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4 VIRGINIA TOBACCO REGION REVITALIZATION COMMISSION  
5 FALL FULL COMMISSION TWO-DAY MEETING  
6 BERRY HILL RESORT  
7 AND CONFERENCE CENTER  
8 3105 RIVER ROAD  
9 SOUTH BOSTON, VIRGINIA

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SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA COMMITTEE  
OCTOBER 5, 2022  
10:00 A.M.

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25 CAROLINE LANE, COURT REPORTER

1 APPEARANCES

2 Delegate James Morefield, Chair  
Ms. Julianne Hensley, Vice Chair

3 Mr. Edward Blevins  
Ms. Gretchen B. Clark

4 Ms. Amanda Cox  
Delegate Terry Kilgore

5 Secretaru Matt Lohr  
Mr. William A. Pace

6 Ms. Sandy J. Ratliff  
Delegate William C. Wampler, III

7 Ms. Sarah L. Wilson

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

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4 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Good morning.

5 We will call the Southwest Virginia  
6 Committee to order.

7 Andy, we need a roll call.

8 MR. SORRELL: All right. Thank you, Mr.  
9 Chairman.

10 Delegate Morefield.

11 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Here.

12 MR. SORRELL: Mrs. Hensley.

13 MS. HENSLEY: Here.

14 MR. SORRELL: Mr. Blevins.

15 MR. BLEVINS: Here.

16 MR. SORRELL: Mrs. Clark.

17 MS. CLARK: Here.

18 MR. SORRELL: Ms. Cox.

19 MS. COX: Here.

20 MR. SORRELL: Senator Edwards.

21 (Negative response)

22 MR. SORRELL: Delegate Kilgore.

23 DELEGATE KILGORE: Here.

24 MR. SORRELL: Mr. Pace.

25 MR. PACE: Here.

1 MR. SORRELL: Mrs. Ratliff.

2 MS. RATLIFF: Here.

3 MR. SORRELL: Delegate Wampler.

4 DELEGATE WAMPLER: Here.

5 MR. SORRELL: Ms. Wilson.

6 MS. WILSON: Here.

7 MR. SORRELL: All right. You have a  
8 quorum, Mr. Chair.

9 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Thank you.

10 The first order of business, we need to  
11 approve the May 11th minutes.

12 MR. BLEVINS: I make a motion to approve  
13 the May 11th minutes.

14 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

15 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: All in favor say  
16 "aye."

17 (All affirm)

18 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: All opposed?

19 (Negative response)

20 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Next we move on to  
21 public comments.

22 Do we have any public comments?

23 (Negative response)

24 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Okay. Now we move  
25 on to extensions and modifications.

1 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

2 We have six requests for extensions to  
3 present to you today.

4 Some of these projects will be familiar  
5 to you already.

6 As a reminder, the Commission -- all  
7 Commission grants are approved for a three-year  
8 period.

9 At the end of that three-year period, the  
10 Commission can approve a fourth year, but  
11 anything fifth year and beyond must come back  
12 to the Commission for approval.

13 And so you will notice in several of the  
14 comments that there are quite a few that will  
15 likely be back for additional extensions.

16 And just a note on those in general, that  
17 is very common to see when there are  
18 construction projects that involve a variety of  
19 other statements -- federal funding sources,  
20 because not only are these projects subject to  
21 our time lines, but they are also subject to  
22 the time lines and requirements of those  
23 funding sources.

24 And so often there can be a bit of a  
25 delay just as they get all their funds in place

1 and ready to go. But generally, we will see  
2 that projects are active, that they are moving  
3 forward, and that they are making beautiful  
4 progress.

5 So with that said, the first project  
6 before you today is number 3464, and it is part  
7 of the Heart of Appalachia Tourism Authority,  
8 the Coalfield Regional Tourism Destination  
9 project. It was approved in September 2018 for  
10 a little over 483,000. There is currently a  
11 401,000 dollar balance remaining.

12 This grant -- it also -- it covers the  
13 staffing positions for a three-year period and  
14 those positions, funding has now been completed  
15 for, but the balance and the bulk of this grant  
16 is to be used for the design and construction  
17 of what is now named the "Three Rivers  
18 Destination Center."

19 This is a visitor's center out of the St.  
20 Paul area, and the Clinch River State Park area  
21 as well.

22 The design of this project is complete  
23 and the construction phase is fully funded.  
24 They have been undergoing contract negotiations  
25 with DHCD who require additional studies and

1 things before they can move forward with that  
2 funding.

3 I believe this project has ARC Power  
4 funding in it.

5 It is a very well leveraged project for  
6 us.

7 So the period of the construction time  
8 line indicates that the project is not likely  
9 to be completed during the one-year extension  
10 and will require another extension next year.

11 So with all that said, Staff recommends  
12 the approval of a one-year extension through  
13 September 30th, 2023.

14 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Questions.

15 DELEGATE WAMPLER: This has been going on  
16 since -- when did they qualify for this grant?

17 MS. WILLIAMS: Our grant was approved in  
18 2018, so the federal money would have been  
19 approved after ours. So --

20 DELEGATE WAMPLER: Okay. Thank you.

21 MS. WILLIAMS: Moving along, we have  
22 number 3465 -- Virginia Highlands Community  
23 College Educational Foundation, Advanced  
24 Technology and Workforce Development Center,  
25 approved for one million dollars, September

1 2018, and it is the full balance that is  
2 currently available. They have requested a  
3 one-year extension.

4 This is an interesting situation because  
5 our funds were approved to assist with the  
6 construction of a new workforce development  
7 building on the college campus.

8 A groundbreaking was held in November  
9 2021, and construction did begin soon after.

10 What we have now learned is that due to  
11 the rising construction costs, Virginia  
12 Highlands made the decision to move forward and  
13 begin construction, despite not having all the  
14 funding in place needed to complete it.

15 We do see a lot of our projects --  
16 construction projects -- struggling with the  
17 rising costs as well.

18 It is somewhat understandable that they  
19 made this decision. It puts the Commission's  
20 funds in a bit of a risky position, because  
21 currently there is a steel shell that has been  
22 constructed there.

23 But what isn't clear to us, is, one, what  
24 is the new total construction costs; two, how  
25 much funding is in place, and, three, what that



1 deficit is.

2 We don't have a lot of details for that  
3 information. So ultimately Staff had to look  
4 at: Is our funding going to result in the  
5 outcome and output that we expected upon  
6 approval, which was the construction, the full  
7 construction of a workforce development  
8 building.

9 So what Staff is recommending is that the  
10 grant be extended, but the Staff recommends a  
11 one-year extension through September 30, 2023,  
12 conditioned upon the use of Commission funding  
13 support, last dollar, construction expenses  
14 after all fund raising required to complete the  
15 project is available and spent.

16 The next project is number 3458, the  
17 Mount Rogers Development Partnership, Regional  
18 Marketing Organization support project.

