

**Southwest Virginia Health Authority
Minutes of the
Board of Directors Meeting
October 23, 2024 at 6:00 PM**

**Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Room 240
Abingdon, Virginia**

ZOOM™ link was also provided to public

I. Call to Order

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Before starting the meeting, the Chairman introduced Kol Gold, the new Program Manager for the Health Authority. Kol shared his educational background graduating from UNC Chapel Hill's public health program. He also shared prior experience working in the field of infection prevention and substance use disorder in rural Appalachia.

II. Roll Call

The Chairman called roll. The following members were present: Ms. Brillhart (Chairman thanked her for her service as she transitions out of her role with the Authority), Mr. Chapman, Mr. Childers, Dr. Couch, Dr. Gulley, Senator Hackworth, Delegate Kilgore, Dr. Mayhew, Senator Pillion, Mr. Prewit, Ms. Copeland, and Dr. Henry

Dr. Rheuban, Mr. Rush, and Ms. Sloce attended the meeting virtually.

Mr. Mitchell attended the meeting in person as legal counsel to the Authority.

III. Declaration of Quorum

The Chairman declared a quorum existed at 6:10 p.m.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Following the declaration of quorum, the Chairman returned to the agenda and asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the January 3, 2020, December 9, 2020, October 16, 2023, and April 23, 2024, Authority Board of Directors.

The motion passed unanimously.

V. Officers' Report

A. Treasurer's Report

Dr. Henry shared that the current cash balance for the Health Authority was \$133,829.21.

The Authority received Ballad Health's 2024 annual payment of \$75,000.00 on October 17, 2024.

Expenditures since last meeting:

- Virginia Department of Taxation Payroll Taxes: \$1,656.70

- Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Meeting Room Rental for April 3, 2024: \$120
- The Mitchell Law Firm: \$9,616.59
- Virginia Liability Risk Management Annual Premium: \$500
- Post Office Box Annual Fee: \$100
- Total: \$11,993.29

The Chairman asked if there are any questions. No questions were offered. The Chairman motioned to approve the resolution authorizing the Treasurer to pay the outstanding invoices of the Authority and ratify those invoices already paid by the Treasurer. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Virginia Monitor Update

The Chairman transitioned and requested an update from the Virginia Monitor. Mr. Mitchell stated that an update would be forthcoming in the weeks following the Authority Board meeting. Mr. Mitchell reassured the Board that he would also support the continued facilitation of the Virginia Monitor role from Dennis Barry to Dr. David Driscoll.

The Chairman stated that he felt it was imperative that the Authority's Virginia Monitor maintain their role, monitoring Ballad Health's activities as established in the Cooperative Agreement. The Chairman shared that maintaining monitoring efforts would maintain a good standing with entities such as the Federal Trade Commission.

VI. New Business

A. Blueprint Update

The Chairman called on Dr. Driscoll to make his presentation regarding updated information for the regional Blueprint.

Dr. Driscoll provided an overview of the Blueprint initiative, emphasizing its significance in addressing health disparities within the region. He explained that the Blueprint was developed as a result of a comprehensive study conducted over the past year, which aimed to identify the root causes of health issues affecting the local population. The study involved extensive community engagement, where local residents shared their perspectives on health disparities and the underlying factors contributing to those issues. Dr. Driscoll highlighted that the feedback collected was instrumental in shaping the Blueprint's approach.

Dr. Driscoll stated that the Blueprint identified three broad domains where interventions could have the greatest impact on improving health outcomes, which were:

1. increase access to local health care;
2. reduce substance use, trauma, and poverty; and
3. promote healthy diet/nutrition and exercise.

Dr. Driscoll noted that each of these domains was determined based on the insights gathered from community discussions and surveys. He explained that local residents expressed specific priority issues they believed needed intervention to enhance their overall health and well-being.

Following the identification of these priority areas, the next step involved the creation of a Request for Proposals (RFP) aimed at organizations that participated in the Blueprint's development. This RFP sought innovative project proposals that aligned with the identified priority domains.

