

Minutes
Legislation and Policy Committee Meeting
Board of Directors of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership
January 29, 2020
12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. Board Room
VEDP Main Office in Richmond, Virginia

Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 12:39 p.m. by Chair Heather Engel. Chair Engel noted that a quorum was present, reviewed the agenda, and the handouts made available to the members.

Members present: Chair Heather Engel, Carrie Chenery, Bill Hayter, and Ned Masee, *ex officio*

Members absent: Dan Pleasant

VEDP staff present: Peyton Annoni, Lindsay Barker, Christine Bell, Jason El Koubi, Stephanie Florie, Sandi McNinch, Stephen Moret, Christy Morton, and Johan Salén

Guests present: Secretary Brian Ball, Dan Clemente, Deborah Flippo, Deputy Secretary Cassidy Rasnick, and Xavier Richardson

Public Comment Period

Chair Engel asked for public comments. There were none.

Approval of Minutes for July 31, 2019 Meeting

Chair Engel asked for approval of the minutes from the July 31, 2019, meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Hayter and seconded by Ms. Chenery; the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

General Assembly Makeup and Leadership

Ms. Christy Morton gave a general overview of the makeup and leadership of the General Assembly following the November election. Control in the General Assembly has shifted, and the Democrats now control the Governor's Mansion and both chambers. The Senate is currently made up of 21 Democrats and 19 Republicans. The House is made up of 55 Democrats and 45 Republicans. Newly appointed Senate leadership includes the Majority Leader, Dick Saslaw, and the Minority Leader, Thomas Norment. Newly appointed House leadership includes the Speaker of the House, Eileen Filler-Corn, Majority Leader, Charniele Herring, and the Minority Leader, Todd Gilbert. Ms. Morton noted that Delegate Filler-Corn is the first female Speaker of the House. Ms. Morton shared that there is a strong showing from Northern Virginia in both the House and Senate, and VEDP will continue to make it a priority to present initiatives that are representative of the entire Commonwealth.

Ms. Morton reviewed the membership of the four Senate committees and five House committees that review most economic development legislation. Copies were made and handed out to the Board members.

Update on the MEI Commission

Ms. Morton reviewed the make-up of the House, Senate, and Ex-Officio MEI Members. The five House MEI members are: Delegates Luke Torian, Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn, David Bulova, Mark Sickles, and Nick Rush. Ms. Morton mentioned that only two of the five members have served on the MEI Commission before. At this time, the Senate members have not been appointed.

Senator Janet Howell has a bill requesting that the committee increase membership from three to five members so it would be equal to the number of House members.

Ms. Morton shared the Ex-Officio members are Secretaries Brian Ball and Aubrey Layne.

Legislation and Budget Review

Ms. Morton gave an update on the following four Governor's economic development and VEDP bills introduced this session. This includes three bills for announced MEI projects, the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Grant Program and Fund for Merck, a Truck Manufacturing Grant Fund for Volvo, and an Advanced Production Grant Program for Morgan Olson. Ms. Morton was excited to report that all three of these are rural projects. The final bill is legislation proposed by VEDP, HB 935, which will consolidate VEDP reporting requirements. This will help to streamline reports, mirror budget language, and increase transparency. Ms. Morton shared HB 935 is headed to the House Appropriations committee.

Ms. Morton gave an update on the VEDP operational budget initiatives as included in the Governor's proposed budget. The Expansion of Virginia Business-Ready Sites Program received an additional \$15.0 million for the biennium, \$12 million in FY21 and \$3 million in FY22. Of the \$12 million in FY21 \$10 million was sent down as an additional budget amendment from the Governor. The Expansion of the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program received \$4.7 million in the second year of the biennium. The Virginia Jobs Investment Program saw a near majority restoration, receiving \$4.0 million for the biennium. Finally, the Governor also provided budget amendments for the International Trade Plan initiatives totaling \$6.3 million for the biennium.

Recap of Outreach Meetings with New Leadership

Ms. Morton reported that she and Dr. Stephen Moret began meeting with legislators in November following the election. Meetings were held in Northern Virginia and Richmond. External Affairs worked to develop an Economic Development 101 presentation that was given to all legislators. The information provided an overview of VEDP, the process for economic development in the Commonwealth, and included some recent major initiatives. In addition to individual meetings, Dr. Moret also gave a presentation to the NOVA Delegation Caucus at the beginning of session where 41 members of the House and Senate were in attendance.

Dr. Moret reported that the members he and Ms. Morton met with had no concerns with VEDP. The legislators were proud of the work that VEDP is doing. Legislators, along with VEDP, want Virginia to maintain the status of Best State for Business.

Board Outreach Recommendations

Ms. Morton shared a handout of suggested legislative meetings for Board members. Secretary Ball explained that now is the time to reach out to legislators. Ms. Morton mentioned she would be more than happy to help schedule meetings. Ms. Chenery said that talking points would be very helpful for all board member to have. Based on Ms. Chenery's suggestion for talking points, folders were prepared to hand out to Board members the next day. One-pager talking points included Budget Priorities, Report Consolidation (HB 935), and MEI grants for Volvo, Morgan Olson, and Merck.

Secretary Ball gave updates and began by saying it was an interesting session. Some of the things he highlighted were the MEI bills previously mentioned, the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority, housing bills/housing trust fund, anti-discrimination, energy/offshore wind, and broadband.

Ms. Cassidy Rasnick mentioned Governor Northam's G3 initiative. Dr. Moret said he was very excited about this. Dr. Moret explained that the Governor's "Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back" initiative, or "G3" program will provide financial support to cover tuition, fees, and books for eligible students at the Commonwealth's two-year public institutions. This initiative is directed at programs for key industries like health care, IT, and skilled trades.

Anticipated Topics for Next Meeting

Ms. Morton said she would give a recap of the General Assembly session results and the progress made to date.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Engel adjourned the meeting at 1:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Bell
Acting Recording Secretary