19 This was approved for \$750,000 in  
20 September 2018. There is a \$219,291 balance.  
21 A one-year extension is requested for this  
22 project.

23 This grant was approved through the  
24 special projects program to provide support for  
25 the eight regional marketing organizations that

1 serve the region, Southwest and Southern  
2 Virginia.

3 I believe six are in Southern Virginia,  
4 and two are in Southwest.

5 And the funding was allocated using the  
6 formula. So each RMO would have received a  
7 certain amount based on 3,000 per locality and  
8 fifteen cents per capita input.

9 And each year for the past three years,  
10 beginning on July 1, to June 30th, each  
11 organization submits a budget for approval.  
12 And there are very strict limits for how those  
13 funds can be used.

14 A lot of the funding is available for --  
15 if they need supplies and a prospect, so they  
16 can go travel for a prospect visit.

17 And so the project just completed its  
18 third fiscal year, June the 30th.

19 However, those organizations have  
20 balances remaining because they simply weren't  
21 able to do some of the things over this  
22 two-year COVID period.

23 So several of them are now going into  
24 what would be a fourth fiscal year. So it  
25 would be a fifth year for the grant -- for the

1 fourth fiscal year of grant funding, to allow  
2 them to use up those balances.

3 So Staff recommends an extension through  
4 June the 30th, 2023, and that would coincide  
5 with the end of that fourth fiscal year.

6 Next we have grant 3198, Friends of  
7 Southwest Virginia, Building Appalachian  
8 Spring, growing the economy of Southwest  
9 Virginia, through Developing Outdoor Recreation  
10 Destinations.

11 This was approved for \$500,000 in  
12 September 2016, and there is a little over  
13 \$206,000 balance remaining.

14 This is a request for a one-year  
15 extension.

16 This grant was approved for three  
17 separate construction projects across the  
18 Southwest region.

19 One of those projects, the Appalachian  
20 Trail Center in Damascus has been completed,  
21 and we are just waiting on final grant closeout  
22 for that project.

23 The second is the High Knob Destination  
24 Center. It is proceeding on schedule. The  
25 construction contract is awarded in August, and

1 construction will begin in spring, summer of  
2 2023.

3 And finally, the Haysi Breaks Trails  
4 Construction project is also underway.

5 This project underwent a major change  
6 because of some flooding issues in the flooding  
7 district of the town of Haysi, so they had to  
8 redesign it to provide a handicap accessible  
9 trail to the river for motorized tourists.

10 Bids for that project came in a little  
11 overbudget, so 150,000.

12 The town approached DCR for that funding,  
13 and it looks like they will receive it.

14 So these are generally positive updates  
15 for these projects. They are all moving  
16 forward. They all have a lot of additional  
17 state and federal funding in it. And the time  
18 lines are somewhat reflective by those regions.

19 There is no reason to suspect the  
20 projects won't be completed, but they do need  
21 some additional staff.

22 So Staff recommends approval of an  
23 extension through September 30th, 2023.

24 Number 3191, the Floyd County EDA, the  
25 Floyd Regional Commerce Center, Phase Two,

1 approved for \$420,696, September 2017.

2 There is a little over a \$406,000 balance  
3 remaining.

4 The balance of this grant is to construct  
5 utilities that serve additional pads that are  
6 under development at the Commerce Center.

7 The phase two activities also involve the  
8 construction of an access road, and I believe a  
9 lot of the utilities will be installed along  
10 with the roads.

11 The funding for that came from the ARC  
12 access road program. And VDOT schedule shows  
13 completion during the winter of 23-24.

14 So under that time line, we should expect  
15 to receive an additional extension request next  
16 year.

17 However, the project team is diligently  
18 pursuing the project and keeping Staff  
19 informed.

20 Staff recommends approval of a one-year  
21 extension through September 30, 2023.

22 Number 3200 is Scott County Economic  
23 Development Authority, Riverside Development,  
24 Phase Three, approved for \$500,000 in  
25 September 2017, the full balance of that grant

1 remains. There is a request for a one-year  
2 extension.

3 This is a project that may be familiar to  
4 a lot of people, because we have had to  
5 consider extensions for it in the past.

6 The extension that we approved last year,  
7 just to be just very clear, was approved as a  
8 final extension, while the project pursued  
9 federal EDA funding to complete a funding gap.  
10 The bids had consistently come back way over  
11 budget for the project.

12 So they did approach EDA -- federal EDA.  
13 However that application was not successful.

14 So on the surface, it looks like a cut  
15 and dry case that the project should be closed.

16 Previously, this project would not have  
17 qualified for VBRSP, Virginia Business Sites  
18 ready.

19 This is a sites program, because at the  
20 time it required 100-acre minimum to qualify.

21 I believe this site comes in just under  
22 that minimum, so that funding source was not  
23 accommodated.

24 Over the past year, the requirements for  
25 that program have been reduced for GO Virginia

1 regions one and two. This would be an increase  
2 in one, to require only 50 acres for those  
3 localities.

4 Because of that, this project now  
5 qualifies for that program.

6 I understand Scott EDA submitted an  
7 application in mid September and we feel that  
8 it's reasonable to allow the grant to remain  
9 open, pending the decision on the VBRSP  
10 application.

11 So Staff recommends approval of a  
12 one-year extension through September 30th,  
13 2023, contingent upon a positive decision for  
14 the pending VBRSP application.

15 If the VBRSP application is unsuccessful,  
16 the grant will be immediately closed.

17 And that completes my presentation.

18 DELEGATE KILGORE: Mr. Chair.

19 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Mr. Kilgore.

20 DELEGATE KILGORE I make a motion to  
21 approve all these En Bloc.

22 I would like to make a comment.

23 I mean our job here is to get this money  
24 out to these communities and make sure that we  
25 are improving the economy of Southside Virginia

1 and Southwest Virginia.

2 And, you know, we got all this money out  
3 here, and it just seems that every year we are  
4 struggling.

5 We want to encourage our folks that are  
6 receiving those grants, everybody comes in here  
7 and says how this will be a great project and  
8 we're ready to go, and then four years later we  
9 are still here.

10 But I am just -- that happens for the  
11 work. We have been through COVID and I  
12 understand that, but I am making the motion to  
13 approve.

14 But I do -- let's try to do a little bit  
15 better, with the Commission's funding and get  
16 it out on the street to make the best decision  
17 we can.

18 And I think that's just something that I  
19 have been wanting to say for a couple of years  
20 now. So now I have the opportunity to say it.

21 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Thank you. I  
22 apologize. We do have a motion.

23 MS. COX: I wholeheartedly agree with  
24 Delegate Kilgore. And is there a pattern -- it  
25 seems to be that matching funds -- what are the



1 significant factors outside of COVID that are  
2 related to these, and if there is anything we  
3 need to do on our end to facilitate progress?

4 DELEGATE KILGORE: There have been real  
5 overruns because of inflation things of that  
6 nature. I just think it is a lot -- you know,  
7 a perfect storm situation that I really would  
8 like that to see us get back into a -- I guess  
9 you know -- get us back into moving these  
10 projects along, go faster, in getting that  
11 money out.