Dr. Driscoll reported that the RFP was disseminated widely, and as a result, twelve proposals were submitted by the October 1st deadline. He expressed excitement over the diverse range of proposals received, indicating strong community interest and engagement in addressing health disparities. He also mentioned that the proposals would cover various mechanisms and programs aimed at improving health outcomes, showcasing a community-based and collaborative approach to health improvement.

Dr. Driscoll emphasized the importance of timely action, stating that the goal was to implement these projects effectively and monitor their outcomes to ensure sustainability beyond the initial funding period. He expressed optimism about the potential impact these projects could have on the community.

To conclude his update, Dr. Driscoll invited any questions from Board members regarding the Blueprint or the proposals submitted, reinforcing the collaborative nature of this initiative and the Board's role in facilitating progress.

B. Grant Subcommittee Update

The Chairman thanked Dr. Rheuban and all of the Grant Committee participants for all of their work in reviewing community proposals.

The Chairman then asked Dr. Henry, to provide a summary of what was covered during the Grant Committee meeting and which proposals scored highest among reviewing members of the Grant Committee.

Dr. Henry shared that twelve community organizations submitted proposals and each member of the Grant Committee reviewed a minimum of two proposals each. Additionally, Dr. Henry made it clear that the Grant Committee members recused themselves from scoring any proposals with a known conflict of interest present.

Dr. Henry requested that the meeting transition into a closed meeting so Board members could learn more about the proposals identified with the greatest impact to the region.

The Chairman and Board approved this motion and the Board entered into a closed session without public joining in person or online for the remainder of this update.

The Board returned to open session with consensus to leverage \$60,000.00 of Authority funds in addition to the \$500,000.00 from the awarded Virginia Consortium to Advance Healthcare in Appalachia USDA grant to pursue the following seven regional projects.

1. **Appalachian College of Pharmacy** – They will establish telehealth clinics in Food City pharmacies, focusing on diabetes management. Patients benefit from improved care access, facilitated by coordinated efforts between medical providers, pharmacists, and staff.
<https://www.acp.edu/>
2. **Mountain Empire Community College** – They will provide an online training program for community health workers. This culturally tailored initiative will enhance healthcare access, particularly in behavioral health, and provide meaningful employment in the region.
<https://www.mecc.edu/>
3. **Mountain Empire Older Citizens** – They will provide nutrition and exercise services for

seniors through telehealth kiosks and mobile platforms, employing a dietitian and navigator to improve nutritional literacy and physical wellness in congregate settings and at home.

<https://meoc.org/>

4. **Mount Rogers Community Services** – They plan to expand behavioral health and primary care services for individuals with substance use disorders through telehealth and in-person visits, with a dedicated RN for care coordination and addiction treatment.
<https://www.mountrogers.org/>
5. **Stone Mountain Health Services** – They will acquire and implement enhanced telehealth access for patients across eleven primary care locations serving seven counties in Southwest Virginia. The equipment will significantly improve behavioral health services and physical exam capabilities in rural areas with limited access to urgent care or same day medical evaluations outside of an emergency department visit.
<https://stonemountainhealthservices.org/>
6. **University of Virginia College at Wise** – They plan to launch the “Eat Smart and Play Strong” program in middle schools, merging nutrition education with physical activity to foster lifelong healthy habits among young students.
<https://www.uvawise.edu/>
7. **Tri-Area Community Health** – They will open an express care clinic with telehealth access in Grayson County, serving as an urgent care resource and offering support for students’ health needs.
<https://www.triareahealth.org/>

VII. Announcements

The Chairman shared an upcoming event:

Registration for the Southwest Virginia Legislative Reception
opens at 5:30 pm held at the Library of Virginia
800 E. Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219
January 29th from 5:30-7:30 pm

Email Jeff Mitchell with any questions
Phone: 540.443.9272
Email: jeff@mitchell-firm.com

VIII. Next Meeting of Authority

The next meeting of the Authority had not been determined. The Chairman stated that it would probably be sometime early next year.

IX. Public Comment

When asked by the Chairman Mr. Gold stated that no one had signed up to make a public comment.

X. Adjournment

The Chairman ended the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Attached

Exhibit A – PowerPoint Presentation (Dr. Driscoll)