



e: PlanRVA@PlanRVA.org
 p: 804.323.2033
 w: www.PlanRVA.org

PlanRVA Commission Meeting Minutes

April 16, 2026 – 9:30 a.m.

**PlanRVA James River Boardroom, 424 Hull Street, Suite 300,
 Richmond, VA 23224 and via Teams**

Members and Alternates Present (X), Virtual (V):

36 votes / 19 for physical quorum

Town of Ashland	2	Goochland County	2	New Kent County	3
*Anita Barnhart	X	*Jonathan Lyle	X	Rev. Milton Hathaway	X
Steve Trivett (A)		Neil Spoonhower (A)		*Amy Pearson	
Brent Chambers	X	Guy Kemmerly		*Jordan Stewart, Chair	X
Charles City County	1	Hanover County	5	Powhatan County	3
*Ryan Patterson, Vice Chair	X	*Sean Davis	X	*Bill Donati	X
Byron Adkins (A)	V	Sue Dibble (A)	V	*Steve McClung	
Chesterfield County	7	Larry Leadbetter		Robert Powers (A)	
*Kevin Carroll		*Faye Prichard	X	Jessica Winall	
Tim Davey	X	Charlie Waddell	X	City of Richmond	6
*Jim Ingle	X	Henrico County	7	Dr. Priscilla Eddings	X
*Dr. Mark Miller	X	Chris Bast	X	*Katherine Jordan (2)	
Frank Petroski	X	*Rev. Roscoe Cooper (2)	X	Dakia Knight	X
*Jessica Schneider	X	Jaron Dandridge	X	*Cynthia Newbille (2)	
*Dr. LeQuan Hylton	X	*Rev. Tyrone Nelson			
		*Jody Rogish	X		
		*Dan Schmitt			
		*Misty Roundtree	X		

A. Call to Order, Welcome & Opening Remarks

Chair Jordan Stewart welcomed all attendees and called the meeting to order at approximately 9:33 a.m.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Sarah-Keel Crews, PlanRVA, called the roll for attendance and certified that a physical quorum was present. Chair Stewart then acknowledged there was a guest online, David Blount. Mr. Blount introduced himself as the speaker for the spotlight topic. Afterwards, Chair Stewart asked for an amendment to the agenda, wanting to discuss section C immediately following section A, as some voting members need to leave. On a motion by Sean Davis, seconded by Jessica Schneider, all voted in favor.

Charlie Waddell and Rev. Milton Hathaway entered the meeting at approximately 9:41 a.m.

B. Decision Items

Chair Stewart gave the floor to Sean Davis, who provided a finance update. He reported that PlanRVA is currently undergoing an audit related to the RFP process, which is expected to conclude within approximately two weeks, with an engagement letter for the FY 2026 audit forthcoming. He noted that the year-to-date quarterly financial package and the proposed FY 2027 budget will be shared with the full commission at the June meeting, which is expected to be a substantial meeting. He also stated that preliminary financials are very favorable and thanked the commission and staff for their support of the financial strategy plan, specifically recognizing Ms. Shephard, Ms. Shickle, and staff working behind the scenes.

After the update, the Chair asked whether there were any questions for Mr. Davis, and none were raised. The discussion then moved to the FY 2027 leadership rotation update and meeting schedule, and members were instructed to disregard the schedule included in the agenda packet and instead use the newly revised version approved by the Executive Committee. Chair Stewart explained that, after speaking with Mr. Patterson, Charles City had determined it was not ready to assume the chair position. She expressed appreciation for that decision and stated that, in order to maintain the established rotation, she had agreed to remain in the chair position for an additional term if that was the will of the board, while preserving the succession order. Under the proposed rotation, Richmond City would serve as chair for FY 2028 beginning in July 2027, Henrico would follow for FY 2029 beginning in July 2028, and Goochland County would serve for FY 2030 beginning in July 2029, followed by Chesterfield, Hanover, and Powhatan. A member noted that the board would need to address the bylaw provision limiting the chair to one term, either by incorporating that into the motion or by voting on it separately, and no other concerns were raised.