12 Basically our job is to revitalize these  
13 communities.

14 And we are not doing this when money is  
15 sitting around. I think it's just a myriad of  
16 items that just -- (indiscernible).

17 MS. WILLIAMS: If I could add a little  
18 bit to that. I think we see this often when  
19 the Commission is among the first dollars in a  
20 project.

21 And we know, sometimes that's necessary  
22 to leverage other funding.

23 But -- for example, the ARC applications  
24 come to mind -- if they applied to that after  
25 they have received our money sometimes that can

1 be a year or more before those funds are  
2 actually available.

3 So you almost immediately have lost half  
4 of your grant period. So some of it is  
5 necessary and part of working with these  
6 funders.

7 But one solution may be for all the  
8 contributors. We prefer to be the last dollars  
9 whenever possible so that these projects are  
10 ready to use immediately.

11 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Okay. Any other  
12 questions?

13 DELEGATE KILGORE: I'll make a motion to  
14 approve Staff's recommendations.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second, Mr.  
16 Chairman.

17 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: All right. So we  
18 have a motion and second to approve Staff  
19 recommendation for the following extension  
20 projects numbers: 3464, 3465, 3458, 3198, 3191  
21 and 3200.

22 All in favor say "aye."

23 (All affirm)

24 All opposed.

25 (Negative response)

1           DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Now we will move on  
2 to other business.

3           As many of you know, there is a great  
4 interest all the way throughout Southwest  
5 Virginia and Southside Virginia to build meat  
6 processing plants. We have a number of  
7 localities that are very interested in moving  
8 forward on the project.

9           So we do have some Staff recommendations.  
10 And I'll turn it over to Andy.

11          MR. SORRELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I  
12 think that -- I'll give you a little bit of an  
13 update on the Southwest Program deadline coming  
14 and then we will go into process.

15          MS. WILLIAMS: Sure. The Southwest  
16 Virginia program has an October 20th deadline.  
17 And I put a copy of -- a hard copy of the  
18 current RSP at each of the committee members  
19 places. It is also is available online.

20          I thought it might be helpful, especially  
21 after discussion with the Strategic Planning  
22 Committee yesterday -- for everyone to have a  
23 copy handy, so they could see what the  
24 priorities are and what the requirements for  
25 the project are.

1           If you know of any projects that fit that  
2 RFP that are interested, feel free to send them  
3 my way.

4           We did advertise -- in the RSP, we have a  
5 little over seven million available for this  
6 round.

7           So next would be going ahead and setting  
8 aside a portion of that balance to remove it  
9 from what is available for awards in December,  
10 and hold on to it to do a round that is focused  
11 only on increasing meat processing capacities  
12 in the Southwest Region.

13           There is a lot of interest from numerous  
14 groups you hear of every day. We know there is  
15 a huge need. So the concept we are going to  
16 discuss would take some of that money and hold  
17 it for a round dedicated only for that purpose.

18           And I believe there is a short, one-page  
19 document that is by your places as well.

20           MR. SORRELL: Thank you.

21           Mr. Chairman, if I may I'll just review  
22 the meat process.

23           As Sara mentioned, there is a lot of  
24 interest in the Commission footprint, and  
25 specifically in Southwest Virginia for meat

1 processing facilities.

2 A number of our members have experienced  
3 that in the last period to find facilities to  
4 process meat.

5 And so the way in which the Commission  
6 has -- is proposing is to basically set aside a  
7 portion of the seven million dollars that  
8 Southwest Virginia program has currently  
9 available, and put it towards a future grant  
10 application round for meat processing  
11 facilities.

12 If you recall, we had a round a couple of  
13 years back.

14 It is sort of a way for us to have more  
15 (indiscernible) -- at the last Commission to  
16 review multiple requests that have a regional  
17 impact.

18 So that perhaps we are not going to be  
19 approving for one in one locality, and then  
20 there is another one in another locality,  
21 adjacent to it that might impact the other  
22 one's operation.

23 And so by having a specific round, solely  
24 for this, that will allow us all to review --  
25 the Commission to review all the ones that may

1 be eligible for the Commission's report.

2 This is something that I believe that  
3 there was a study that the General Assembly has  
4 requested for meat processing facilities, and  
5 is it still Southwest Virginia or Virginia --

6 MS. WILLIAMS: I believe that is all of  
7 Virginia.

8 MR. SORRELL: All of Virginia.

9 And it is something that I believe will  
10 be prepared or completed by January.

11 And so by having a particular focus grant  
12 round, specifically for this, for the  
13 application period in the spring, would then  
14 allow us to utilize the information from the  
15 Commission and utilize that information on that  
16 report, and form that review of the spring  
17 application.

18 Then it would be a decision that next  
19 year at the Commission's meeting in the fall of  
20 '23.

21 And we did have an opportunity to review  
22 that with Secretary Lohr.

23 And that was something that he said that  
24 he talked to his -- frequently -- and something  
25 that he would support if the Commission was

1 looking to go in that direction.

2 So at this point, I would be happy to  
3 answer any questions. I do believe that we  
4 need to have more than one committee to set  
5 aside a minimum of two million dollars, to this  
6 particular meat project. And that would be  
7 something that we would look at in the spring.

8 I also want to mention that we would have  
9 a review panel from our agribusiness section to  
10 review this application -- so from VDAT, USDA  
11 Virginia Tech.

12 Any feedback that Commissioners have as  
13 to who that review panel would be, we would  
14 definitely set that in place.

15 So at this point, I am happy to answer  
16 any questions.

17 DELEGATE WAMPLER: Mr. Chairman, I would  
18 like to comment. When you think about  
19 Virginia, the State of Virginia, over space and  
20 time, if you go across the state, we have got  
21 some amazing technology developed in Hampton  
22 Roads, here in Southside precision metal work  
23 and advanced manufacturing taking place.

24 But if you look historically even at the  
25 current time, you think about what the

1 strongest industry in Virginia is?

2 It is farming and agriculture, and  
3 agricultural products.

4 That still, beyond a doubt, is the  
5 highest performing industry section that we  
6 have.

7 And so, I think from a -- (indiscernible)  
8 incentivizing further development to this  
9 industry makes perfect sense. For the  
10 footprint, agriculture is what works, and has  
11 worked for a long time.

12 The need -- you talk to any farmer in  
13 Southwest to Southside about meat producing and  
14 meat packaging, they will tell you that it  
15 takes up to a year to get their livestock  
16 brought up into a facility, maybe six months to  
17 get it out.

18 That is creating some significant market  
19 issues in the Commonwealth and across the  
20 country.

21 And so we are able to help take some of  
22 our balances and incentivize -- you know --  
23 future development of this type of activity on  
24 a smaller scale.

