



**REGION 9 COUNCIL
North Fork Meeting Center
994 Research Park Blvd, Charlottesville, VA 22911**

**OCTOBER 29, 2024
9:30 am to 11:30 am
IN-PERSON MEETING**

Virtual links in agenda posted with this agenda at www.GOVirginia9.org/calendar

MINUTES

Attending: Ethan Dunstan, Capital River Advisors (Chair); Rob Archer, Codebase Coworking (Vice Chair); Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch, Revalation Vineyards (Treasurer/Secretary); Kim Blosser, Laurel Ridge Community College; Roque Castro, Elysium LD Technology, Inc.; Tom Click, Patriot Industries; Bob Coiner, Town of Gordonsville; Brian Cole, LexisNexis Reed Tech; Ned Galloway, Albemarle County Board of Supervisors; Cheryl Kirby, Atlantic Union Bank; Ray Knott, Blue Ridge Bank; Pace Lochte, UVA Economic Development; Patrick Mauney, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission; Brandon Payne, Self-Storage of Louisa; Paige Read, Town of Culpeper; Jean Runyon, Piedmont Virginia Community College; Cathy Schafrik, Greene County; Tom Thorpe, Afton Scientific; Jonathon Weakley, Madison County; Tina Weaver, Papa Weaver's Pork, Inc.

Virtual: Christine Jacobs, Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission

Absent: Gizelle Curtis, Dominion Energy; Andy Wade, Louisa County

Staff: Helen Cauthen, Kristy Dancy, Shannon Holland, Christie Taylor

Guests: Ike Broaddus (virtual); Matt Brown, Matt Brown Consulting; Stephen Davis, CIC; Joseph Dennie, DHCD; Katie Dulaney, CVPED; Tracey Gardner, Madison County; Ashley Hernandorena, Albemarle County; Rachael Hobbs, UVA; Craig Honick, Good People Research; Maureen Kelley, Nelson County; Emily Kilroy, Albemarle County (virtual); Hope Lawrence, CIC; Greg Rosko, PVCC; Bryan Rothamel, Culpeper County; Candance Spence, CVPED; Debroah Van Earsel, UVAF

1. Opening

• **Call to Order**

Ethan Dunstan called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

• **Roll Call**

A roll call was performed. A quorum was established, as noted above.

• **Public Comment**

Opportunities for public comment were made available for the meeting, however, no public comments were received.

2. Consent Agenda – ACTION ITEM

Ethan Dunstan noted that due to the packed agenda, the six business items listed were grouped together with the intention that the Council would discuss and act with one vote unless a motion was made to remove any item from the discussion. No such motion was made.

- Approve Meeting Minutes, August 20, 2024
- Approve Financials August 31, 2024
- MEMO: Approve FY 25 Per Capita Project Contract
- MEMO: Update on Project VITAL MOU and Contract
- MEMO: Region 9 Sites Initiative via Operating Funds - Update
- Director Report

Brian Cole made a motion to approve Council business as presented. Ray Knott seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. Updates

- **Committees:** Ethan Dunstan shared that neither the Executive Committee nor the Nominating Committee met since the last Council meeting.
- **Task Forces:** Ethan Dunstan reported that the Sites, Entrepreneurship and Talent Development Task Forces each met separately on Friday, October 18. Minutes are on the Region 9 website and much of their work is reflected in the meeting agenda.
- **Chair:** Ethan Dunstan attended the Board retreat and meeting in Danville on September 9-10. Shannon Holland and Christie Taylor also participated. Ethan Dunstan offered public comments at that Board Meeting on behalf of Regions 2, 4, and 9 asking the Board to accelerate the contract and MOU for Project VITAL. The MOU for Project VITAL was finished a few weeks ago and the contract has been the topic of several feedback sessions over the past few days. Region 9 is pushing for a November 1 contract date as this what CvilleBioHub needs to have the accelerator operational by January. There are several companies ready to join the accelerator.
- **Other:** Ethan Dunstan extended congratulations to Tom Thorpe on the Governor's announcement in early October that Afton Scientific will be expanding with a \$200M investment and adding 200 employees.

4. Conflict of Interest Policy Revision – ACTION ITEM

Ethan Dunstan directed members to page 35 of the agenda for the policy revision to consider based on the latest version of the VITAL contract.

Ray Knott made a motion to approve the change to the Conflict-of-Interest Policy as provided but only if it is needed to comply with requirements in the Project VITAL project contract but to not approve if it is not needed. Tom Click seconded the motion. The motion carried.

5. Letter of Interest for TPI - ACTION ITEM

- Talent Pathway Planning Initiative (TPI) Letter of Interest:
Ethan Dunstan noted that the TPI proposal deadline is November 1, 2024 at noon. The Talent Development Task Force reviewed the letter and related attachments, with the summary in the packet. With the tight turnaround on the deadline, Council should first decide whether to accept the Letter of Interest and then, if accepted, assign staff to submit the application by November 1.

