



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

VIRGINIA GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY BOARD REGIONAL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Virtual

Members Present

Jim Cheng
Leah Fremouw (Committee Chair)
John King
Delegate Michele Maldonado

Members Absent

None

Call to Order

Leah Fremouw, Chair of the Virginia Growth and Opportunity (GO Virginia) Regional Council Committee Chair Leah Fremouw called the GO Virginia Regional Council Committee Meeting to order. She provided a brief recap of the November 2024 meeting. She noted the State Board approved the addition of advisory committee members, formalizing their role in supporting the committee's work.

Roll Call

Shara Gibson, GO Virginia Program Manager at the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), called the roll, and stated that a quorum of the Committee was present

Public Comment

Chair Fremouw opened the floor for public comment.

No members of the public appeared before the Committee for the public comment period.

Ms. Gibson noted that the staff had not received written public comment prior to the meeting

The public comment period was closed.

General Assembly Update

Chris Llyod of the GO Virginia Foundation provided an update on recent legislative actions impacting GO Virginia. Key points included: GO Virginia's full funding of \$30 million has been preserved, ensuring financial stability through June 30, 2026, and discussed various bills that could impact GO Virginia's funding scope and industry priorities.

Regional Council Committee Charter

Leah Fremouw led a discussion on the Regional Council Committee Charter, which was distributed to committee members ahead of the meeting. She emphasized its role in providing a clear framework for committee operations, outlining three key responsibilities 1) Facilitating Communication, 2) Encouraging Regional Synergy, and Aligning Councils with GO Virginia's Mission.

Region 9 representative Rob Archer recommended a minor wording edit to the membership section. Region 3 representative Randy Lial suggesting adding language to emphasize fostering communication between the regions.

Following discussion, a motion to approve the charter with the noted revisions was made and approved by unanimous vote.

Collaboration & Connectivity

Leah Fremouw facilitated a discussion among Regional Council representatives on best practices for council recruitment, engagement, and leadership development. Region 5 (Sarah Jane Kirkland) emphasized the importance of industry cluster alignment and peer-to-peer recruitment. Region 8 representative Dr. Yolanda Shields highlighted strategic planning to balance geographic, industry, and demographic representation.

A discussion on leadership development strategies followed. Region 3 representative, Randy Lail discussed engaging Virginia Tech for leadership training workshops. Region 2 Richmond Vincent emphasized early identification of leadership potential during recruitment. Region 4, Elizabeth Creamer, suggested leveraging existing leadership programs to cultivate future council leaders.

The group agreed on the need for structured leadership development resources and potential statewide leadership training opportunities in collaboration with DHCD.

Innovation: Strategic Priorities

Chair Fremouw introduced the discussion on strategic priorities, with presentations from DHCD and VEDP representatives.

Shara Gibson, DHCD GO Virginia Program Manager, Provided an overview of FY25 funding allocations, detailing the distribution of per capita, competitive, and capacity-building funds.

Sara Dunnigan, DHCD Deputy Director Economic Development and Community Vitality, Introduced a structured framework to streamline project development and align proposals with state economic goals.

Tyler Carroll, VEDP Manager of Economic Competitiveness, provided insights into VEDP's strategic focus areas, including knowledge work, advanced manufacturing, and logistics. He emphasized the role of regional councils in aligning with state economic development initiatives and leveraging data-driven decision-making

Adjournment

Leah Fremouw thanked committee members for their participation and confirmed upcoming quarterly meeting dates for 2025. She encouraged continued collaboration and engagement before adjourning the meeting

