



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION
REGIONAL COUNCIL 9

**REGIONAL COUNCIL 9
GROW EXISTING BUSINESS (GEB) TASK FORCE MEETING**

APRIL 4, 2025

8 am to 9 am

IN-PERSON

1001 Research Park Blvd., Suite 301, Charlottesville

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82872614666>

Call 434-979-5610 x. 106 with connectivity issues.

MINUTES

GEB Task Force Members Present: Ray Knott (Chair), Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch, Brian Cole, Tom Thorpe

GEB Task Force Members Absent: Paige Read

Council Members Present: n/a

Staff Present: Shannon Holland, Christie Taylor

1. Call to Order

Ray Knott, GEB Task Force Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

- **Roll Call**

A roll call was performed. **A quorum was established, as noted above.**

- **Public Comment**

There was no public comment submitted before the meeting or offered at the meeting.

2. ACTION ITEM: Consent Agenda

- Meeting Minutes, April 12, 2024
- Meeting Minutes, January 25, 2025

Brian Cole made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2024, and January 25, 2025 meetings, as presented. Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch seconded the motion. The motion carried.

3. Update:

- Region 9 Grow Existing Business Projects Dashboard

Referring to the GEB dashboard in the meeting packet, Shannon Holland noted that since the last meeting, the Wine Industry Planning Grant closed and the Wine Industry Implementation Grant was awarded. The Wine Industry Implementation Grant contract is in process with an effective date of March 11. Project VITAL contract has also been finalized. Both projects are just beginning with no issues, hence the greenlight status in the dashboard.

4. Proposal Review

- Innovation Corridor Roadmap – Planning Grant Summary
- Discuss Project and Scoring Rubric
 - Shannon Holland noted the following updates to the Innovation Corridor Roadmap proposal.
 - A Match Commitment Form from Orange County has been received.
 - Letters of Support from Euro Composites and Afton Scientific have been received.
 - Shannon Holland also summarized responses to questions presented during the scoring

process including:

A. IMPACT

- **Question:** Can you provide a stronger vision for an implementation grant?
- **Answer:** To our knowledge this type of study has not been done in our region. We have studied sectors but not the intersection of those sectors to identify unique advantages. We expect the grant to identify high-potential innovation-driven opportunities and provide recommendations for action items that can be implemented by GO Virginia and other funding sources.

B. REGIONAL COLLABORATION:

- **Question:** How were participating localities engaged?
- **Answer:** Discussions were held with all localities in Region 9 over the past several months. All localities support and will benefit from the data being reviewed for the entire region.

C. READINESS:

- **Question:** Has the consulting firm been identified? Are they qualified?
- **Answer:** The consulting firm, TEconomy, has been identified and is qualified, with extensive experience.
- **Question:** Will other private sector companies be engaged and will they have a role and can they be involved outside of the advisory board?
- **Answer:** Local economic developers will help connect to more private sector companies. Private sector companies beyond those listed will be engaged through interviews, focus groups, and other activities.

Feedback from the GEB Task Force included:

Francoise Seillier-Moiseiwitsch asked who is serving with an AI/Data Science background. Shannon Holland responded that UVA's Alex Gates, Associate Professor of Data Science, is serving this role.

It was discussed that TEconomy had experience in Virginia and Region 9. They had completed extensive innovation work for GO Virginia in 2018/2019 and were currently contracted with the TPI grant. TEconomy had also done similar projects and were selected from three strong candidates.

Overall, the task force was supportive of the project, but extensive discussion occurred around reducing proposal ambiguity and strengthening the private sector's influence. The Task Force wants to see private sector stakeholders on the Steering Committee or more robust engagement of the Advisory Committee to ensure adequate private sector influence. The Task Force suggests a deliberate cross-section of geographic and sector representation. If private sector companies cannot commit to the Steering Committee commitments, there needs to be a mechanism for having them inform the process in a meaningful way, as the committee is currently very heavy Economic Development. Practical experience is needed to yield a better work product, and more ready implementation grant.

Shannon Holland will discuss with the applicant team and deliver responses to the task force quickly so they can re-score the proposal before the Council Meeting.

5. Growth Plan Feedback

- 2025 Growth Plan – Cluster Scale Up Assessment by Sector

Shannon Holland gave a presentation. [Presentation is posted with these minutes at www.GOVirginia9.org.] The Growing Existing Business (GEB) Task Force was requested to assess the

impact that GEB-focused grant awards have had on each target sector by selecting a color from the stoplight spectrum to indicate the level of success achieved so far. After engaging of all the Task Forces, the results will be reviewed at the August Council meeting. DHCD's Cluster Based Economic Development Model was used to quickly evaluate progress and guide future priorities.

The Task Force was overall in agreement with the suggested assessments for the Cluster Scale Up strategy. They offered additional feedback including:

- Food & Beverage: There is an overarching concern for talent development, and they are curious of the influence current projects and Virginia Wine Coalition will have. In general, the sector and the region lack a talent-driver in this area.
- Finance & Business Services: Talent remains an issue, especially as return to office patterns continue, and employees refuse to relocate resulting in exits. CPAs, bankers, attorneys and similar occupations all have major shortfalls. Moreover, there is an issue with how data excludes a subset of jobs, like banking, where the industry relies on recruiters rather than posting jobs (posted jobs are what is captured for data).
- The Virginia Chamber is in the middle of its assessment which includes how AI will impact the state economy. Roque Castro is the Region 9 representative on that. There is an opportunity for a proposal on how AI will reshape our region's jobs. For example, software developers, something that has historically been a need, may no longer be applicable due to AI. From a Council recruitment perspective, it may be helpful to get someone in from that field.

The Task Force suggested a trend line be added to the graphic that corresponds with whether there is progress (green) or decline (red).

6. Project Pipeline

- Talent Development - TPI Planning – should lead to talent implementation grants
- Growing Existing Business - Innovation Corridor Roadmap, if approved, should lead to implementation grants
- Entrepreneurship - REI and the Food & Beverage Business Accelerator grants should both lead to implementation grants

7. Other Business

No other business was presented.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 a.m.