25 So we are not looking for say one plant



1 in Virginia to serve every part of Virginia,  
2 but if we can make sure that these are  
3 dispersed across the footprint in a way that  
4 allows local farmers to reach local processing  
5 facilities, I think that is really the thing  
6 that we ought to be focused on, because that is  
7 what farmers in Washington County -- they may  
8 have to go to Knoxville, Tennessee or to Salem,  
9 Virginia to hit a high end meat manufacturing  
10 plant.

11 There is some smaller facilities in the  
12 area, but a lot of the major processing takes  
13 place in Salem and Knoxville.

14 And so, if we can do this and help  
15 incentivize small and medium-sized facilities  
16 across the footprint, you are going to have  
17 happy farmers, you're going to have a more  
18 productive agriculture industry, and then,  
19 hopefully some lower prices, because that is  
20 another thing that consumers are facing and  
21 needing, and other agriculture products.

22 And they are going through the roof. And  
23 consumers are having a hard time keeping up  
24 with that.

25 So I think this has got some real

1 problems to it. I want to support it, and so  
2 Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that we do  
3 allocate this two million dollars.

4 MR. SORRELL: Okay. Thank you. So in  
5 summary, we have a motion to allocate two  
6 million dollars to Southwest Virginia committee  
7 to create the meat processing program.

8 So we have a motion -- do we have a  
9 second?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second.

11 MR. SORRELL: There is a motion and a  
12 second.

13 All in favor say "aye."

14 (All affirm)

15 All opposed?

16 (Negative response)

17 MR. SORRELL: Now we will go to public  
18 comment.

19 Yes, sir.

20 MR. SHELTON: I remember back relatively  
21 pre-COVID it was still, I believe it came under  
22 the agribusiness committee.

23 We allocated a fairly substantial grant.  
24 to -- it was Grayson -- Grayson, Carroll, and  
25 Floyd maybe for a project, and I haven't heard

1 anything more about it. It just kind of piqued  
2 my memory as to where that was at years later.

3 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, years later, we  
4 allocated \$500,000 to the Blue Ridge plateau  
5 initiative, for a project that -- they had been  
6 working on -- we did a feasibility study maybe  
7 fifteen years ago.

8 We allocated half a million dollars in  
9 January 2019. So that project will be before  
10 the committee for an extension in January.

11 It has -- it seems like they have had  
12 some business plan changes. They struggled  
13 with some of the fund raising, although they  
14 seemed to have some sources in mind.

15 I do have a meeting scheduled with them  
16 in a few weeks, and I plan to let them know  
17 about this.

18 I do believe that it would be best for us  
19 to extend the grant, but ask them to submit  
20 maybe a revised business plan, so that we can  
21 -- we can review it with all the others.

22 And it may be possible, if that's the  
23 best plan out there that they can even get more  
24 funding from us.

25 At the time they applied -- in Section C1

1 of the RFP, we list our funding limit.

2 And at the time they applied, a public --  
3 non-profit owned facility could receive 50  
4 percent of capital costs -- up to 500,000.

5 There was that ceiling.

6 And a privately owned facility can  
7 receive 25 percent of equipment costs.

8 And at the time, that was limited to  
9 250,000. What we did -- a couple of years ago,  
10 we removed that 500 and 250,000 limit, but we  
11 kept the percentage in there.

12 Does that answer your question?

13 MR. SHELTON: Yes. So basically, it is  
14 still ongoing but they really haven't been able  
15 to get anything off the ground.

16 MS. WILLIAMS: I think they are working  
17 on it, but there may have been some  
18 (indiscernible).

19 MR. SHELTON: Do you -- is your feeling,  
20 you think they are on track to where it can be  
21 salvaged?

22 MS. WILLIAMS: I don't know. I haven't  
23 seen the most recent business plan.

24 And I think maybe it will be helpful to  
25 review that, among the other projects that have

1     come in. I think that is important to know  
2     where they are at right now.

3             MR. SHELTON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4             DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Okay. That has been  
5     approved.

6             Now we will move on to -- first off, do  
7     you have any other questions?

8             MR. BLEVINS: Mr. Chair.

9             DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Yes, sir.

10            MR. BLEVINS: I am a member of the  
11     Washington County Board of Supervisors. We met  
12     last week and this was a topic of discussion at  
13     that meeting.

14            I think the challenge of this is we hear  
15     the news from the people who need a processor,  
16     but when we look at potential people to become  
17     processors, the cost and commitment are the two  
18     big challenges.

19            I think that -- and first of all, making  
20     a commitment to operate a processing facility  
21     is a huge commitment, but also the cost, in the  
22     most cases is prohibitive because of the cost  
23     of construction and equipment, and everything.

24            But to my knowledge, there is one  
25     processor in Russell County and one in

1 Washington County.

2 There was one in Wise County. I don't  
3 know if that is still in operation or not, but  
4 there's definitely a need there. But I think  
5 that the county supervisors, the Board of  
6 Supervisors could get on board and maybe if we  
7 could look at changing the percentage that we  
8 could fund for a privately owned facility might  
9 stimulate more interest.

10 But I do think that those two factors are  
11 the biggest obstacles.

12 DELEGATE MOREFIELD: Thank you. Any  
13 other questions?

14 Okay. Now, we will move on to public  
15 comments.

16 If there are no public comments, ladies  
17 and gentlemen, the meeting is adjourned.

18

19

20 (End of session.)

21

22

23

24

25

1 COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA AT LARGE, to wit:

2 I, Caroline Lane, Court Reporter, Notary  
3 Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia at  
4 Large, and whose commission expires February 28,  
5 2023, do certify that the foregoing is a true,  
6 correct, and full transcript of the testimony  
7 adduced.

8 I further certify that I am neither  
9 related to nor associated with any counsel or party  
10 to this proceeding, nor otherwise interested in the  
11 event thereof.

