



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

**VIRGINIA GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY BOARD MEETING**

**March 24, 2026**

**1:00 PM**

**Library of Virginia**

**800 E. Broad St.**

**Richmond, VA 23219**

Members Present

Nancy Howell Agee

Reggie Aggarwal

Jim Cheng

Ben J. Davenport, Jr

Senator Creigh Deeds (virtual)

Bill Dotson

Cliff Fleet

W. Heywood Fralin

Joel Griffin

Kenneth Johnson

Delegate Terry Kilgore

John King

Senator L. Louise Lucas (virtual)

Delegate Michelle Maldonado

Emily O'Quinn

Thomas Ransom

Delegate Virgil Thornton

Delegate Luke Torian

Members Absent

Senator Ryan McDougle

Jon Peterson

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Call to Order

Ms. Emily O'Quinn, Chair of the Virginia Growth and Opportunity (GO Virginia) Board, called the meeting to order.

Ms. O'Quinn made remarks welcoming the new Director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, Dr. Tamarah Holmes Ph.D. and the Chief of Staff to Secretary of

Commerce and Trade Ms. Turner Widgen.

- Roll Call Ms. Shara Gibson, GO Virginia Program Manager for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), called the roll and stated that a quorum was present.
- Public Comment Ms. O’Quinn opened the floor for public comment.
- Ms. Gibson noted that there were no written comments or people wishing to appear before the Board for public comment. The public comment period was closed.
- Consent Agenda Ms. O’Quinn noted that the consent agenda consisted of the meeting minutes for the December 9, 2025, meeting of the GO Virginia State Board.
- A motion was made by Mr. Cheng and seconded by Mr. King to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed.
- Presentations Ms. O’Quinn recognized Mr. Andrew Sinclair, Vice President of Public Policy at the Virginia Chamber of Commerce and Mike Malone, Partner at Economic Leadership to present the findings of the GO Virginia funded Virginia AI Landscape Assessment.
- Deputy Director’s Report Ms. Sara Dunnigan provided a brief overview of the application review process for GO Virginia grant applications.
- Ms. Dunnigan presented the Board with 12 Per Capita and Competitive applications regarding site development and infrastructure, cluster scale-up, and talent development: Hampton Roads Playbook Sites Planning from Region 5, Clarke County Camp 7 Extended Due Diligence from Region 8, Hampton Roads Playbook Implementation: Defense from Region 5, Hampton Roads Mobility Innovation Center from Region 5, Randolph College Mechanical Engineering Program Expansion from Region 2, FAA Uncrewed Aerial Systems College Initiative and Talent Pipeline: Advancing BVLOS Capabilities in the Commonwealth of Virginia from Region 5, Start in Hampton Roads: Talent Attraction and Retention Program from Region 5, Extended and New Pathways with Stafford and Caroline Counties from Regions 6, Life Sciences Innovation and Future Talent from Region 7, AM2 Initiative to Grow Advanced Manufacturing from Regions 2 and 3, AI Mobile Unit for Workforce

and Education from Regions 6 and 9, and CNC Machining Program at RCC from Region 6.

Ms. O'Quinn noted that the Board would vote on the proposed projects as a block.

Mr. Fleet noted that the Board has made several investments in talent development portal-like activities over the years and requested that the Board consider pausing consideration on any future talent portal projects and refer the topic of talent portals to the Governance and Policy Committee for review. Hearing no objections, Chair O'Quinn referred the topic to the Governance and Policy Committee by unanimous consent.

A motion was made by Mr. King and seconded by Mr. Davenport to approve the workgroup's recommendations of the projects as a block. The motion passed.

Program Performance  
and Evaluation  
Committee Report

Ms. O'Quinn recognized Mr. Jim Cheng, Chair of the Program Performance and Evaluation Committee, to provide a report for the Committee.

Mr. Cheng noted that the Committee met on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026, during which they discussed the two remaining Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission (JLARC) recommendations delegated to the Committee. During that meeting, the Committee also approved a Committee Charter.

