

**Minutes**  
**Legislation and Policy Committee Meeting**  
**Board of Directors of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership**  
**January 27, 2021**  
**3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**  
**[Zoom Meeting]**

**Welcome and Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m. by Chair Marianne Radcliff, who noted that a quorum was present.

Members present: Chair Marianne Radcliff, Carrie Chenery, Deborah Flippo, Bill Hayter, Dan Pleasant, and Ned Masee, *ex officio*

Members absent: None

Other Board Members: Secretary Brian Ball, Dan Clemente, and Vince Mastracco

VEDP staff present: Stephanie Agee, Lindsay Barker, Vince Barnett, Christine Bell, Jamie Canup, David Devan, Jason El Koubi, Stephanie Florie, Sandi McNinch, Lori Melancon, Debbie Melvin, Nathalie Molliet-Ribet, Stephen Moret, Christy Morton, Jordan Snelling, and Carrie Vuori

Guests present: Charles Kennington and Randy Sherrod

**Opening Remarks**

Chair Radcliff welcomed guests to the electronic meeting of VEDP's Legislation and Policy Committee. Chair Radcliff shared these remarks: "As you well know, the Governor declared a state of emergency in March due to the potential spread of COVID-19. Because an in-person meeting is unsafe and we wish to discharge our lawful purposes, duties and responsibilities, we are permitted by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, as amended by the State Budget, to meet by electronic means without a quorum of our members being physically assembled at one location.

We are gathered now in a Zoom environment that is open to the public. Should anyone from the public get disconnected from the public Zoom environment and be unable to re-engage, he or she should call (804) 278-7702 and speak to Jennifer Garrett. We will do our best to re-engage and will halt the public portion of the meeting until the connection can be re-established.

Here are reminders of a few things that will be different than our in-person meetings:

- Everything on the public Zoom environment will be recorded, and the recording will be posted on VEDP's website.
- All votes will be taken by roll call.

- Please use the mute function unless you are speaking—and remember to unmute at the appropriate time.
- During the public comment period, any member of the public wishing to make a comment may simply unmute and speak at that time or use the Chat function and ask to be given an opportunity to speak.
- Likewise, committee members may simply unmute themselves to speak or use the Chat function during the meeting."

**Public Comment Period**

Chair Radcliff solicited public comments. There were none.

**Approval of Minutes for October 21, 2020 Meeting**

Chair Radcliff asked for approval of the minutes from the October 21, 2020, meeting. A motion was made by Ms. Chenery and seconded by Ms. Flippo, and the minutes were approved as presented by roll call vote:

Upon the vote:	Ms. Radcliff	Aye
	Ms. Chenery	Aye
	Ms. Flippo	Aye
	Mr. Hayter	Absent for vote
	Mr. Pleasant	Absent for vote

**VEDP Budget Priorities**

Ms. Morton began by saying the General Assembly convened on January 13, and they agreed to a 30-day session. She mentioned this was a short amount of time for the volume of work they had to complete. Both chambers did set bill limits which only allowed for a little less than 1,200 bills. Ms. Morton stated that crossover is scheduled for February 5, and sine die is currently planned for February 11.

Ms. Morton mentioned that VEDP had worked closely with the Administration to develop priorities that would significantly impact Virginia's recovery. She shared that VEDP sees four significant opportunities for economic recovery, and they are as follows.

- Capture manufacturing reshoring and new supply chain opportunities
- Accelerate digital Virginia (cloud computing, software, data centers)
- Seize telework transition opportunities, with a particular focus on rural and small metro regions
- Retool and reskill Virginia's unemployed workforce for post-COVID career opportunities

Ms. Morton reviewed the following five budget initiatives. Expand the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program; Restore the Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP); Expand the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP); Create the office of education and labor market alignment; and MEI Custom Grant for Microsoft.

Ms. Morton explained the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program has a significant impact on training workers for new jobs being created in communities today, which is needed now more

than ever. She said the two Talent Solutions programs VEDP has would be critical to retooling and retraining workers who may be out of work and getting them into higher-paying jobs.

Ms. Morton spoke about VBRSP and how important it is for the Commonwealth to increase our sites' readiness. Doing this will allow Virginia to compete for some of the reshoring and supply chain distribution projects.

Ms. Morton talked about creating the office of education and labor market alignment. This initiative is a partnership with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV). The creation of this office would provide a unified and consistent source of information and analysis on linkages between education and employment outcomes. The office will be located at VEDP but will be in partnership with SCHEV.