12 Given under my hand at Roanoke, Virginia,  
13 this 22nd day of November, 2022.

14

15

16

17



18

Caroline Lane, Notary Public

19

Notary Registration No. 238126

20

Commonwealth of Virginia at Large

21

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23

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25

<hr/>	<b>3458</b> 9:16 18:20	<b>amount</b> 10:7
<b>\$</b>	<b>3464</b> 6:6 18:20	<b>Andy</b> 3:7 19:10
<b>\$206,000</b> 11:13	<b>3465</b> 7:22 18:20	<b>apologize</b> 16:22
<b>\$219,291</b> 9:20	<hr/>	<b>Appalachia</b> 6:7
<b>\$406,000</b> 13:2	<b>4</b>	<b>Appalachian</b> 11:7,19
<b>\$420,696</b> 13:1	<hr/>	<b>application</b> 14:13 15:7,10,14,15 21:10 22:13,17 23:10
<b>\$500,000</b> 11:11 13:24 27:4	<b>401,000</b> 6:11	<b>applications</b> 17:23
<b>\$750,000</b> 9:19	<b>483,000</b> 6:10	<b>applied</b> 17:24 27:25 28:2
<hr/>	<hr/>	<b>approach</b> 14:12
<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>approached</b> 12:12
<hr/>	<b>50</b> 15:2 28:3	<b>approval</b> 5:12 7:12 9:6 10:11 12:22 13:20 15:11
<b>1</b> 10:10	<b>500</b> 28:10	<b>approve</b> 4:11,12 5:10 15:21 16:13 18:14,18
<b>100-acre</b> 14:20	<b>500,000</b> 28:4	<b>approved</b> 5:7 6:9 7:17,19,25 8:5 9:19,23 11:11,16 13:1,24 14:6,7 29:5
<b>11th</b> 4:11,13	<hr/>	<b>approving</b> 21:19
<b>150,000</b> 12:11	<b>A</b>	<b>ARC</b> 7:3 13:11 17:23
<hr/>	<hr/>	<b>area</b> 6:20 25:12
<b>2</b>	<b>access</b> 13:8,12	<b>Assembly</b> 22:3
<hr/>	<b>accessible</b> 12:8	<b>assist</b> 8:5
<b>2016</b> 11:12	<b>accommodated</b> 14:23	<b>August</b> 11:25
<b>2017</b> 13:1,25	<b>acres</b> 15:2	<b>Authority</b> 6:7 13:23
<b>2018</b> 6:9 7:18 8:1 9:20	<b>active</b> 6:2	<b>awarded</b> 11:25
<b>2019</b> 27:9	<b>activities</b> 13:7	<b>awards</b> 20:9
<b>2021</b> 8:9	<b>activity</b> 24:23	<b>aye</b> 4:16 18:22 26:13
<b>2023</b> 7:13 9:11 11:4 12:2,23 13:21 15:13	<b>add</b> 17:17	<hr/>
<b>20th</b> 19:16	<b>additional</b> 5:15 6:25 12:16,21 13:5,15	<b>B</b>
<b>23</b> 22:20	<b>adjacent</b> 21:21	<b>back</b> 5:11,15 14:10 17:8,9 21:13 26:20
<b>23-24</b> 13:13	<b>adjourned</b> 30:17	<b>balance</b> 6:11,15 8:1 9:20 11:13 13:2,4,25 20:8
<b>25</b> 28:7	<b>advanced</b> 7:23 23:23	<b>balances</b> 10:20 11:2 24:22
<b>250,000</b> 28:9,10	<b>advertise</b> 20:4	<b>based</b> 10:7
<hr/>	<b>affirm</b> 4:17 18:23 26:14	<b>basically</b> 17:12 21:6 28:13
<b>3</b>	<b>agree</b> 16:23	<b>beautiful</b> 6:3
<hr/>	<b>agribusiness</b> 23:9 26:22	<b>begin</b> 8:9,13 12:1
<b>3,000</b> 10:7	<b>agricultural</b> 24:3	
<b>30</b> 9:11 13:21	<b>agriculture</b> 24:2,10 25:18,21	
<b>30th</b> 7:13 10:10,18 11:4 12:23 15:12	<b>ahead</b> 20:7	
<b>3191</b> 12:24 18:20	<b>allocate</b> 26:3,5	
<b>3198</b> 11:6 18:20	<b>allocated</b> 10:5 26:23 27:4,8	
<b>3200</b> 13:22 18:21	<b>amazing</b> 23:21	



**beginning** 10:10  
**bids** 12:10 14:10  
**big** 29:18  
**biggest** 30:11  
**bit** 5:24 8:20 16:14 17:18 19:12  
**Blevins** 3:14,15 4:12 29:8,10  
**Bloc** 15:21  
**Blue** 27:4  
**board** 29:11 30:5,6  
**Breaks** 12:3  
**brought** 24:16  
**bud** 12:20  
**budget** 10:11 14:11  
**build** 19:5  
**building** 8:7 9:8 11:7  
**bulk** 6:15  
**business** 4:10 14:17 19:2 27:12,  
20 28:23

---

**C**

---

**C1** 27:25  
**call** 3:5,7  
**campus** 8:7  
**capacities** 20:11  
**capita** 10:8  
**capital** 28:4  
**Carroll** 26:24  
**case** 14:15  
**cases** 29:22  
**ceiling** 28:5  
**center** 6:18,19 7:24 11:20,24  
12:25 13:6  
**cents** 10:8  
**Chair** 4:8 15:18 29:8  
**Chairman** 3:9 18:16 19:11 20:21  
23:17 26:2 29:3  
**challenge** 29:14  
**challenges** 29:18

**change** 12:5  
**changing** 30:7  
**Clark** 3:16,17  
**clear** 8:23 14:7  
**Clinch** 6:20  
**closed** 14:15 15:16  
**closeout** 11:21  
**Coalfield** 6:8  
**coincide** 11:4  
**college** 7:23 8:7  
**comment** 15:22 23:18 26:18  
**comments** 4:21,22 5:14 30:15,  
16  
**Commerce** 12:25 13:6  
**Commission** 5:6,7,10,12 9:12  
17:19 20:24 21:5,15,25 22:15,25  
**Commission's** 8:19 16:15 22:1,  
19  
**Commissioners** 23:12  
**commitment** 29:17,20,21  
**committee** 3:6 19:18,22 23:4  
26:6,22 27:10  
**common** 5:17  
**Commonwealth** 24:19  
**communities** 15:24 17:13  
**Community** 7:22  
**complete** 6:22 8:14 9:14 14:9  
**completed** 6:14 7:9 10:17 11:20  
12:20 22:10  
**completes** 15:17  
**completion** 13:13  
**concept** 20:15  
**conditioned** 9:12  
**consistently** 14:10  
**construct** 13:4  
**constructed** 8:22  
**construction** 5:18 6:16,23 7:7  
8:6,9,11,13,16,24 9:6,7,13 11:17,  
25 12:1,4 13:8 29:23

**consumers** 25:20,23  
**contingent** 15:13  
**contract** 6:24 11:25  
**contributors** 18:8  
**copy** 19:17,23  
**cost** 29:17,21,22  
**costs** 8:11,17,24 28:4,7  
**country** 24:20  
**county** 12:24 13:22 25:7 29:11,  
25 30:1,2,5  
**couple** 16:19 21:12 28:9  
**covers** 6:12  
**COVID** 10:22 16:11 17:1  
**Cox** 3:18,19 16:23  
**create** 26:7  
**creating** 24:18  
**current** 19:18 23:25  
**cut** 14:14

---

**D**

---

**Damascus** 11:20  
**day** 20:14  
**DCR** 12:12  
**deadline** 19:13,16  
**December** 20:9  
**decision** 8:12,19 15:9,13 16:16  
22:18  
**dedicated** 20:17  
**deficit** 9:1  
**delay** 5:25  
**Delegate** 3:4,10,11,22,23 4:3,4,  
9,15,18,20,24 7:14,15,20 15:18,  
19,20 16:21,24 17:4 18:11,13,17  
19:1 23:17 29:4,9 30:12  
**design** 6:16,22  
**Destination** 6:8,18 11:23  
**Destinations** 11:10  
**details** 9:2

