

**Hampton Roads Planning District Commission
Chief Administrative Officers Meeting
Summary Minutes of March 1, 2023**

The Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) Committee meeting was called to order at 11:45 a.m. by Chair Mary Bunting in the Community Building, located at 401 N Boundary Street in Williamsburg, Virginia.

CAO Committee Members in Attendance:

Mary Bunting, Chair	Hampton
Chris Price, Vice-Chair	Chesapeake
Amanda Jarratt	Franklin
Carol Steele	Gloucester County
Randy Keaton	Isle of Wight County
Scott Stevens	James City County
Chip Filer	Norfolk
Randy Wheeler	Poquoson
Brian Thrower	Southampton County
Al Moor	Suffolk
Andrew Trivette	Williamsburg
William Saunders	Windsor
Neil Morgan	York County

CAO Committee Members Absent:

Cynthia Rohlf	Newport News
Mimi Terry	Portsmouth
Michael Stallings	Smithfield
Melissa Rollins	Surry County
Patrick Duhaney	Virginia Beach

Executive Director:

Robert A. Crum, Jr.

Others in Attendance:

Joe Flores, Virginia Municipal League
Mark Geduldig-Yatrofsky, Community Advisory Committee
Michelle Gowdy, Virginia Municipal League
Diane Kaufman, Senator Kaine's Office
Drew Lumpkin, Senator Warner's Office
Peter Stephenson, VRSA
David Westcott, Chesapeake
Jerri Wilson, Newport News
Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC
Matt Klepeisz, HRPDC
Pavithra Parthasarathi, HRTPO

Mr. Andrew Trivette welcomed everyone to Williamsburg and briefed the committee on the construction projects underway to improve the municipal center, including a new fire station, library, and public housing facilities. He also provided background information on proposed plans for the African American Heritage Trail.

Approval of Agenda

Chair Bunting asked if there were any additions or revisions to the agenda. An update on the emergency management communications system was requested. Mr. Crum provided the CAO Committee with a brief status report on this effort. Mr. Morgan Moved to approve the agenda as presented; seconded by Mr. Keaton. The Motion Carried.

Approval of Minutes

The summary minutes of the CAO Committee meeting held on January 4, 2023 were included in the agenda packet for the committee's consideration and approval. Mr. Al Moor Moved to approve the summary minutes as presented; seconded by Dr. Chip Filer. The Motion Carried.

Public Comments

Members of the public were provided with the opportunity to address the CAO Committee. There were no in-person requests to comment.

Update on Regional Projects and Efforts

Mr. Robert A. Crum, Jr., HRPDC/HRTPO Executive Director, provided an update on the following regional items:

I-64 Gap Status

Mr. Crum reported that the 29-mile I-64 Gap project from west of Williamsburg to the Bottoms Bridge interchange near I-295/Richmond appears to be fully funded. He reminded members that the Hampton Roads region, through HRTAC, has already dedicated \$311 million of regional funding to complete 21 miles of the I-64 Gap. The HRPDC/HRTPO Regional Legislative Agenda has included the completion of the I-64 Gap as a unanimous regional legislative priority.

He noted that the General Assembly allocated \$470 million from the General Fund in last year's session to support the I-64-Gap. In addition, the Central Virginia Transportation Authority in Richmond has committed \$100 million. The federal government has provided \$25 million from rural transportation funds for a portion in New Kent County. He noted that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) submitted a SMART SCALE application for \$161 million.

Mr. Crum noted that the HRTPO is submitting an application for a federal RAISE grant in the amount of \$45 million, and VDOT has provided a letter of support. Collectively, these funding sources will provide funding to complete the 29-mile I-64 Gap project.

Mr. Neil Morgan asked about the other CTB SMART SCALE proposals. Mr. Crum indicated that this appears to be the only CTB SMART SCALE submission for this round, with a final decision on this grant due in June.

Ms. Pavithra Parthasarathi, HRTPO Deputy Executive Director, noted that the 29-mile project had a Benefit-Cost Analysis (BCA) of roughly 2.0, but the 9-mile portion that is located in the Hampton Roads region, has a BCA of 3.5.

Mr. Crum explained that Phase 1 will be from Bottoms Bridge to the rest stop. He expressed hope that Phase 2 will be the easternmost portion in James City County and Phase 3 will be the middle section through New Kent.

Regional Broadband Efforts

Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach – The southside project to create a fiber ring that connects these five southside cities is fully funded. The fiber ring will be 119 miles in length. Out of those 119 miles, 34 are under construction, and permits have been submitted for an additional 16 miles. The completion of the project is anticipated to take 18 months. Mr. Crum shared maps illustrating the permitting and construction status of various segments of the southside fiber ring. This project is being advanced through the Southside Network Authority (SNA).

Isle of Wight County, Suffolk, and Southampton County – A grant from the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) in the amount of \$37 million has been received to expand the broadband project west to Isle of Wight County, Southampton County, and western Suffolk. A partnership with Charter Communications will provide the last mile of connectivity in those areas. Collectively, there are over 3,000 linear miles of fiber under construction on the southside.

