

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMISSION**

**Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held Thursday, September 25, 2008**

**COMMISSIONERS**

(The names of those members present are highlighted.)

<b>Hon. Sharon Bulova</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
<b>Hon. Gerald E. Connolly, NVRC Chairman</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
<b>Hon. Joan Cross</b>	<b>City of Fairfax</b>
Hon. Steve DeBenedittis	Town of Herndon
Hon. Barbara A. Favola	County of Arlington
Hon. John Foust	County of Fairfax
<b>Hon. Penelope A. Gross</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
<b>Hon. Pat Herrity</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
Hon. Catherine Hudgins	County of Fairfax
Hon. Robert W. Lazaro, Jr.	Town of Purcellville
<b>Hon. Harold Lippman</b>	<b>City of Falls Church</b>
Hon. Michael C. May	County of Prince William
<b>Hon. Martin E. Nohe, NVRC Treasurer</b>	<b>County of Prince William</b>
<b>Hon. Harry J. Parrish, II, NVRC Vice Chairman</b>	<b>City of Manassas</b>
<b>Hon. Redella S. Pepper</b>	<b>City of Alexandria</b>
Hon. Frank J. Principi	County of Prince William
<b>Hon. M. Jane Seeman</b>	<b>Town of Vienna</b>
<b>Hon. Paul C. Smedberg</b>	<b>City of Alexandria</b>
<b>Hon. Linda Smyth</b>	<b>County of Fairfax</b>
Hon. J. Walter Tejada	County of Arlington
<b>Hon. William J. Treuting, Jr.</b>	<b>City of Manassas Park</b>
<b>Hon. Kristen C. Umstattd</b>	<b>Town of Leesburg</b>
Hon. Clyde N. Washington, Jr.	Town of Dumfries
Hon. Lori Waters	County of Loudoun
Hon. Scott K. York	County of Loudoun

**STAFF PRESENT**

G. Mark Gibb	Executive Director
Linda M. Tenney	Deputy Director
Linda Summerall	Executive Secretary
Ken Billingsley	Director, Demographics & Information
Barbara Gordon	Communications Director
David Schwengel	Director, Regional Emergency Preparedness Planning
Heather Shackley	Executive Assistant
Michelle Simmons	Director, Human Services
Aimee Vosper	Director, Planning & Environmental Services

**GUESTS**

Tom Owens	Fire Chief, City of Fairfax
Sue Rowland	NVRC Legislation Liaison; SR Consulting, Inc.
Jim Schwartz	Fire Chief, Arlington County

**CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Connolly called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all present.

**ROLL CALL** The roll was called and all members present or absent were noted for the record.

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

Commissioner Bulova moved approval of the minutes of the July 24, 2008, meeting. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved with Commissioners Smedberg, Seeman and Herrity abstaining.

PRESENTATION

*A REGIONAL APPROACH TO FIRE & EMS*

Vice Chairman Connolly welcomed Tom Owens, Fire Chief for the City of Fairfax. Chief Owens currently chairs the Northern Virginia Fire Chiefs Committee.

*Tom Owens*

Chief Owens explained that the Northern Virginia Fire Chiefs Committee covers an expanded area, including Stafford and Fauquier Counties, Fort Myer, Fort Belvoir and Quantico Marine Corps Base, and the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority. The Fire Chiefs Committee meets regularly with the Northern Virginia Chief Administrative Officers. The works flows from the operations chiefs to a multi-jurisdictional operations board that provides oversight for the multi-jurisdictional committees (technical writing, training, communications, etc.).

The jurisdictions' regional emergency services agreement and regional response system has evolved into a system of mutual response. This allows for greater efficiency through:

- Sharing of response resources based on closest available unit
- Overall response capacity increased through resource sharing
- Regional use of specialized response teams (hazardous materials, technical rescue, marine, etc.)

The current system provides:

- Regional command officer training
- Common dispatch protocols
- Joint development of tactical operating manuals
- Group purchasing of materials and supplies
- Development of equipment "caches" for regional deployment
- Regional deployment of tactical response teams
- Sharing of subject matter experts
- Unified approach to National Capital Region policies through MWCOG
- Regional approach to state and federal grants
- Regional response resources (air units, ambulance buses, mass casualty units)

Chief Owens also addressed the challenges faced by the current system:

- Lack of integrated communications/dispatch — results in response delays
- Lack of regional strategic system planning — staff support needed
- System overload during periods of high response demand
- Lack of consistent minimum staffing levels across the region
- Availability of qualified operational volunteers continues to decline throughout the region and the nation
- Legislative obstacles
- Recruitment/retention of quality service providers
- Workforce development
- Increasing service demand —
  - ® Aging population means increased demand on EMS and greater fire death risk
  - ® EMS becoming a primary healthcare provider
  - ® Longer EMS service times due to:
    - Φ Overload of hospital emergency rooms
    - Φ Increased standard of EMS care
    - Φ Increase in highway related incidents
    - Φ Increase in response time due to growing traffic volume and highway congestion
  - ® Increasing number of multiple alarm fires due in part to:
    - Φ Increased flammability of structural components and contents

- Φ Greater square footage of newer residential construction
- Φ Zero lot line development
- Φ Increasing density of multiple family dwellings
- Rapid development in rural areas without municipal water service for firefighting

*questions & answers* Commissioner Seeman asked if new homes are required to have sprinkler systems. Chief Owens replied only if the roofline is 50 feet above ground. He explained that this rule can be subverted by building on a hillside, so the front is below 50 feet but the back is essentially four stories. Chief Owens added that the Fire Chiefs have a problem with the state building code and have communicated this concern to the chief administrative officers. At the national level, for the first time, sprinkler systems will have to be included in single-family and two-family dwellings beginning in 2011. This regulation still needs to be adopted in Virginia.