<b>developed</b> 23:21	15:12 18:19 27:10	<b>forward</b> 6:3 7:1 8:12 12:16 19:8
<b>Developing</b> 11:9	<b>extensions</b> 4:25 5:2,15 14:5	<b>Foundation</b> 7:23
<b>development</b> 7:24 8:6 9:7,17 13:6,23 24:8,23	<hr/> <b>F</b> <hr/>	<b>fourth</b> 5:10 10:24 11:1,5
<b>DHCD</b> 6:25	<b>facilitate</b> 17:3	<b>free</b> 20:2
<b>diligently</b> 13:17	<b>facilities</b> 21:1,3,11 22:4 25:5,11, 15	<b>frequently</b> 22:24
<b>direction</b> 23:1	<b>facility</b> 24:16 28:3,6 29:20 30:8	<b>Friends</b> 11:6
<b>discuss</b> 20:16	<b>facing</b> 25:20	<b>full</b> 8:1 9:6 13:25
<b>discussion</b> 19:21 29:12	<b>factors</b> 17:1 30:10	<b>fully</b> 6:23
<b>dispersed</b> 25:3	<b>fairly</b> 26:23	<b>fund</b> 9:14 27:13 30:8
<b>district</b> 12:7	<b>fall</b> 22:19	<b>funded</b> 6:23
<b>document</b> 20:19	<b>familiar</b> 5:4 14:3	<b>funders</b> 18:6
<b>dollar</b> 6:11 9:13	<b>farmer</b> 24:12	<b>funding</b> 5:19,23 6:14 7:2,4 8:14, 25 9:4,12 10:5,14 11:1 12:12,17 13:11 14:9,22 16:15 17:22 27:24 28:1
<b>dollars</b> 7:25 17:19 18:8 21:7 23:5 26:3,6 27:8	<b>farmers</b> 25:4,7,17	<b>funds</b> 5:25 8:5,20 10:13 16:25 18:1
<b>doubt</b> 24:4	<b>farming</b> 24:2	<b>future</b> 21:9 24:23
<b>dry</b> 14:15	<b>faster</b> 17:10	<hr/> <b>G</b> <hr/>
<b>due</b> 8:10	<b>favor</b> 4:15 18:22 26:13	
<hr/> <b>E</b> <hr/>	<b>feasibility</b> 27:6	
<b>Economic</b> 13:22	<b>federal</b> 5:19 7:18 12:17 14:9,12	<b>gap</b> 14:9
<b>economy</b> 11:8 15:25	<b>feedback</b> 23:12	<b>general</b> 5:16 22:3
<b>EDA</b> 12:24 14:9,12 15:6	<b>feel</b> 15:7 20:2	<b>generally</b> 6:1 12:14
<b>Educational</b> 7:23	<b>feeling</b> 28:19	<b>gentlemen</b> 30:17
<b>Edwards</b> 3:20	<b>fifteen</b> 10:8 27:7	<b>get all</b> 5:25
<b>eligible</b> 22:1	<b>final</b> 11:21 14:8	<b>give</b> 19:12
<b>En</b> 15:21	<b>finally</b> 12:3	<b>Good</b> 3:4
<b>encourage</b> 16:5	<b>find</b> 21:3	<b>grant</b> 6:12,15 7:16,17 9:10,23 10:25 11:1,6,16,21 13:4,25 15:8, 16 18:4 21:9 22:11 26:23 27:19
<b>end</b> 5:9 11:5 17:3 25:9 30:20	<b>fiscal</b> 10:18,24 11:1,5	<b>grants</b> 5:7 16:6
<b>equipment</b> 28:7 29:23	<b>fit</b> 20:1	<b>Grayson</b> 26:24
<b>expect</b> 13:14	<b>flooding</b> 12:6	<b>great</b> 16:7 19:3
<b>expected</b> 9:5	<b>Floyd</b> 12:24,25 26:25	<b>ground</b> 28:15
<b>expenses</b> 9:13	<b>focus</b> 22:11	<b>groundbreaking</b> 8:8
<b>experienced</b> 21:2	<b>focused</b> 20:10 25:6	<b>groups</b> 20:14
<b>extend</b> 27:19	<b>folks</b> 16:5	<b>growing</b> 11:8
<b>extended</b> 9:10	<b>footprint</b> 20:24 24:10 25:3,16	<b>guess</b> 17:8
<b>extension</b> 7:9,10,12 8:3 9:11,21 11:3,15 12:23 13:15,21 14:2,6,8	<b>form</b> 22:16	
	<b>formula</b> 10:6	

<hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>H</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>half</b> 18:3 27:8 <b>Hampton</b> 23:21 <b>handicap</b> 12:8 <b>handy</b> 19:23 <b>happy</b> 23:2,15 25:17 <b>hard</b> 19:17 25:23 <b>Haysi</b> 12:3,7 <b>hear</b> 20:14 29:14 <b>heard</b> 26:25 <b>Heart</b> 6:7 <b>held</b> 8:8 <b>helpful</b> 19:20 28:24 <b>Hensley</b> 3:12,13 <b>high</b> 11:23 25:9 <b>highest</b> 24:5 <b>Highlands</b> 7:22 8:12 <b>historically</b> 23:24 <b>hit</b> 25:9 <b>hold</b> 20:10,16 <b>huge</b> 20:15 29:21</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>I</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>immediately</b> 15:16 18:3,10 <b>impact</b> 21:17,21 <b>important</b> 29:1 <b>improving</b> 15:25 <b>incentivize</b> 24:22 25:15 <b>incentivizing</b> 24:8 <b>increase</b> 15:1 <b>increasing</b> 20:11 <b>indiscernible</b> 17:16 21:15 24:7 28:18 <b>industry</b> 24:1,5,9 25:18 <b>inflation</b> 17:5 <b>information</b> 9:3 22:14,15</p>	<p><b>informed</b> 13:19 <b>initiative</b> 27:5 <b>input</b> 10:8 <b>installed</b> 13:9 <b>interest</b> 19:4 20:13,24 30:9 <b>interested</b> 19:7 20:2 <b>interesting</b> 8:4 <b>involve</b> 5:18 13:7 <b>issues</b> 12:6 24:19 <b>items</b> 17:16</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>J</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>January</b> 22:10 27:9,10 <b>job</b> 15:23 17:12 <b>July</b> 10:10 <b>June</b> 10:10,18 11:4</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>K</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>keeping</b> 13:18 25:23 <b>Kilgore</b> 3:22,23 15:18,19,20 16:24 17:4 18:13 <b>kind</b> 27:1 <b>Knob</b> 11:23 <b>knowledge</b> 29:24 <b>Knoxville</b> 25:8,13</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>L</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>ladies</b> 30:16 <b>learned</b> 8:10 <b>leverage</b> 17:22 <b>leveraged</b> 7:5 <b>limit</b> 28:1,10 <b>limited</b> 28:8 <b>limits</b> 10:12 <b>lines</b> 5:21,22 12:18 <b>list</b> 28:1 <b>livestock</b> 24:15</p>	<p><b>local</b> 25:4 <b>localities</b> 15:3 19:7 <b>locality</b> 10:7 21:19,20 <b>Lohr</b> 22:22 <b>long</b> 24:11 <b>lost</b> 18:3 <b>lot</b> 8:15 9:2 10:14 12:16 13:9 14:4 17:6 20:13,23 25:12 <b>lower</b> 25:19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>M</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>made</b> 8:12,19 <b>major</b> 12:5 25:12 <b>make</b> 4:12 15:20,22,24 16:16 18:13 25:2 26:2 <b>makes</b> 24:9 <b>making</b> 6:3 16:12 29:19 <b>manufacturing</b> 23:23 25:9 <b>market</b> 24:18 <b>marketing</b> 9:18,25 <b>matching</b> 16:25 <b>meat</b> 19:5 20:11,22,25 21:4,10 22:4 23:6 24:13,14 25:9 26:7 <b>medium-sized</b> 25:15 <b>meeting</b> 22:19 27:15 29:13 30:17 <b>member</b> 29:10 <b>members</b> 19:18 21:2 <b>memory</b> 27:2 <b>mention</b> 23:8 <b>mentioned</b> 20:23 <b>met</b> 29:11 <b>metal</b> 23:22 <b>mid</b> 15:7 <b>million</b> 7:25 20:5 21:7 23:5 26:3, 6 27:8 <b>mind</b> 17:24 27:14 <b>minimum</b> 14:20,22 23:5 <b>minutes</b> 4:11,13</p>
--	--	--