Hampton and Newport News – A Federal National Telecommunications grant application requesting \$22 million and offering a \$15.2 million match was prepared by Hampton and Newport News with assistance from the HRPDC and SNA. Other localities on the peninsula could connect to the ring proposed in the grant. The decisions on grant awardees are expected in March. Mr. Crum encouraged the committee to start thinking about whether it would be desirable to expand the existing SNA to the whole region or to create a Peninsula Network Authority.

Chair Bunting suggested establishing a CAO working group consisting of the peninsula CAOs to discuss this issue.

Jefferson Lab

Mr. Crum reported that he participates in the Friends of Jefferson Lab working group meetings to help position the facility to be the selected location for a High-Performance Data Facility (HPDF). He reported that the proposed state budget includes funding to serve as a local match as Jefferson Lab competes for this opportunity.

Mr. Drew Lumpkin mentioned that the previous proposal from Jefferson Lab for the electron-collider was competitive with Brookhaven, NY, but not successful. However, Jefferson Lab was offered a role in designing the collider. The Request for Proposal for the HPDF is expected to be released in the next two weeks. Senator Warner is determined to make Jefferson Lab the HPDF hub. The local match for this proposal is in the draft state budget, and letters of support have already been collected. Mr. Lumpkin suggested that he anticipates a quick site selection process with an announcement in the summer.

Birthplace of America Trail

Mr. Crum referenced the handout on the Birthplace of America Trail (BoAT). The long-term goal is to build out the trail and connect it to the Virginia Capital Trail. Three short sections were recommended for SMART SCALE funding, but the section in Williamsburg near Carters Grove also needs funding assistance. He noted that the costs of trails are increasing due to inflation.

Mr. Neil Morgan thanked the HRPDC/HRTPO team for their efforts and asked if there were plans to fund other segments with local funding.

Chair Bunting asked if the design was developed sufficiently for localities to include BoAT sections in their earmark requests.

Ms. Parthasarathi commented that the consultant, Michael Baker, was working on the design details for the peninsula sections.

Congressional Appropriation Requests – potential requests such as the BoAT

Mr. Crum reminded the committee that Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) requests were due in the next two weeks and asked if localities were applying for trail funding.

Mr. Al Moor and Mr. Andrew Trivette reported that they were planning to make requests to fund a section of the BoAT trail.

Ms. Diane Kaufman and Mr. Drew Lumpkin commented on the CDS process and encouraged localities to send applications early. The deadline for CDS applications is March 10. Mr. Lumpkin advised that multiple single segment applications in the range of \$1 million to \$3 million would be more successful than a larger request for a regional project.

Regional Violence and Crime Roundtable – next steps

Mr. Crum reported that the CAO Subcommittee of the Hampton Roads Mayors and CAOs Violence Prevention Roundtable is continuing to work on issues identified in the fishbone framework provided as a handout. The next meeting will be held in mid-March and will include mental health professionals. HRPDC staff has received contacts for some of the local community service boards, hospitals, and nonprofits. He encouraged localities to provide additional local mental health professional contacts. The Roundtable will meet to discuss mental health on March 30. After this meeting, Mr. Crum indicated that attention will shift to identifying violence

interrupter programs that are underway in the community and learning how the localities can support these grassroots efforts.

Chair Bunting shared her concern that sometimes the people with the credibility to work on violence prevention cannot be hired because there is a state statute that bans criminals convicted of specific “barrier crimes” from working with youth. The committee discussed inviting members of the General Assembly to the Roundtables to provide feedback on these issues and gain their insights.

Mr. Crum mentioned that he has received requests from HRPDC members to collect data regarding how actions by the General Assembly have impacted the ability of police officers to conduct traffic stops, and how this may have decreased the removal of illegal guns in the community. He asked the committee to provide direction on whether HRPDC staff should initiate this task. The committee members pointed out that it would be better to work with universities that have the expertise to evaluate the potential link between guns collected in pretextual traffic stops and reductions in violence.

Ms. Jerri Wilson noted that Newport News has a contract with Christopher Newport University related to violence and that Hampton University is interested in this type of research.

Emergency Management Communications System

In August/September, the CAOs posed a set of technical questions about the proposal to update the ORION emergency management communications system. The consultant provided answers that will be reviewed by the emergency management technical staff before being presented to the CAOs. The goal is for this discussion to occur with the technical staff before advancing to the CAO agenda possibly in May. Several committee members agreed that the technical review and internal briefs will be valuable in preparing them to make decisions.

Additional Items of Regional Interest

Ms. Michelle Gowdy and Mr. Joe Flores provided an update on several bills addressing how local zoning changes must be publicly noticed, a study on short-term rentals, and increasing pay for jurors.

Mr. Randy Wheeler asked if the Virginia Municipal League could provide a summary of the state budget since that process is hard to follow. The committee expressed particular interest in school funding.

CAO Information Sharing

Each CAO was asked to share information on items of regional interest from their locality. There was a discussion regarding potential plans for salary adjustments in locality budgets and a discussion about a potential regional police recruitment event. The CAOs asked Mr. Crum to follow up with an email request to compile individual responses for distribution to the full CAO Committee.

Other Business

No other business was discussed.

Next Scheduled Meeting

The next CAO Committee meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2023 and will be hosted in Franklin/Southampton County.

Adjournment

With no further business to come before the CAO Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Robert A. Crum, Jr.
Executive Director/Secretary