

**GO VIRGINIA REGION 3 FULL COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 21, 2026**

REGULAR BUSINESS

Call To Order

Chair Willis called the GO Virginia (GOVA) Region 3 Full Council all virtual meeting to order on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 1:04 p.m.

Roll Call and Confirmation of Quorum

Ann Taylor Wright conducted a roll call. Chair Willis declared a quorum was present.

Region 3 Executive Committee Members

Members	In Person	Virtual	Absent	Members	In Person	Virtual	Absent
Kelly Lanier-Arnold		X		Angie Kellett		X	
Sheldon Barr		X		Randolph Lail		X	
Robert Bates		X		Elizabeth Leggett		X	
Clark Casteel		X		Ilsa Loeser		X	
Melody Foster		X		Sheri McGuire		X	
Kristin Gee		X		Danny Marshal		X	
Amy Griffin		X		John Parkinson			X
Keith Harkins		X		Dale Wagoner			X
Rhonda Hodges		X		Lauren Willis		X	

Ex Officio Member

Name – Organization - Role	In Person	Virtual	Absent
Charley Majors – Region 3 Executive Committee - Advisor			X

Region 3 Staff

Name – Organization - Role	In Person	Virtual	Absent
Bryan David (UVA Weldon Cooper Center) - Program Director – Region 3 Contract Staff		X	
Andy Wells - Southside PDC - Support Org. & Fiscal Agent		X	
Ann Wright (CTW Consulting) – Southside PDC Contract Staff		X	
Liz Povar (The Riverlink Group) - Southside PDC Contract Staff		X	

Guests in Attendance

Name – Organization - Role	In Person	Virtual
Billy Gammel - DHCD GO Virginia - Senior Program Administrator		X
Dr. Julie Brown – Averett University - Provost		X
Dr. Sara Hill-Lyons – Virginia Tech Center for Economic & Community Engagement - Director for Research Development		X
Emma Carroll – New River Valley Regional Commission - Regional Innovation Officer		X
Colin Emberland – Chmura Economics & Analytics – Economic Consultant		X
Jemma Sabokrouh – GOVA Region 2 – Program Manager		X
Emmalee Wagner – GOVA Region 2 – Am2 Project Administrator		X

Public Comments

No written or verbal public comments were received.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest potentially exist for activities benefiting and/or contracts issued to the following organizations and projects listed below:

Name	Organization(s)
Randolph Lail	Mid-Atlantic Broadband; SOVA Innovation Hub
Rhonda Hodges	IALR Foundation Board
Clark Casteel	Danville Regional Foundation
Lauren Willis	Charlotte County Public Schools

Keith Harkins	Southside Virginia Community College
Charley Majors	The Institute for Advanced Knowledge & Research; Mid-Atlantic Broadband; SOVA Innovation Hub
Sheri McGuire	Longwood University
Angie Kellet	Mecklenburg County Economic Development
Ilsa Loeser	LetterPress Communications

Approval of Minutes

Chair Willis noted that the minutes of the October 15, 2025 Full Council meeting were received via email prior to the meeting and included in the meeting packet. **Melody Foster made a motion that the minutes from the October 15, 2025 Full Council meeting be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Elizabeth Leggett and approved unanimously by roll call vote.**

Financial Reports & Project Update

Bryan David, Andy Wells, and Ann Wright presented the Financial Reports and Project Updates that were included in the meeting packet for the period ending December 31, 2025. **Randy Lail made a motion that the Financial Reports be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Melody Foster and approved unanimously by roll call vote.**

SPECIAL APPEARANCES & PRESENTATIONS

Southern Virginia Living Wage and Job Availability Analysis (11.2025)

Colin Emberland, an Economic Consultant with Chmura, presented the 2025 SOVA Living Wage Study to the Council which was included in the meeting packet.