**modifications** 4:25  
**money** 7:18 15:23 16:2 17:11,14,  
25 20:16  
**months** 24:16  
**Morefield** 3:4,10,11 4:9,15,18,  
20,24 7:14 15:19 16:21 18:11,17  
19:1 29:4,9 30:12  
**morning** 3:4  
**motion** 4:12 15:20 16:12,22  
18:13,18 26:2,5,8,11  
**motorized** 12:9  
**Mount** 9:17  
**move** 4:20,24 7:1 8:12 19:1 29:6  
30:14  
**moving** 6:2 7:21 12:15 17:9 19:7  
**multiple** 21:16  
**myriad** 17:15

---

**N**

---

**named** 6:17  
**nature** 17:6  
**needed** 8:14  
**needing** 25:21  
**negative** 3:21 4:19,23 18:25  
26:16  
**negotiations** 6:24  
**news** 29:15  
**non-profit** 28:3  
**note** 5:16  
**notice** 5:13  
**November** 8:8  
**number** 6:6 7:22 9:16 12:24  
13:22 19:6 21:2  
**numbers** 18:20  
**numerous** 20:13

---

**O**

---

**obstacles** 30:11  
**October** 19:16

**one's** 21:22  
**one-page** 20:18  
**one-year** 7:9,12 8:3 9:11,21  
11:14 13:20 14:1 15:12  
**ongoing** 28:14  
**online** 19:19  
**open** 15:9  
**operate** 29:20  
**operation** 21:22 30:3  
**opportunity** 16:20 22:21  
**opposed** 4:18 18:24 26:15  
**order** 3:6 4:10  
**organization** 9:18 10:11  
**organizations** 9:25 10:19  
**outcome** 9:5  
**Outdoor** 11:9  
**output** 9:5  
**overbudget** 12:11  
**overruns** 17:5  
**owned** 28:3,6 30:8

---

**P**

---

**Pace** 3:24,25  
**packaging** 24:14  
**pads** 13:5  
**panel** 23:9,13  
**Park** 6:20  
**part** 6:6 18:5 25:1  
**Partnership** 9:17  
**past** 10:9 14:5,24  
**pattern** 16:24  
**Paul** 6:20  
**pending** 15:9,14  
**people** 14:4 29:15,16  
**percent** 28:4,7  
**percentage** 28:11 30:7  
**perfect** 17:7 24:9

**performing** 24:5  
**period** 5:8,9 6:13 7:7 10:22 18:4  
21:3 22:13  
**phase** 6:23 12:25 13:7,24  
**piqued** 27:1  
**place** 5:25 8:14,25 23:14,23  
25:13  
**places** 19:19 20:19  
**plan** 27:12,16,20,23 28:23  
**Planning** 19:21  
**plant** 24:25 25:10  
**plants** 19:6  
**plateau** 27:4  
**point** 23:2,15  
**portion** 20:8 21:7  
**position** 8:20  
**positions** 6:13,14  
**positive** 12:14 15:13  
**potential** 29:16  
**Power** 7:3  
**pre-covid** 26:21  
**precision** 23:22  
**prefer** 18:8  
**prepared** 22:10  
**present** 5:3  
**presentation** 15:17  
**Previously** 14:16  
**prices** 25:19  
**priorities** 19:24  
**privately** 28:6 30:8  
**problems** 26:1  
**proceeding** 11:24  
**process** 19:14 20:22 21:4  
**processing** 19:6 20:11 21:1,10  
22:4 25:4,12 26:7 29:20  
**processor** 29:15,25  
**processors** 29:17  
**producing** 24:13

**productive** 25:18  
**products** 24:3 25:21  
**program** 9:24 13:12 14:19,25  
15:5 19:13,16 21:8 26:7  
**progress** 6:4 17:3  
**prohibitive** 29:22  
**project** 6:5,9,22 7:3,5,8 9:15,16,  
18,22 10:17 11:22 12:4,5,10  
13:17,18 14:3,8,11,15,16 15:4  
16:7 17:20 19:8,25 23:6 26:25  
27:5,9  
**projects** 5:4,18,20 6:2 8:15,16  
9:24 11:17,19 12:15,20 17:10  
18:9,20 20:1 28:25  
**proposing** 21:6  
**prospect** 10:15,16  
**provide** 9:24 12:8  
**public** 4:21,22 26:17 28:2 30:14,  
16  
**purpose** 20:17  
**pursued** 14:8  
**pursuing** 13:18  
**put** 19:17 21:9  
**puts** 8:19

---

**Q**

---

**qualified** 14:17  
**qualifies** 15:5  
**qualify** 7:16 14:20  
**question** 28:12  
**questions** 7:14 18:12 23:3,16  
29:7 30:13  
**quorum** 4:8

---

**R**

---

**raising** 9:14 27:13  
**Ratliff** 4:1,2  
**reach** 25:4  
**ready** 6:1 14:18 16:8 18:10

**real** 17:4 25:25  
**reason** 12:19  
**reasonable** 15:8  
**recall** 21:12  
**receive** 12:13 13:15 28:3,7  
**received** 10:6 17:25  
**receiving** 16:6  
**recent** 28:23  
**recommendation** 18:19  
**recommendations** 18:14 19:9  
**recommending** 9:9  
**recommends** 7:11 9:10 11:3  
12:22 13:20 15:11  
**Recreation** 11:9  
**redesign** 12:8  
**reduced** 14:25  
**reflective** 12:18  
**region** 10:1 11:18 20:12  
**regional** 6:8 9:17,25 12:25 21:16  
**regions** 12:18 15:1  
**related** 17:2  
**remain** 15:8  
**remaining** 6:11 10:20 11:13 13:3