Shannon Holland added that there was a reviewer comment that we should be clearer in the proposal that UVA workforce needs in biotech will be involved in this effort as well as an important member of the biotech talent ecosystem. Talent Development Task Force Members and project reviewers were asked to give their feedback on the project. In general, all were positive and supportive citing that it will add value to Project VITAL, enhance capacity of the sector, and will strengthen the ecosystem and is highly collaborative.

Paige Read made a motion to accept the Talent Pathways Initiative Letter of Interest from CvilleBioHub. Pace Lochte seconded the motion. The motion carried.

6. Project Review - ACTION ITEM

- Food and Beverage Business Accelerator:

Ethan Dunstan then moved on in the agenda to discuss the Food and Beverage Business Accelerator proposal submitted by Venture Central. He noted that the project was reviewed by the Entrepreneurship Task Force and others. Shannon Holland noted that the milestones attachment had been omitted from the project review files and was included in the meeting materials as several reviewers noted its absence. Also, she added that additional questions developed by the Growing Existing Businesses Task Force were answered by the applicant and were also included in the meeting packet.

Ethan Dunstan solicited feedback from those who reviewed or participated at the Task Force meeting. The discussion was supportive of the project and included discussions on:

- The project articulated its place as an accelerator to develop cooperating with incubators like BEACON's Kitchen as a pipeline approach to advancing the sector.
- The project team demonstrated awareness of the challenges within the industry and prepared to investigate them
- A strong effort to collaborate among existing investments
- Effort should be to keep these businesses in the region and if not here in Virginia
- Efforts should be focused on keeping businesses thriving vs selling
- Land price in our region may require more collaboration with other regions

Tom Click made the motion to accept the Food and Beverage Business Accelerator proposal. Rob Archer seconded the motion. The motion carried.

7. Statewide Planning Grant Request – ACTION ITEM

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) Statewide Landscape Assessment (AISLA):

Ethan Dunstan introduced the statewide planning grant opportunity led by Regions 2 and 3. He added that it had been discussed at the Talent Development Task Force meeting. He added that if the council supports the request the council is being asked to 1) write a letter of support 2) ask staff to participate, and 3) assign a region 9 Council Member to participate. He added that Region 9 funds are not being requested.

Discussion on the proposal brought up concerns about infrastructure needs for AI, and whether this proposal took those into consideration in preparing a workforce for AI careers in regions where jobs may be limited because the infrastructure doesn't support a data center.

Roque Castro agreed to serve as the Region 9 volunteer, and Paige Read asked to shadow so she can learn more about the program.

Jonathan Weakley made the motion to support the AI proposal. Pace Lochte seconded the motion. The motion carried.

8. Presentation – Regional Entrepreneurship Investment (REI) Final Report & Action Plan

- Presentation: *Building a Right Sized Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Region 9*

Guests: Stephen Davis, President, Community Investment Collaborative
Hope Lawrence, Program Manager, Venture Central
Rebecca Haydock, Director, Venture Central
Craig Honick, Owner, Good People Research

The project team presented the REI Report: *Thrive in Place*.

Questions on the report centered on municipal capacity to implement the suggestions, status of the capital and venture capital (VC) markets to connect with entrepreneurs, entrepreneur eligibility for VC funding and other start-up resources, and comprehensive guides for navigating the ecosystem. The project team spoke to the intensity and necessity of the human element of matching entrepreneurs with resources, which limits comprehensive guides and automation of the venture capital market.

Ethan Dunstan thanked the presenters and stated that he was looking forward to reviewing the action plan that is also a deliverable for the ReI grant as well as the follow-on implementation grants.

9. Presentation – Wine Industry Planning Grant & Action Plan

- 2024 Wine Industry Report and Action Plan

Guests: Matt Brown, MJ Brown Consulting
Maureen Kelley, Nelson County Economic Development

Matt Brown presented the Wine Industry Report and Action Plan. The discussion included:

- Questions centered on how many growers identified expansion as a goal (around 60%);
- what is capacity/saturation point of Region 9 (to be determined);
- definition of a “high performing wine professional” (various positions, tenure-track employees);
- the industry’s connection to hospitality sector (need to improve and opportunities identified as part of the study process);
- and how Virginia wine scores relative to competitive markets (some products globally competitive).



Ethan Dunstan thanked the presenters and indicated he was looking forward to the finalized action plan as well as the follow-on implementation grant proposals.

10. Project Pipeline

Shannon Holland reported that she will get the approved projects submitted to DHCD. She expects implementation project proposals to be submitted as the result of the REI and Wine Reports just presented. Additionally, she will continue to support development of a Sites project as presented in the Council business.

11. Other Business

Ethan Dunstan noted that he is working with staff to “reinvigorate” the Task Forces by hosting regular meetings and appointing Chairs. More to come on that activity.

12. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

DRAFT