Replying to Commissioner Bulova's observation that many issues raised stem from building materials and construction styles, Chief Owens noted that in Virginia, local government cannot change the building codes in their jurisdiction. He added that lighter, pre-manufactured materials are often easier to install, reducing labor costs, thus making housing more affordable to buyers; but often these materials burn quicker, resulting in more resources needed to fight fires.

Commissioner Gross commented that in talking with Fairfax County firefighters, she has learned that approximately 75 percent of their calls are for EMS, not fire suppression. She asked if the Fire Chiefs are making recommendations on the EMS side. Chief Owens replied it is really an entire package, and some of the EMS issues are hospital based, because the EMS personnel must continue to care for the people they bring to the hospital until those people are accepted into the hospital system.

Responding to Commissioner Lippman's inquiry, Chief Owens said that the number of fires is decreasing but the intensity of the fires is increasing.

**CONSENT AGENDA** Chairman Connolly inquired about the deficit for the end of FY08. Mr. Gibb replied this was discussed in the Operations Committee meeting. The deficit is due to the fact that the agency is so heavily dependant upon grants. Commissioner Nohe pointed out that NVRC is the only Planning District Commission to receive an increase in state funding for FY09. The Chairman pointed out that the localities are facing their own budgetary difficulties for the next few budget cycles, so there is no possibility of a dues increase.

Commissioner Nohe moved approval of the Consent Agenda, consisting of the items listed below. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

- A. Financial Reports for June 2008
- B. Resolution No. P09-02: Authorization to Receive and Subcontract 2008-09 Minority AIDS Initiative Funds Under the Ryan White Treatment Modernization Act of 2006 for Services to Persons Living with HIV/AIDS
- C. Resolution No. P09-03: Authorization to Submit Funding Proposals to Support Climate and Energy-Related Cooperative Efforts Following the "First U.S.-European Conference of Metropolitan Regional Councils"

EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR'S  
REPORT

- GIS capability expanded: The state has released street centerline files for the entire state. NVRC is using this new analytical tool to regionally address homeland security, environmental management, demographics, transportation, human services, and land use.
- Virginia Association of Local Human Service Officials: annual meeting held earlier in the month. Meeting highlights included results of pilot programs demonstrating that children under Comprehensive Services Act have better outcomes in community based care versus costly residential services; and ways to garner larger amounts of corporate and philanthropic revenue and non-governmental advocacy for local human service projects.
- Four Mile Run Restoration: work progressing on various fronts.
- Woodbridge Charrette: November 13-15. The charrette will further the development and enhancement of the Route 1 corridor through transportation and economic development design solutions.
- Stormwater Management Permit Regulations: New stormwater management permit regulations will be the responsibility of local jurisdictions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Local governments are concerned about potentially inadequate fees, and the fact that additional staff and new ordinances may be needed for implementation. The regulations have more emphasis on a larger number of smaller LID facilities which impacts plan review and approval, inspections and enforcement of long-term maintenance obligations.
- Sister Region Exchange: The Verband Region Stuttgart has invited the Commission to send a delegation in December. Some grant funding for this exchange has been secured.
- Mr. Gibb introduced Aimee Vosper, the Commission's new Director of Planning & Environmental Services.
- Mr. Gibb reported that Sally Ormsby, a former Commissioner and community activist from Fairfax County, recently passed away. A memorial service will be held October 18.

CHAIRMAN'S  
REPORT

Chairman Connolly announced that Fred Yohey has resigned from the Commission and appointed Vice Mayor Clyde N. Washington, Jr. as the representative for the Town of Dumfries.

The Commission's FY 2010 Preliminary Budget will be presented next month for adoption and transmittal to the member governments. A draft 2009 Legislative Platform will also be presented for discussion.

Several groups have approached Mr. Gibb to make presentations to the Commission. Chairman Connolly requested a presentation at the October meeting on demographics. Commissioner Smedberg added that the members had requested an update on foreclosures at a future meeting.

Chairman Connolly reported that all member jurisdictions have approved the Commission's Charter amendment with the exception of the Town of Leesburg. The Charter amendment must be approved unanimously or it fails. Commissioner Umstadd said she plans to ask the Town Council to concur that the majority of the Commission's member jurisdictions may amend paragraph five of the Charter; the Leesburg Town Council does not have to vote to approve it.

COMMITTEE  
REPORTS

*Communications*      Commissioner Smedberg reported that the July/August issue of *Virginia Review* magazine includes an article on the Commission's "Only Rain Down the Drain" storm drain campaign, and three newspapers contained Commission news items.

ADJOURNMENT      There being no further business, Chairman Connolly adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved by:

G. Mark Gibb  
Executive Director

Gerald E. Connolly  
Chairman