



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR  
**GROWTH &  
OPPORTUNITY**  
IN EACH REGION  
REGIONAL COUNCIL 9

**REGIONAL COUNCIL 9  
SITES TASK FORCE MEETING  
JANUARY 7, 2025**

10 am to 11 am

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89266954721>

Call 434-979-5610 x. 106 with connectivity issues

**ALL-VIRTUAL**

**MINUTES**

**Sites Task Force Members Present:** Brandon Payne, Gizelle Curtis, Patrick Mauney, Andy Wade

**Sites Task Force Members Absent:** Ned Galloway, Christine Jacobs, Paige Read, Jonathan Weakley

**Council Members Present:** Ethan Dunstan (Chair), Rob Archer (Vice Chair)

**Staff Present:** Helen Cauthen, Shannon Holland, Christie Taylor

**1. Welcome**

Brandon Payne called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. He announced that this meeting was all-virtual as allowed by the Governor's statement of an emergency due to the snowstorm. Brandon shared that Council Chair Ethan Dunstan asked him to serve as Sites Task Force Chair until the next Annual Meeting, when a new chair would be appointed or nominated. The idea is to increase council member engagement through Task Force activities as discussed at the October Council Meeting.

- **Roll Call**

A roll call was performed. **A quorum was not established, as noted above.**

- **Public Comment**

No public comment was submitted prior to or offered during the meeting.

**2. ACTION ITEMS**

- **Approve Meeting Minutes**

Since there was a not a quorum, the Minutes for the October 18, 2024 were not presented for action.

**3. Updates:**

- **Region 9 Sites Initiative Update**

Shannon Holland reviewed how at the last meeting, the Council discussed ways it could use operating funds to support site projects. Following that meeting, we unexpectedly received a strong sites project proposal. Consequently, the focus shifted to the project for review today, instead of proceeding with a less defined project. There are still other options the Council can consider for using operating funds to support the growth plan.

- **GO Virginia Program – Dashboard**

The Dashboard Link provided is for a new tool created by DHCD to display program impact for closed projects only. The dashboard omits Accelerating Sites since it is not technically

closed because it is waiting for wetlands environmental report to be completed (expired as project requested Tier Certification, so new environmental report being done to allow for Timmons to upgrade Tier).

[https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/virginiadhcd/viz/GOVADashboard\\_17345526597200/GOVADashboard](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/virginiadhcd/viz/GOVADashboard_17345526597200/GOVADashboard).

- **Region 9 Sites Projects Update**

In the meeting packet a draft dashboard for the Site's Task Force was included to demonstrate both active and closed projects, as well as status. The intention is to refine this document to clearly outline completed tasks, ongoing activities, and areas requiring additional effort.

4. **MEMO: Definition for Regionally Significant Sites**

Shannon Holland requested feedback on the draft definition provided for *Regionally Significant Sites*. Patrick Mauney pointed out an opportunity for specificity in the fifth bullet point, through metrics to address how regional collaboration is achieved. If the goal is to be broad, may want to leave out. Brandon Payne and Gizelle Curtis agreed with these comments and a discussion ensued about how specific to be in terms of investment amounts or description. Helen Cauthen urged for capital amounts that aren't a barrier to smaller localities. Shannon Holland stated she would integrate feedback provided in the draft and it would likely be up for action at the January Council Meeting.

5. **Proposal Review:**

- **Rivanna Futures (Implementation Grant Proposal)**

Albemarle County is seeking \$613,000 in GO Virginia funds to upgrade 172 of the 432 acres from Tier 3 to Tier 4. They have committed \$324,000 as a match, meeting the 2:1 grant requirement. This includes \$300,000 from Albemarle County, \$8,000 from Greene County and Charlottesville, and \$8,000 in time from CVPED. The project supports the Region 9 Growth Plan by enhancing sites for biotech, IT/cybersecurity, and light manufacturing industries. It also aligns with the Super Regional Strategy to leverage national security innovation opportunities.

**Notes from proposal discussion:** the

- Staff noted that they thought the proposal could be strengthened with statements from the Council regarding the regional collaboration efforts and support for the proposed targeted sectors.
- Staff also noted that the match commitment has changed slightly: UVA shouldn't be included in the additional leverage section (not required) and CVPED has been added to the Match commitment.
- Gizelle Curtis commented that she wants to know what happens after Phase 1; what Phase 2 looks like and what happens if there are delays? She asked if there is a grant application to VBRSP and funds awarded? Helen Cauthen indicated the pre-application was accepted by VEDP and the project will be submitting a VBRSP application. Shannon Holland asked if the application should be updated to outright say the VEDP pre-application had been approved and the project invited to submit to VBRSP. , noting that VEDP suggested the project by VBRSP submit the GO Virginia request to strengthen the application. Andy Wade shared that the GO Virginia funding on the front end was imperative to the VBRSP support for Shannon Hill, so urged the task force to approve the GO Virginia funding to catalyze the VBRSP decision. Shannon Holland will note in the

proposal the goal of regional validation for the project as a leverage point with VEDP, by accelerating the advancement from a Tier 3 to a Tier 4 (total investment of \$11M).

- Andy Wade asked about flexibility of budget categories. Shannon Holland will ask Emily Kilroy for a Plan A and Plan B budget so both options can be approved by the Council in the event of a change in the scope of the timing and budget priorities for the project, considering there might be a pending MEI request which could affect the allocation of funds.
- Patrick Mauney suggested additional details on the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC), such as are they getting updates or playing decision-making roles? Andy Wade's experience at Shannon Hill, for instance, could greatly inform the process even though it isn't a neighboring county and included in the RAC. Shannon Holland will seek clarification on the role of the RAC and update the proposal to reflect this.
- To show the actual level of regional collaboration, the proposal will be updated to note the votes from localities in support of this project obtained via CVPED. The proposal will also be updated to reflect dry utility status.
- Based on this conversation Shannon Holland stated that she would discuss the following with the applicant prior to the Council Meeting on January 16:
  - Discuss potential MEI funding potential and if the timeline is viable identify a plan B for unused GO Virginia funds that may need to be presented with this proposal
  - See if the applicant can attend Council Meeting
  - Further clarify
    - activities of the localities collaborating
    - the other locality support obtained via CVPED activities
    - how Louisa County and Albemarle are sharing best practices, and may offer a letter of support
    - private sector support, non-government support, and dry utilities

#### **6. Feedback from Task Forces**

Shannon Holland requested feedback and ideas for improving council processes to engage more closely in project development and review, including how to involve task force members earlier, allowing time for questions and feedback on proposals. Ideas discussed included the potential for one- or two-members volunteer to mentor a project through the development process or post-award to help with problem solving and report out to Council, as needed. Ethan Dunstan said that having Task Force Chairs would be helpful. Getting earlier feedback on proposals may be helpful in getting to no sooner, before staff and Council members expend considerable time. Andy Wade said the earlier exposure to projects, the better. For example, Shannon Hill was presented as an idea long before it became a request for funding.

#### **7. Project Pipeline**

The Partnership hopes to be ready to advance some projects depending on locality readiness. Otherwise, there aren't other sites projects in the pipeline.

#### **8. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:01 AM.