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VIRGINIA TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION

701 East Franklin Street, Suite 501

Richmond, Virginia 23219

EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, January 7, 2020

9:00 a.m.

Homewood Suites  
Richmond, Virginia

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APPEARANCES:

- Mr. Frank M. Ruff, Jr., Chairman
- Ms. Gayle F. Barts
- Mr. Ben Chafin, Jr.
- Ms. Becky Coleman
- Mr. Joel Cunningham
- Ms. Alexis I. Ehrhardt
- Ms. Sandy Ratliff
- Mr. Cecil Shell
  
- COMMISSION STAFF:
- Mr. Evan Feinman, Executive Director
- Mr. Andy Sorrell, Deputy Director
- Mr. Timothy S. Pfohl, Grants Program Administration  
Director
- Ms. Stephanie S. Kim, Director of Finance
- Ms. Sarah K. Capps, Grants Program Administrator,  
Southside Virginia
- Ms. Michele Faircloth, Grants Assistant,  
Southside Virginia
- Ms. Sara G. Williams, Grants Program Administrator,  
Southwest Virginia
- (Cont.)

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COMMISSION STAFF: (Cont.)

Ms. Jessica Stamper, Grants Assistant,  
Southwest Virginia  
Ms. Stacey Richardson, Administration Supervisor  
Ms. Suzzette M. Patterson, Grants System Manger  
Mr. David Bringman, Database and Performance  
Metrics Manager

COUNSEL FOR THE COMMISSION:

Ms. Elizabeth B. Myers, Assistant Attorney General  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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CHAIRMAN RUFF: Welcome to this morning's Education Committee. We don't have a heavy schedule, but we have a necessary schedule.

If you'll call the roll, please.

MR. FEINMAN: Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

Senator Ruff?

CHAIRMAN RUFF: Here.

MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Coleman?

MS. COLEMAN: Here.

MR. FEINMAN: Ms. Barts?

MS. BARTS: Here.

MR. FEINMAN: Delegate Byron?

Senator Chafin?

MR. CHAFIN: Here.

MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Cunningham?

MR. CUNNINGHAM: Here.

MR. FEINMAN: Dr. Ehrhardt?

MS. EHRHARDT: Here.

MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Harris?

Ms. Ratliff?

1 MS. RATLIFF: Here.

2 MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Shell?

3 MR. SHELL: Here.

4 MR. FEINMAN: Senator Stanley?

5 Delegate Wright?

6 You have a forum, Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Thank you, Evan.

8 The minutes were published on the

9 website for the October meeting. Are there any

10 corrections, or is there a motion?

11 MR. SHELL: So moved.

12 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Move to approve

13 second?

14 MS. BARTS: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN RUFF: All in favor, say

16 aye. (Ayes).

17 Okay. Stephanie, I'll turn it over

18 to you for the Talent Attraction Program Update.

19 MS. KIM: Okay. Behind you --

20 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Awesome.

21 MS. KIM: I just wanted to give you

22 a brief update on where we are on the Talent

23 Attraction Program. I can't give you many

24 outcomes, because we just had the first round in

25 the fall, but I did want to let you know that the

1 Virginia Department of Health, State Loan Repayment  
2 Program, who we partnered with for the health care  
3 occupations, they are -- their application period  
4 is open now until March 31st. They have been  
5 marketing this program nationwide to all primary  
6 care conferences and things where they would be  
7 recruiting.

8                   They did record an interview on  
9 January 3rd for PBS and it's airing at various  
10 places throughout the state this week and they will  
11 be making their awards in, probably, April.

12                   So, to summarize how our application  
13 round went this past fall, we had a September  
14 deadline. We received 140 applications, 120 were  
15 eligible. We did have certain eligibility  
16 requirements. They -- we didn't require that they  
17 live and work in the region yet, but they did have  
18 to be in certain occupations, they did have to  
19 graduate, things like that.

