

### *Grant Proposal Study & Review Sub-Committee Recommendations and Discussion*

Tracy Fitzsimmons, Chair of the Grant Proposal Study & Review sub-Committee, said the sub-committee was excited to have three project applications to recommend for funding to the Council.

The first proposal Ms. Fitzsimmons presented was the Industrial Hemp Initiative – Phase 1 (Enhanced Capacity Building Grant). This proposal intends to study the impacts and opportunities of the industrial hemp industry for all of Region 8, including the assets and industry resources within the region. The GO Virginia Funding request is \$53,630 and the private sector/non-local partner is James Madison University (JMU). Discussion followed with Council members asking several questions of applicants Dr. Keith Holland, JMU Interim Vice Provost, Office of Research and Scholarship, and Dr. Samuel Morton, JMU Associate Professor.

A motion was made by Dr. John Downey to approve the Industrial Hemp Initiative – Phase 1 (Enhanced Capacity Building Grant); seconded by Mark Merrill. The motion was approved unanimously.

The second proposal presented by Ms. Fitzsimmons was the Shenandoah Valley Economic Gardening Program. This is a per capita grant request for \$50,000 GO Virginia funding to be matched by the Shenandoah Valley Partnership. The program would utilize the expertise and resources of the National Center for Economic Gardening via service contract to help traded sector companies pursue second stage growth. Brian Shull, Economic Development Director of Harrisonburg, shared with Council that the City of Harrisonburg had two companies participate in the Economic Gardening program when offered by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) and had very favorable outcomes for both companies.

A motion was made by Connie Loughhead to approve the Shenandoah Valley Economic Gardening Program; seconded by Jeff Stapel. The motion was approved unanimously.

The third proposal Ms. Fitzsimmons presented was the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Enterprise Center Feasibility Study (Enhanced Capacity Building Grant). This project proposes to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of a certified, commercial, shared-use Agricultural Enterprise Center located in the central Shenandoah Valley. The GO Virginia funding request is \$85,000 to be matched by a USDA Local Food Promotion Program grant received by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC). Discussion followed with one Council member noting he supports funding to help research the best business model to sustain an Agricultural Enterprise Center as he sees a definite need through his day to day company operations.

A motion was made by Frank Friedman to approve the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Enterprise Center Feasibility Study (Enhanced Capacity Building Grant). The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Updates on Project Pipeline & GO Virginia Program**

Faith McClintic, Region 8 Program Director, updated the Council on several projects. Ms. McClintic said she anticipates the Shenandoah Valley Regional Airport's (SHD) proposed project on the Aviation Technology Park will be brought before Council prior to the close of the fiscal year. She also noted she had been in touch with Sharon Johnson of the Shenandoah Valley Workforce Development Board regarding the proposed Valley Talent Collaborative project. Ms. Johnson has decided to defer on the project for now as she is working to merge workforce platforms with other organizations. Ms. McClintic also reported the Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative has discussed with her a potential broadband project for Region 8.

Ms. McClintic said the ED Ad Hoc group had been waiting to meet until the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) finished its site readiness study. That work is now complete and has been disseminated to the localities. Plans are for VEDP to host "Sites Roadshow" meetings in the different regions. Region 8 staff will work with the ED Ad Hoc group to coordinate and schedule that meeting.

## **Executive Committee Report**

### *Financial Status Report*

Brandon Davis, Executive Director, Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission, reviewed the financial statements included in the packets. In response to a Council member's question, Mr. Davis noted approximately \$111,000 will remain for Enhanced Capacity Building (ECB) projects if both ECB grants approved at today's meeting are administratively approved by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

### *Region 8 Funded Projects Status Report:*

Bonnie Riedesel, Executive Director, Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission, reviewed the Project Status report included in Council packets. She reported two of the five funded projects are closing out. RAAMP submitted its final drawdown request to DHCD in September and the Staunton Innovation League Tech-Lab Feasibility Study has submitted its final drawdown request.

Ms. Riedesel noted the Shenandoah Valley Talent Solutions Strategy project is moving forward with the talent solutions team reviewing the draft of the final report. Region 8 staff will work with the applicants on coordinating a presentation of the findings at the May 5<sup>th</sup> Region 8 Council meeting at Shenandoah University in Winchester.

### *Project Update: SILI Hub Lab Feasibility Study*

Peter Denbigh, Staunton Innovation Hub, gave an update on the recently completed "Reengineering Rural Innovation" feasibility study funded by Region 8. The study researched the case for a techlab and mobile tech trailer in rural Virginia. Per the study: "The Shenandoah Valley is poised to be a vanguard in the next wave of innovation". Mr. Denbigh said he is excited about the outcome of the study and next steps are now being considered to "ensure that young people and entrepreneurs in the Shenandoah Valley have the tools and experiences necessary to best prepare them for this exciting future".

## **Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Advisory Committee Update**

Debbie Irwin, Staunton Creative Community Fund, and Marguerite Landenburger, Shenandoah University, reported in Mary Lou Bourne's absence. They noted the goal of the advisory group is to find a way to build a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the entire Shenandoah Valley. An accelerator project is currently being designed to work in the rural environment. Assets would be customized per entrepreneur and the model could hopefully be replicated throughout the State. The group is targeting the April application deadline for submission.

## **Public Comment**

No public comment.

**Next Council Meeting:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020; Location: Shenandoah University, Brandt Student Center, Ferrari Room

**Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the Council, Vice-Chair Kyle adjourned the meeting at 12:08.