**remains** 14:1  
**remember** 26:20  
**reminder** 5:6  
**remove** 20:8  
**removed** 28:10  
**report** 22:1,16  
**request** 11:14 13:15 14:1  
**requested** 8:2 9:21 22:4  
**requests** 5:2 21:16  
**require** 6:25 7:10 15:2  
**required** 9:14 14:20  
**requirements** 5:22 14:24 19:24  
**response** 3:21 4:19,23 18:25  
26:16

**result** 9:4  
**review** 20:21 21:16,24,25 22:16,  
21 23:9,10,13 27:21 28:25  
**revised** 27:20  
**revitalize** 17:12  
**RFP** 20:2 28:1  
**Ridge** 27:4  
**rising** 8:11,17  
**risky** 8:20  
**river** 6:20 12:9  
**Rivers** 6:17  
**Riverside** 13:23  
**RMO** 10:6  
**road** 13:8,12  
**roads** 13:10 23:22  
**Rogers** 9:17  
**roll** 3:7  
**roof** 25:22  
**round** 20:6,10,17 21:10,12,23  
22:12  
**RSP** 19:18 20:4  
**Russell** 29:25

---

**S**

---

**Salem** 25:8,13  
**salvaged** 28:21  
**Sara** 20:23  
**scale** 24:24  
**schedule** 11:24 13:12  
**scheduled** 27:15  
**Scott** 13:22 15:6  
**Secretary** 22:22  
**section** 23:9 24:5 27:25  
**Senator** 3:20  
**send** 20:2  
**sense** 24:9  
**separate** 11:17

**September** 6:9 7:13,25 9:11,20  
11:12 12:23 13:1,21,25 15:7,12  
**serve** 10:1 13:5 25:1  
**session** 30:20  
**set** 21:6 23:4,14  
**setting** 20:7  
**shell** 8:21  
**SHELTON** 26:20 28:13,19 29:3  
**short** 20:18  
**shows** 13:12  
**significant** 17:1 24:18  
**simply** 10:20  
**sir** 26:19 29:9  
**site** 14:21  
**sites** 14:17,19  
**sitting** 17:15  
**situation** 8:4 17:7  
**small** 25:15  
**smaller** 24:24 25:11  
**solely** 21:23  
**solution** 18:7  
**SORRELL** 3:8,12,14,16,18,20,  
22,24 4:1,3,5,7 19:11 20:20 22:8  
26:4,11,17  
**sort** 21:14  
**source** 14:22  
**sources** 5:19,23 27:14  
**Southern** 10:1,3  
**Southside** 15:25 19:5 23:22  
24:13  
**Southwest** 3:5 10:1,4 11:7,8,18  
16:1 19:4,13,15 20:12,25 21:8  
22:5 24:13 26:6  
**space** 23:19  
**SPEAKER** 4:14 18:15 26:10  
**special** 9:24  
**specific** 21:23  
**specifically** 20:25 22:12  
**spent** 9:15

**spring** 11:8 12:1 22:13,16 23:7  
**St** 6:19  
**staff** 7:11 9:3,9,10 11:3 12:21,22  
13:18,20 15:11 18:18 19:9  
**Staff's** 18:14  
**staffing** 6:13  
**state** 6:20 12:17 23:19,20  
**statements** 5:19  
**steel** 8:21  
**stimulate** 30:9  
**storm** 17:7  
**Strategic** 19:21  
**street** 16:16  
**strict** 10:12  
**strongest** 24:1  
**struggled** 27:12  
**struggling** 8:16 16:4  
**studies** 6:25  
**study** 22:3 27:6  
**subject** 5:20,21  
**submit** 27:19  
**submits** 10:11  
**submitted** 15:6  
**substantial** 26:23  
**successful** 14:13  
**summary** 26:5  
**summer** 12:1  
**supervisors** 29:11 30:5,6  
**supplies** 10:15  
**support** 9:13,18,24 22:25 26:1  
**surface** 14:14  
**suspect** 12:19

---

**T**

---

**takes** 24:15 25:12  
**taking** 23:23  
**talk** 24:12

**talked** 22:24  
**team** 13:17  
**Tech** 23:11  
**technology** 7:24 23:21  
**Tennessee** 25:8  
**thing** 25:5,20  
**things** 7:1 10:21 17:5  
**thought** 19:20  
**three-year** 5:7,9 6:13  
**time** 5:21,22 7:7 12:17 13:14  
14:20 23:20,25 24:11 25:23 27:25  
28:2,8  
**today** 5:3 6:6  
**topic** 29:12  
**total** 8:24  
**Tourism** 6:7,8  
**tourists** 12:9  
**town** 12:7,12  
**track** 28:20  
**trail** 11:20 12:9  
**Trails** 12:3  
**travel** 10:16  
**turn** 19:10  
**two-year** 10:22  
**type** 24:23

---

**U**

---

**ultimately** 9:3  
**undergoing** 6:24  
**understand** 15:6 16:12  
**understandable** 8:18  
**underway** 12:4  
**underwent** 12:5  
**UNIDENTIFIED** 4:14 18:15  
26:10  
**unsuccessful** 15:15  
**update** 19:13  
**updates** 12:14

**USDA** 23:10 11:1,5 13:16 14:6,24 16:3 18:1  
22:19 24:15  
**utilities** 13:5,9  
**utilize** 22:14,15 **years** 10:9 16:8,19 21:13 27:2,3,7  
28:9  

---

**V**

---

**yesterday** 19:22

**variety** 5:18  
**VBRSP** 14:17 15:9,14,15  
**VDAT** 23:10  
**VDOT** 13:12  
**Virginia** 3:5 7:22 8:11 10:2,3  
11:7,9 14:17,25 15:25 16:1 19:5,  
16 20:25 21:8 22:5,7,8 23:11,19  
24:1 25:1,9 26:6  
**visit** 10:16  
**visitor's** 6:19

---

**W**

---

**waiting** 11:21  
**Wampler** 4:3,4 7:15,20 23:17  
**wanting** 16:19  
**Washington** 25:7 29:11 30:1  
**week** 29:12  
**weeks** 27:16  
**wholeheartedly** 16:23  
**WILLIAMS** 5:1 7:17,21 17:17  
19:15 22:6 27:3 28:16,22  
**Wilson** 4:5,6  
**winter** 13:13  
**Wise** 30:2  
**work** 16:11 23:22  
**worked** 24:11  
**workfoce** 8:6  
**workforce** 7:24 9:7  
**working** 18:5 27:6 28:16  
**works** 24:10

---

**Y**

---

**year** 5:10,11 7:10 10:9,18,24,25