20                   But 120 were eligible. We made 92  
21 awards and 91 of them accepted, totaling 1.6  
22 million. So that averaged out to an award of  
23 17,549. It is a two-year commitment, so we won't  
24 really know the results of how many actually  
25 received the money until the two-year period is

1 over and they submit all of their documentation.

2 Just to summarize, recall the  
3 workforce areas. They generally followed the  
4 workforce development areas, except we had to make  
5 a few modifications where there was a county by  
6 itself. So, these are our modified workforce  
7 areas. Then the next slide you can see just a  
8 chart of where the population was for those  
9 workforce areas, how -- what percentage of them  
10 lived in the area and worked in the area of the  
11 applicants that received the awards.

12 And then just to give you an idea of  
13 the occupation, you know, the majority of them were  
14 special ed teachers and you'll notice that a large  
15 percentage of them were also speech, OT and PT.  
16 And I can provide these slides to you on paper, if  
17 you'd like. It's small.

18 So, we're proposing a couple of  
19 changes for this year's rounds. One is that we are  
20 trying to be ahead of their graduation period, so  
21 we're trying to move it from the fall to actually  
22 early spring. We're looking at trying to open up  
23 the next round shortly, closing March 31st and  
24 hopefully that will help them make the decision  
25 when they are looking for jobs and interviewing for

1 jobs and looking at where to locate upon  
2 graduation. But this will help them decide to move  
3 to our region.

4 We're having a requirement of the  
5 graduation date to be between March 20, 2019 and  
6 December 2020. So, some of these students will not  
7 have graduated yet when they apply, but they will  
8 have had to have graduated and worked and lived,  
9 before they receive any money. We will make awards  
10 based on future graduation dates.

11 And then no other changes, as far as  
12 occupation or requirement for a two-year  
13 commitment, or that they have to reside and work in  
14 certain occupations. So that all will be the same.

15 The next slide, this is just to  
16 remind you what we did approve last year and there  
17 are no changes to this, but the occupations that we  
18 felt were the hardest to fill across the regions.  
19 Some have shortages in certain areas and not in  
20 others, but in order to make this a little simpler  
21 we just picked the ones that were across most of  
22 the areas.

23 So, what we need to do today is  
24 adopt program changes for FY20 and recommend  
25 funding of \$1 million for the current year to fund

1 the TAP Program for this next cycle, which would be  
2 this coming spring. And we had 1.38 million in  
3 carryforward, so it would be a total of 2.38  
4 million available.

5 Any questions?

6 MS. EHRHARDT: Mr. Chairman, may I  
7 ask a question?

8 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Yes.

9 MS. EHRHARDT: Stephanie, can you  
10 talk about the marketing. I know you said it's  
11 marketed to employers, I'm just thinking of our  
12 higher Ed institutions. Are they able to market it  
13 to their graduating students as well, or to the  
14 employer's who are coming to job fairs now?

15 MS. KIM: Yes. I think the timing  
16 of the last cycle, because we were doing this in  
17 August and September, it wasn't the best time. We  
18 did hit some of the larger universities and career  
19 development centers. I think with it being in the  
20 springtime it will be a little bit easier as  
21 students are, you know, looking at interviews and  
22 job placement.

23 MS. EHRHARDT: Okay.

24 MS. KIM: But we do -- we will be  
25 contacting all of the Virginia universities and

1 maybe some surrounding areas, just so that they can  
2 have that available to them.

3                   It's a little bit harder -- I mean,  
4 we have notified, like, the school systems in  
5 those -- in our region and I think they have used  
6 that. They have -- but it was -- it was kind of --  
7 we were already into the school year.

8                   MS. EHRHARDT: Yeah.

9                   MS. KIM: So they were just telling  
10 their current teachers, but I think it can be used  
11 as a recruitment for future hirings.