Sean Davis moved to nominate the current chair, Jordan Stewart, for FY27. He then further moved to suspend Article VI, section 3 of the bylaws. Jim Ingle seconded the motion, and all voted unanimously via roll call. Following the vote, Chair Stewart thanked the board for its confidence in her continued service and thanked the other members for stepping up, while also acknowledging Mr. Patterson for allowing the revised arrangement to proceed and for being willing to serve when ready. Additional clarification was then provided that the remaining officers would continue to advance in the order they would have followed if

Charles City had assumed the chair position, meaning Charles City would serve as vice chair for now and reenter the chair rotation in the future.

The board then reviewed the meeting schedule for the next fiscal year, with meetings set for September 3, November 12, and December 10 for the joint annual meeting, followed in 2027 by February 11, April 8, and June 10. Sarah-Keel Crews shared that calendar invites would come out mid-May. The board also noted that the next meeting, scheduled for June 11, will be held virtually only, following discussion and a decision by the Executive Committee.

The change was made in part to accommodate Ms. Shickle's conflicting obligation and to allow her to participate in both roles. The Chair emphasized the importance of supporting Ms. Shickle's outside service and making practical use of virtual meeting technology. The meeting then moved on to the consent agenda, consisting of approval of the February 12, 2025, meeting minutes and the intergovernmental and environmental review, and the Chair asked whether there were any questions before entertaining a motion for approval. Sean Davis made a motion to approve the consent agenda; it was seconded by Rev. Hathaway. All voted unanimously.

C. Strategic Vision Alignment & Update

The Spotlight Topic for this Commission meeting was the 2026 General Assembly Session Recap. David Blount, the VAPDC Executive Director, gave the recap to help the board understand what happened during the session and what it may mean for local governments and PlanRVA. Chair Stewart explained that several board members had expressed interest in this topic because actions taken in Richmond directly affect localities across the region, and the goal was not only to review legislation but also to consider how state-level decisions should be applied back home while respecting local authority.

In his remarks, David Blount provided background on his role at the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission, where he serves as Deputy Director, Director of Government Relations, and also works with the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions. He noted that this kind of legislative liaison role is somewhat unique among PDCs and is intended to help represent local government interests at the state level. In reflecting on the 2026 session, he emphasized that one of the key challenges for local and regional leaders is understanding both the immediate effects of new legislation and the longer-term downstream impacts on their communities.

Blount's main advice to the board was to stay informed, remain engaged, and continue building strong relationships with legislators, legislative staff, and state agency officials. He stressed that effective government relations depend on trust, consistent communication, and year-round engagement—not just during the General Assembly session itself. He encouraged local and regional officials to educate state leaders about what is happening in their communities, share both successes and challenges, invite them to meetings and events, and use those interactions to strengthen understanding and collaboration over time.

Following David Blount's presentation, Chair Stewart thanked him for the overview and reflected that the General Assembly session had been especially meaningful from a local government perspective, particularly in light of proposals affecting local authority. She then invited both questions for Mr. Blount and a broader discussion among board members about how their localities manage legislative relations, noting that some larger jurisdictions have dedicated legislative liaisons while others, such as New Kent, rely on contract lobbyists. In the discussion, a member asked for more detail on Senate Bill 531 related to accessory dwelling units, specifically whether it included maximum square footage or minimum lot size requirements, and Mr. Blount responded that he believed it did but did not have those details immediately available. Board members then described the importance of maintaining regular communication with legislators throughout the year, not just during the General Assembly session, including holding meetings such as legislative breakfasts to discuss priorities well before bills are filed.

The conversation also highlighted a possible role for PlanRVA as an educational resource for legislators, particularly newer members of the House of Delegates who may have limited local government experience, by helping them better understand local authority and regional issues in a nonpartisan, informational way. Before concluding, a member asked Mr. Blount to clarify his statement about local aid, and he explained that state support to localities had declined from roughly 52 percent in 2009 to about 43 or 44 percent more recently, reflecting a gradual downward trend over approximately 15 years. The Chair then thanked him again for participating and turned the floor over to Dr. Sarin Adhikari, PlanRVA, for the Regional Pulse.