The last budget item Ms. Morton spoke about was the Microsoft project, which was announced in the previous year. Microsoft will invest \$64 million and create 1,500 new jobs in Northern Virginia. Since this was an MEI project with a custom grant, the next session legislation is introduced to implement the grant agreement's parameters.

Ms. Morton shared that four of these items were included in the Governor's introduced budget. The Virginia Talent Accelerator Program is being considered with an amendment with the Administration's support, and we are very appreciative of that.

### **Other Budget Items of Interest**

Ms. Morton briefly spoke about other budget items of interest relating to economic development:

- Virginia Telecommunications Initiative (VATI)
- Get Skilled, Get a Job, Give Back (G3) Program
- Passenger Rail to Blacksburg
- Virginia Main Street Program
- \$1,500 bonus executive branch employees; contingent on meeting or exceeding the revenue forecast.

Ms. Morton also spoke about budget amendments introduced by members of the General Assembly. The first amendment included International Trade Plan funding introduced by Senator Marsden and Delegate Bulova. The second amendment by Delegate McQuinn was to provide \$4 million additional over the biennium for the Virginia Brownfields Restoration and Economic Development Assistance Fund to help with redeveloping public housing projects. Lastly, there was an amendment for Infrastructure Upgrades for Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Economic Development by Delegate Aird.

### **VEDP Legislation**

Ms. Morton went over VEDP's four agency bills, SB1418, HB1967, SB1314, and SB1156.

SB1418, carried by Senator McPike, waives or reduces the capital investment requirement and/or local match for job creation grant programs for teleworking jobs.

HB1967, carried by Delegate Bagby, aligns VJIP to the Virginia Minimum Wage Act.

SB1314, carried by Senator Hashmi, creates the office of education and labor market alignment at VEDP.

SB1156, carried by Senator Howell, is the MEI custom grant legislation for Microsoft.

### **Special Election Update**

Ms. Morton explained that a special election was held on January 5, 2021, to fill two vacant seats in the House of Delegates. Delegate Jennifer Carrol-Foy resigned from her seat in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District to focus on her gubernatorial run for Governor, and Delegate Joe Lindsey resigned from his seat in the 90<sup>th</sup> District to accept a judgeship. The two new House members are Delegate Candi Mundon King for the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and Delegate Angelia Williams Graves for the 90<sup>th</sup> District.

Ms. Morton shared that Senator Ben Chafin of the 38<sup>th</sup> District passed away on January 1, 2021, from complications of COVID-19. His seat will remain vacant for the 2021 session, and a Special Election is set for March 23, 2021.

### **Board Outreach**

Ms. Morton spoke about some of the different ways VEDP has been engaging with decision-makers. She said VEDP has been working closely with the Administration. She thanked Secretary Ball, Secretary Layne, Deputy Secretary Cass Rasnick, and others for being great supporters throughout this process.

Ms. Morton discussed that VEDP has been working with partner organizations like the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA), Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Local and Regional Chambers of Commerce, the Coalition of Technology Councils, Virginia Business Council, and others.

Ms. Morton shared that VEDP has developed one-pagers on VEDP budget priorities and legislation. VEDP also has been proactively reaching out to legislators with information on economic development projects in their respective districts that offer either of VEDP's workforce training programs. Ms. Morton also mentioned the updated Board Outreach books and talking points on the effectiveness of VEDP's economic development programs.

Chair Radcliff spoke about the importance of committee members and board members reaching out to one or two legislators they have a relationship with and share the many things VEDP is doing. She mentioned the materials that VEDP and the Administration put together are beneficial.

Mr. Masee mentioned the state Chamber board meeting was held last week, and he wanted to reiterate how meaningful the relationship between VEDP and the Chamber is. Mr. Masee said that Mr. Martin, Executive Vice President with the Virginia Chamber and responsible for their legislative affairs, made it clear that they asked board members to lobby on VEDP's behalf.

Ms. Morton shared that we added some new information into the Board Outreach books. We added the names and contact information for all House Appropriations Committee members and their economic development subcommittee and the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee and their economic development subcommittee. Ms. Morton said she would be happy to go through and identify legislators for each board member to reach out to. The top

priority is funding for the Virginia Talent Accelerator program in addition to talking points. Ms. Chenery said she thought it was a good idea for board members to identify a few legislators to reach out to and make those recommendations to Chair Radcliff and Ms. Morton.

### **Open Discussion and Anticipated Topics for Next Meeting**

Ms. Morton mentioned our next board meeting is in March. Some anticipated topics are an update on the General Assembly, possible initiatives for the 2022 General Assembly, talk about the gubernatorial race, and all 100 House seats up for election.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Radcliff adjourned the meeting at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Bell  
Acting Recording Secretary

DRAFT