12                   MR. FEINMAN: And, Mr. Chairman, Dr.  
13 Ehrhardt are going to be working a lot with our  
14 partners in the executive branch. So, SCHEV and  
15 VCCS are both fully briefed on it this time.  
16 They're aware, as well as the Secretary of  
17 Education is very excited about it. He wants to  
18 treat this like a model and I think if we can show  
19 success in the next couple of years, the General  
20 Assembly may take this off our hands for all of  
21 rural Virginia, which wouldn't be the worst thing  
22 in the world.

23                   MS. EHRHARDT: And I'd love to  
24 suggest the colleges, counsel of independent  
25 colleges in Virginia as well, so we don't forget

1 our --

2 MR. FEINMAN: Absolutely. That is  
3 an oversight and we will correct it.

4 MS. EHRHARDT: Great. Thank you.

5 MS. KIM: And we would appreciate  
6 the commission's help too of any suggestions about  
7 who to contact, or where to market.

8 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Have we in any way  
9 defined or been given the guidance as to what the  
10 civic involvement is?

11 MS. KIM: We have been very generous  
12 about how we define that. We have, in the Email  
13 that -- in the award letter talked about it being  
14 for a nonprofit, government entity -- or government  
15 entity. You know, it's basically volunteering.  
16 So, if you will volunteer either in your community  
17 or for nonprofit, and it just needs to not be part  
18 of the requirements in your job.

19 Some people are required to go in  
20 the community and do so many hours for their job,  
21 so we were saying that it needs to not be part of  
22 the requirement of their job, or recertification,  
23 you know, but that it is truly voluntary. It could  
24 be anything from, you know, volunteering to coach  
25 baseball to, you know, volunteering in a government

1 committee. So, it's pretty -- pretty general.

2 CHAIRMAN RUFF: In that description,  
3 can I encourage you to prominently put fire and  
4 rescue squad?

5 MS. KIM: Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN RUFF: We're having an  
7 awful hard time with fire departments losing  
8 membership. If -- and I think once people got some  
9 training and got involved, that might keep them  
10 more interested in the community, 'cause they know  
11 then that they're doing something of value and  
12 they're not just putting in time.

13 MS. KIM: Right.

14 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Any other questions?

15 MS. RATLIFF: How are they reporting  
16 their volunteers on hours?

17 MS. KIM: So, we are asking them at  
18 the end of each 12-month period, even though it's a  
19 two-year commitment, at the end of 12 months they  
20 need to submit to us basically a number of hours  
21 and signed off by the supervisor.

22 MS. RATLIFF: Okay.

23 MS. KIM: Or nonprofit, or whoever  
24 was supervising their volunteer hours.

25 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Any other questions?

1                   Thank you, Stephanie. Appreciate  
2     it.

3                   The next issue Tim will deal with.  
4     If you imagine that there were no windows in this  
5     room and the lights were off, we wouldn't be able  
6     to see much. That's where we are on the two-year  
7     programs. We do not know what will pass in the  
8     General Assembly as to what the definition of free  
9     two-year college is going to be. As proposed, it  
10    will be several classifications of jobs and certain  
11    elements of poverty. But what goes in in December  
12    may not come out the same in March. So, we'll have  
13    to guide -- we'll have to open it up, or we have  
14    to -- we're going to probably have a meeting  
15    sometime in late March to really get the community  
16    colleges to be fully aware of what's going to be  
17    available.

18                   Tim.

19                   MR. PFOHL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

20                   The spring meeting cycle is the one  
21    in which we have traditionally dealt with the  
22    workforce financial aid for community colleges and  
23    higher Ed centers and also concurrently the  
24    Competitive Education Program. Competitive Ed is a  
25    little more straightforward this year, as always.

1 That's for new and expanding programs in facilities  
2 and we have a \$1.5 billion budget line for  
3 competitive education.

4 As the Chairman said, the workforce  
5 financial aid is a little more complicated this  
6 year, because of the budget that's been proposed  
7 and the potential for substantial new state support  
8 for community college tuition and workforce  
9 training.