OLD BUSINESS

Project Pipeline

Bryan David reviewed the current project pipeline which was emailed to Council members prior to the meeting. The following projects were discussed:

- **CEA Innovation Center Research Building Expansion:** This will be an implementation project for the CEA Strategy & Roadmap, which will involve installing a prefabricated research greenhouse, making associated building improvements, and preparing the site and utilities. A Region 3 request is anticipated in April 2026 for greenhouse research equipment.
- **Virginia's Heartland Regional Economic Development Alliance:** This would be a 2-phase Sites Planning Project. Phase I would inventory available sites and buildings in the region and include a facilitator to support members in understanding and prioritizing the engineering analysis. Phase II would identify and prioritize larger industrial sites to be developed by the Alliance. An application is anticipated in March 2026.

- **Farm Park Siting, Fiscal and Economic Impact, and Workforce Development Project:** This will be a planning project building upon the recent feasibility report on the Co-location of Data Centers and CEA Greenhouses, prepared by the Resource Innovation Institute. An application is anticipated in March 2026.
- **Virginia AI Innovation Hub & Venture Studios:** This would be a project supported by Regions 3 and 7. The Smart Innovation Corporation (non-profit) is proposing to develop an industry-aligned workforce development program to support individuals pursuing careers in artificial intelligence, data analytics, and applied machine learning, and to support employees of existing businesses in the use of AI in the workplace.
- **Metals Workforce Training Center:** This project is being developed by the Town of Bedford Economic Development Authority following a successful feasibility and master plan project funded by GO Virginia Region 2. A 60,000-square-foot former steel foundry located in Bedford would serve as a metal industries workforce training facility.
- **Region 3 Leadership Development Project:** This project will be in partnership with the UVA Sorensen Institute for Leadership and the Virginia Institute for Government to develop a community leadership program in Region 3.

Chair Willis asked members for questions or comments; there being none, there was no discussion regarding the updates.

NEW BUSINESS

Southern Virginia Partnership for Health Sciences Careers – Selection of Lead Organization

This healthcare initiative aims to align the workforce with business needs and strengthen rural competitiveness by developing a coordinated pipeline of skilled health professionals. These efforts will expand job access, attract and retain talent, and support employer growth. Dr. Julie Brown, on behalf of Averett University, has been selected to serve as the lead applicant for a project grant, with Danville Community College and Longwood University providing direct support in application development, submission, and post-award grant implementation. Dr. Brown discussed the project and addressed questions from the Council.

Project Review Committee

Bryan David presented the Advanced Manufacturing and Advanced Materials (AM2) Initiative to Grow Advanced Manufacturing in Virginia project. This project will assist existing manufacturers in designing, refining, & testing technologies and processes to improve their efficiency and productivity; strengthen the manufacturing career pipeline by creating curriculum and quality work-based learning opportunities from middle school through graduate school; accelerate the commercialization timeline for regional manufacturers; and coordinate all AM2 activities to improve collaboration amongst manufacturers, streamline and facilitate access to services, and help to attract and grow regional manufacturers. This will be a multi-region partnership including Regions 2 and 3 and Virginia Tech. The Project Review Committee has recommended this project for approval. **Clark Casteel made a motion to approve the application as presented; the motion was seconded by Melody Foster and approved by roll call vote; Rhonda Hodges abstained due to conflict of interest.**

PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Bryan David presented the Program Director's Report as detailed in the meeting packet which included the Region 3 staff transition plan, announcement of the SOVA Innovation Hub receiving an OpenAI Foundation grant, and IALR's Annual Report.

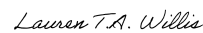
ADJOURN

There being no additional business matters to be brought before the GOVA Region 3 Council, Chair Willis adjourned the meeting at 2:42 p.m.

These minutes were approved on 4/15/2026.



Andy Wells, Southside PDC
Executive Director



Lauren Willis, GOVA Region 3
Council Chair









1.21.2026 Full Council FINAL Minutes

Final Audit Report

2026-04-20

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