

**GO VIRGINIA REGION 3 FULL COUNCIL  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, April 15, 2026**

**REGULAR BUSINESS**

Call To Order

Chair Willis called the GO Virginia (GOVA) Region 3 Full Council in-person meeting to order on Wednesday, April 15, 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 Taylor 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
Angela Brown – IALR – GO TEC Director	X	
Dr. Melanie Lewis – IALR – Vice President of Advanced Learning	X	
Ted Abernathy – Economic Leadership – Managing Partner	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 January 21, 2026 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 January 21, 2026 Full Council meeting be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Elizabeth Leggett and approved unanimously.**

Financial Reports & Project Update

Bryan David and Ann Wright presented the Financial Reports and Project Updates that were included in the meeting packet for the period ending March 31, 2026. **Randy Lail made a motion that the Financial Reports be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Elizabeth Leggett and approved unanimously.**

**SPECIAL APPEARANCES & PRESENTATIONS**

Resolution of Recognition for Lauren T. A. Willis and E. Randolph Lail

A Resolution of Recognition was read aloud for both Lauren Willis and Randy Lail, detailing their many years of service to the Region 3 Council. Each was presented with a Region 3–engraved paperweight and a printed copy of the Resolution. **Melody Foster made a motion to adopt the Resolutions as presented; the motion was seconded by Amy Griffin and approved unanimously.**

Virginia AI Landscape Assessment

Ted Abernathy, CEcD, Managing Partner, Economic Leadership presented the report and findings from the Virginia AI Landscape Assessment.

Southern Virginia Partnership for Health Sciences Careers Update

Dr. Julie Brown, Provost, Averett University provided an update on the SOVA Partnership for Health Science Careers initiative.

GO TEC Update

Angela Brown, GO TEC Director, IALR, provided an update on GO TEC. She reported that the team has received the draft Sustainability Plan and is currently reviewing it. The Plan will be presented to the GOVA State Board at an upcoming meeting.

## 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 in progress.
- **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 April 2026.
- **Southern Virginia Partnership for Health Science Careers (SOVA Partnership):** This healthcare initiative aims to align the workforce with business needs and strengthen rural competitiveness by developing a coordinated pipeline of skilled health professionals. Averett University, Longwood University, and Danville Community College have been meeting regularly to define the scope of work, budget, schedule, and deliverables for the implementation grant. This work involves representatives from SOVA Health, Sentara Halifax, Centra, and VCU Memorial Health. An implementation application is expected in September.
- **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**

### 2026-2027 Organizational Meeting – GO Virginia Region 3 Council Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee invited Robert Bates to serve as Chair and Elizabeth Leggett to serve as Vice Chair for the upcoming fiscal year. Each accepted, and the Executive Committee agreed and endorsed both for these Region 3 Council leadership positions for July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. **Amy Griffin made a motion to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair as presented; the motion was seconded by Kelly Arnold and approved unanimously.**

### Proposed FY2026-2027 GO Virginia Region 3 Capacity Building Budget

Bryan David presented the draft FY2026-2027 operating budget and discussed the delay in the approval of the Weldon Cooper Center contract. **Elizabeth Leggett made a motion that the FY2026-2027 Capacity Building (Operating) Budget be approved as presented; the motion was seconded by Angie Kellett and approved unanimously; Ilsa Loeser abstained (COI- LetterPress Communications).**

## **PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Program Director's Report was submitted in writing in the meeting packet; no oral report was given due to time constraints. The Program Director's Report included the Region 3 2025 Growth & Diversification Plan Update, the pending projects report, proposed state funding for GOVA and GO TEC, and a recap of the recent Regional Council Committee meeting.

## **ADJOURN**

There being no additional business matters to be brought before the GOVA Region 3 Council, Chair Willis adjourned the meeting at 3:06 p.m.

These minutes were approved on \_\_\_\_.

Andy Wells, Southside PDC  
Executive Director

Lauren Willis, GOVA Region 3  
Council Chair