10 At this point, the best we can  
11 suggest is stay the course consistent with what we  
12 have funded in the current school year, which was  
13 an obligation, total obligation of about \$2.9  
14 million, with a cap per institution of \$315,000,  
15 under all the rank priorities we've been using for  
16 the last several years; Stem H, short-term training  
17 leading to nationally recognized credentials and so  
18 forth.

19 So, typically we take applications  
20 for workforce aid and competitive education  
21 sometime in March. We may not have a clear picture  
22 of what the state funding opportunity is at that  
23 point, but folks are going to need to start working  
24 on these proposals so they can have them to us in  
25 March and we can act on them in May, so they can

1 begin to offer financial aid for the 2020-2021  
2 school year.

3                   So, I guess our suggestion is that  
4 we announce that folks can apply at levels not to  
5 exceed what we're currently funding this school  
6 year, with the understanding that when the budget  
7 situation becomes more clear, we may have to do  
8 some revisions and so forth. So, I guess we're  
9 just looking for some direction to give us a green  
10 light to say that the community colleges and higher  
11 Ed centers can apply for workforce financial aid,  
12 not to exceed current levels and consistent with  
13 the current guidelines.

14                   CHAIRMAN RUFF: So if I understand  
15 you correctly, you're fishing for a motion to  
16 continue as we have, with the understanding that it  
17 will probably be modified late March?

18                   MR. PFOHL: Yes, sir.

19                   CHAIRMAN RUFF: Would someone like  
20 to make that motion?

21                   MR. SHELL: So moved.

22                   A SPEAKER: Second.

23                   CHAIRMAN RUFF: Any discussion of  
24 that motion?

25                   Any discussion of the issue?

1                   If not, all in favor, say aye.

2                   (Ayes). All opposed? (No response).

3                   That one passes.

4                   Evan, do we have anything else?

5                   MR. FEINMAN: Mr. Chairman, if we do  
6 need -- if we're going to be able to do what we  
7 want to do, have a spring semester Talent  
8 Attraction Program around this year, we've asked  
9 for a motion to allocate \$1 million to add to carry  
10 it for the last round, so we have the 2.38 that we  
11 think we'll need to do the Talent Attraction  
12 Program this year, so the staff has asked for a  
13 motion allocating \$1 million to the TAP program for  
14 this year.

15                   CHAIRMAN RUFF: Is there a motion?

16                   Is there a second?

17                   MS. EHRHARDT: Second.

18                   CHAIRMAN RUFF: Any further  
19 discussion?

20                   Hearing none, all in favor, say aye.

21                   (Ayes). All opposed? (No response).

22                   Okay. That passes.

23                   All right. Anything else?

24                   MR. FEINMAN: I have no other  
25 business before you, except to thank the committee

1 for your work. You know, obviously we're all but  
2 certain to have to call you all back for what could  
3 be a complicated meeting after the General Assembly  
4 is active. So, just keep your eyes peeled.

5 CHAIRMAN RUFF: Is there anyone in  
6 the audience today that wishes to make any kind of  
7 public comment?

8 Going once, going twice?

9 The meeting is adjourned.

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11 (The hearing is adjourned.)

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CERTIFICATE OF THE COURT REPORTER

I, Jacqueline Barreto, Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public for the State of Virginia at Large, do hereby certify that I was the Court Reporter who took down and transcribed the proceedings of the Virginia Region Revitalization Commission, Education Committee Meeting, when held on Tuesday, January 7, 2020, at 9:00 a.m., at the Homewood Suites, Richmond, Virginia.

I further certify this is a true and accurate transcript, to the best of my ability to hear and understand the proceedings.

Given under my hand this 15th day of January, 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_

Jacqueline Barreto

Certified Court Reporter

Notary Public for the State of Virginia at Large

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: October 31, 2022