Mr. Cheng also noted that the Committee met in the morning prior to the March 24<sup>th</sup> State Board Meeting. During this meeting, the Committee held further discussion regarding the JLARC recommendations and endorsed issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a firm to assess the long-term impacts of projects funded by the GO Virginia program.

Mr. Cheng noted that the Committee is planning to meet again before the June 9<sup>th</sup> State Board meeting, but that the specific date has not been chosen.

Governance and Policy  
Committee Report

Ms. O'Quinn recognized Mr. Cliff Fleet, Chair of the Governance and Policy Committee, to provide a report for the Committee.

Mr. Fleet noted that the Committee met in the morning prior to the March 24<sup>th</sup> State Board Meeting. The Committee discussed one of the two remaining JLARC recommendations delegated to the Committee: a recommendation to increase the planning grant limit for Regional Per Capita use from \$250,000. Mr. Fleet noted that the Committee discussed that removal of site development planning and broadband planning from counting against the \$250,000 planning grant limit had created capacity for the GO Virginia Regions and that no further action was recommended at this time.

Mr. Fleet noted that the Committee discussed the merit of increasing the limit of multi-regional competitive planning grants from the existing \$250,000 per grant limit to a higher amount. Mr. Fleet noted that staff have been directed to present options for the Committee to consider at its next meeting.

Mr. Fleet reported that the Committee considered the Board referred topic regarding whether childcare related projects should be considered a GO Virginia fundable activity. Mr. Fleet reported that the Committee discussed and determined that childcare is a pivotal barrier to economic development and should be a point of advocacy, however the Virginia General Assembly has invested heavily in addressing childcare and the GO Virginia program does not have adequate resource capacity to address childcare availability. The Committee has chosen to not advance a recommendation to allow childcare related projects as a fundable GO Virginia activity.

Regional Council  
Committee Report

Ms. O'Quinn recognized Mr. John King, Chair of the Regional Councils Committee, to provide a report for the Committee.

Mr. King reported that the Regional Council Committee met on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. At that meeting, in reference to a JLARC recommendation to raise the \$250,000 limit on regional per capita planning grants, the Committee discussed an analysis of planning grant limit utilization and the pipeline from planning to GO Virginia funded implementation. At that meeting, the Committee chose to not take action to recommend changing board policy and to defer action on the topic to the Governance and Policy Committee.

Mr. King noted that the Committee discussed Regional Council Certification processes and the State Board's role in ensuring councils continue to meet governance and participation requirements.

Mr. King reported that the Committee met in the morning prior to the March 24, 2026, meeting of the GO Virginia State Board. The Committee discussed regional resource utilization and unobligated balances. During this meeting, the Committee also received a staff update on the Regional Council Self-Assessment. The Assessment was deployed from January 16, 2026, to March 11, 2026. Action based on this assessment will be taken in the future.

Mr. King noted that the committee also heard a presentation on best practices for developing Growth and Diversification Plans.

Legislative and Budget Update

Ms. O'Quinn recognized Dr. Tamarah Holmes, Ph.D., Director of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, to provide an overview of recent legislative and budget updates that are pertinent to the GO Virginia program.

Dr. Holmes reported that the General Assembly of Virginia adjourned Sine Die on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The Governor will now review all legislation that passed during Session. The Governor will have the opportunity to sign, veto, or suggest amendments to legislation until April 13<sup>th</sup>. The General Assembly will convene again on April 22<sup>nd</sup> to respond to the Governor's actions.

Dr. Holmes noted that the General Assembly adjourned without a budget agreement. A special session is tentatively proposed for April 23<sup>rd</sup> to consider the budget.

Dr. Holmes discussed two pieces of legislation pertinent to the GO Virginia Program. HB1053, introduced by Delegate Eric Phillips, would have allowed Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission funds to be utilized as match for GO Virginia grants. The bill failed in the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee. HB29, referred to as the caboose budget bill, was signed into law and contained a \$10 million sweep of GO Virginia's unobligated balances.

Information Items

Ms. O'Quinn recognized Ms. Dunnigan to provide an overview of the information items.

Ms. Dunnigan provided a brief overview of the administratively approved projects since the December 9<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

DRAFT