Dr. Adhikari's Regional Pulse presentation focused on the "rewarding work" pillar of RVA Rising and examined whether employment in the PlanRVA region truly supports upward mobility. He explained that this pillar looks not only at whether people can access jobs, but also at the quality of those jobs and whether they provide long-term stability and a pathway to advancement. Using the RVA Rising framework, he noted that rewarding work is one of the region's major drivers of mobility, supported by indicators and specific metrics tracked over time. He also explained that, over the past eight months, three workshop sessions were held to identify the most useful measures from a larger pool of 72 possible metrics.

Dr. Adhikari highlighted several key findings. One measure, hires and separations, was used to assess job stability through what he described as job or labor market churn. He noted that the PlanRVA region shows slightly higher hiring than Virginia overall, but also higher separations, suggesting that while people are finding jobs, many are also leaving them, creating a relatively high-churn and less stable employment environment. He then discussed job quality, using the ALICE threshold—about \$24 per hour—as a benchmark for whether work provides enough income for a household to meet basic needs and maintain stability. This analysis showed a mixed picture: occupations in STEM and management

were more likely to exceed that threshold, while many service, sales, and some education-related jobs fell below it. He also reviewed employment by occupation as a measure of upward mobility, noting that the region has a comparatively larger share of workers in sales and administrative roles, which tend to offer less mobility, while higher-opportunity pathways such as STEM are present but not yet large enough to significantly shift the regional picture.

The presentation also addressed occupational representation by race, showing that racial and ethnic groups are not distributed evenly across occupations. Dr. Adhikari explained that if all occupations reflected the region's overall workforce makeup, there would be no gaps; instead, the data suggest that some groups are underrepresented in higher-wage occupations and more concentrated in lower-paying roles, indicating persistent occupational segregation. He concluded by explaining how these individual measures are combined into three broader dimensions—access to work, quality of work, and sustaining work—which together form a single overall “rewarding work” score for the region. At this stage, the metrics are weighted equally, though weighting could be adjusted in the future as the framework evolves.

Following Dr. Adhikari's presentation, board members asked several clarifying questions about the data and methodology. One member noted that high levels of both hiring and separation could potentially reflect upward mobility rather than instability alone, and Dr. Adhikari agreed that this was possible, emphasizing that the data require some subjective interpretation and do not tell the full story on their own. Another member asked whether the dataset identified the reasons for separations, and he explained that it does not; the data only show that separations and hires occurred, although seasonal hiring patterns can be adjusted for. Members also asked whether the materials would be made available, and staff confirmed that the presentation would be posted online for later review. In response to a question about participation in the workshop sessions used to develop the metrics, staff explained that the sessions included representation from localities, nonprofits, the Chamber, and businesses, with roughly 45 to 50 participants overall, although not everyone attended every session. The discussion concluded with thanks to Dr. Adhikari for the presentation.

Holly Gordon provided a Community Voice update on PlanRVA's recent and upcoming public engagement work, reporting that staff participated in roughly 15 community engagement events over the past month and have about 15 more planned in the coming weeks. She explained that these events span multiple program areas and localities, but often reach a regional audience because residents live, work, and travel across jurisdictional lines. Recent engagement included work related to transportation, economic mobility, churches, chambers, partnerships, and Earth Day events, while upcoming efforts will continue across similar topics. She also highlighted several professional development and partnership opportunities, including PlanRVA staff participation in the Many Hands Climate Forum and collaboration supporting Hack for PlanRVA in connection with the City of Richmond mayoral priorities.

Ms. Gordon then reviewed current engagement initiatives and their status. She noted that transportation engagement has recently concluded for the regional safety plan and the Transportation Improvement Program, while outreach for the Long-Range Transportation Plan was still active, with public input closing the following day. She also previewed two newer efforts: a recycling barriers study with the Central Virginia Waste Management Authority, with engagement expected over the summer, and the Weaver Awards program, supported through the Aspen Institute, which will recognize and provide small grants to individuals doing important community-building work. She described the Weaver Awards as both a grantmaking opportunity and a way to build stronger on-the-ground community relationships and noted that additional information sessions and outreach materials were available.

She also shared engagement data showing that the transportation safety plan generated the strongest response among completed efforts, with particularly high public participation and more than 1,000 survey contributions. She said the feedback consistently reflected concerns about pedestrian safety, inattentive driving, and speeding. By comparison, engagement around the Transportation Improvement Program drew less participation, which she attributed in part to the shorter timeframe and the more technical, project-specific nature of that process, though it still generated thoughtful comments about greenhouse gas reduction, project choices, transit, active transportation, and GRTC improvements. In discussion, a board member asked whether PlanRVA is effectively showing the public how earlier feedback informs later project decisions. Gordon said that PlanRVA is working toward doing that more clearly through its engagement site and more intentional follow-up, acknowledging that the organization still has room to improve in showing residents how their repeated input influences outcomes. The discussion closed with appreciation for the Weaver Awards outreach already underway and confirmation that applications are expected to open in June.

D. Regional Roundtable: Innovation & Collaboration Showcase

After Ms. Gordon's presentation, Chair Stewart moved on to the next agenda item, the Regional Roundtable. During the Mission Moment, Ms. Shickle highlighted a potential partnership opportunity connected to Leadership Metro Richmond and encouraged board members to consider how PlanRVA might work more strategically with that network. She noted that many local leaders are preparing to attend the Chamber's intercity visit to Phoenix and explained that Leadership Metro Richmond is currently recruiting new members, with applications due May 1. She said she has been in discussions with the organization's new executive director, Chris Edwards, about how PlanRVA, its advisory partners, and the Leadership Metro Richmond alumni network might better collaborate. She described the alumni group as an active pool of civically engaged residents who care about the region and may be a valuable resource for local board and commission appointments, particularly where jurisdictions are seeking broader and more diverse community participation. She also noted that the program's small-group project work

could potentially be better aligned with PlanRVA's regional priorities so that ideas developed through the leadership program have a place to continue and grow after the class ends.

Jessica Schneider then shared her experience as a current participant in the program, describing it as a strong opportunity for regional networking, leadership development, and collaborative problem-solving. She explained that participants meet regularly around different regional topics, hear from subject-matter experts, and work in smaller groups to address specific community challenges. She said her subgroup is focused on food insecurity and is developing a "living map" of locations where residents can access food, including details such as hours, contact information, and site locations. She noted that the group is interested in identifying a way to sustain and house that resource long term and suggested that PlanRVA might potentially serve as a home for it. Overall, both Ms. Shickle and Ms. Schneider emphasized the value of the program as a way to connect engaged residents to real regional issues and potentially turn leadership training into practical, ongoing community solutions.

Bill Donati presented Powhatan County's commissioner engagement update, highlighting the county's Economic Development Authority's recent involvement in a conduit bond financing opportunity for a hotel development in Chesterfield County. He explained that, although this type of financing was outside the Powhatan EDA's usual experience, it presented a meaningful opportunity for organizational learning, growth, revenue generation, and increased visibility in the marketplace. The project involved the Springline at District 60 development in Chesterfield, including a 270-room full-service Hilton hotel and conference center as well as a 109-room Residence Inn, representing a total investment of approximately \$107 million. He noted that the project had already been approved by Chesterfield's EDA before Powhatan's EDA was approached to participate in the bonding process.

Mr. Donati said that once Powhatan's EDA was approached, it moved quickly to review, evaluate, and vote on the opportunity within roughly two months, demonstrating responsiveness, coordination, and due diligence. He emphasized that the experience created several benefits for Powhatan: it allowed the EDA to use an economic development tool it had not previously exercised, generated revenue to support Powhatan's own initiatives, introduced the authority to the bond market, and strengthened its capacity in that area. He also framed the effort as an example of effective regional collaboration, showing how one locality's EDA can support a major project in another jurisdiction while advancing broader regional economic development goals.

After Mr. Donati's presentation concluded, Chair Stewart asked for any additional commentary. Charlie Waddell raised a cautionary point about data centers, noting recent information suggesting that over the long term they may contribute to warming in the ground and surrounding environment, and he encouraged localities considering data

center development to examine those potential environmental impacts closely. The Chair then reminded members that the next meeting, on June 11, 2026, will be held virtually and asked everyone to register in advance so they will receive the meeting link.

A brief discussion followed about board onboarding, with members expressing interest in participating in future onboarding sessions and staff offering to share scheduled dates or arrange additional sessions for interested board members.

E. Adjournment

With no other commentary, Chair Stewart adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:05 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. via Teams.