



Board/MIC Meeting Minutes

February 22, 2023: 10:00 a.m. – Noon

Virtual via Zoom

Call to Order

Theodore L. Chandler, Jr., Co-chair of RVA757 Connects, called the February 22, 2023 Board of Directors / Megaregion Institutional Council (MIC) meeting to order at 10 a.m.

Mr. Chandler welcomed the group and reviewed our organization's mission, purpose, and priorities for 2023. He thanked the board of directors and MIC members for their contributions, saying our organization's progress wouldn't be possible without them. He then welcomed new board directors Martin J. Barrington, Chairman of Anheuser-Busch InBev; Donald Graul, President and CEO of Branch Group; Thomas J. McNerney, President and CEO of Genworth Financial; Shamim Mohammad, Executive Vice President and Chief Information and Technology Officer of CarMax; and Ting Xu, Founder and Chairwoman of Evergreen Enterprises.

Updates on RVA757 Connects

John W. Martin, President and CEO of RVA757 Connects, reviewed administrative updates including the filing of O&D Insurance and Executive Committee Conflict of Interest forms. Mr. Martin reminded directors and MIC members that they can see meeting minutes and other key documents by utilizing the Documents Portal on the website (located at the bottom of the website's homepage). These documents also will be available on the new website once it is relaunched.

Mr. Martin introduced a new goal for this year – creating a bio book for the board of directors. Bios and photos of all board members will be requested later this year.

He also provided the remaining 2023 Board/MIC meeting dates, including Convergence 2023:

- April 26, 2023: 10 a.m. to noon – (100% Zoom)
- September 28, 2023: Convergence 2023



- All-day retreat focused on the I-64 Innovation Corridor. This event is organized by ChamberRVA, Hampton Roads Chamber, and RVA757 Connects. It will be held in Williamsburg. We will hold a short Board meeting as part of this signature event.
- November 15, 2023: 10 a.m. to noon – (100% Zoom)

Committee Updates

Government Relations Committee Co-Chairs Ross Grogg and Chris Lloyd provided updates on the General Assembly budget discussion as well as major topics being reviewed in the House and Senate.

Development Committee Chair Mitch Haddon shared an overview of this year's goals, including commitment renewals and finding outside sources of financial support. Funders can expect thank you calls for all the support that has been given up to this year. The Innovation Spotlight series provides unique education that isn't available anywhere else. RVA757 Connects' stakeholders are encouraged to attend and spread the word about this webinar.

Communications Director Greg Gilligan shared about the upcoming website relaunch scheduled for mid-March. Innovation Spotlight topics vary from month to month and videos are posted on RVA757 Connects' YouTube channel (and on the relaunched website). Social media posts are gaining attention. Stakeholders are encouraged to attend the webinar, spread the word, and recommend speakers.

Increasing Passenger Rail

Mr. Martin gave a brief review of the previous Board/MIC meeting's featured topic: RVA757 Connects' Passenger Rail Plan, presented by guest speaker DJ Stadtler, Executive Director of Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA).

Advancing rail in the megaregion means supporting the completion of Long Bridge in Northern Virginia, a long-term project that will need to be finished so that other advancements in rail may continue. RVA757 Connects is prepared to provide letters of support when asked by the VPRA, including plans to send a letter of support for the Rail Authority's application for the Franconia-Springfield Bypass Project under the Federal Railroad Administration's grant program.

Bike-Walk Trails

Mr. Martin reminded the group that a detailed plan has been created for bike-walk trails. The proposed BoAT trail in Hampton Roads will need an estimated \$150 million to complete the expansion. VDOT is in the process of hiring a director for the new State Trails Office. The person will be contacted once the appointment is made. The Tidewater Trails Alliance also has requested to have an RVA757 Connects' director appointed to its board of directors.

I-64 Gap Project

Support has reached \$595 million for the 29-mile Gap project. VDOT has put in a grant request to the state, which will pull this project closer to reaching the \$750 million total cost for the construction. The Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) also has requested \$45 million in federal funding. VDOT estimates that widening the Gap will be completed by late 2028.

Global Internet Hub Strategic Plan Initiative

Consultants have worked on gathering information for the Global Internet Hub Strategic Plan: Jon Hjembo of TeleGeography, Vinay Nagpal of InterGlobix, and Dr. Terry Clower of George Mason University, and SIR/JobsEQ (SIR's mining of national data using Chmura's labor market software).

Five key items learned from this process include:

- We now understand the Global Internet Hub infrastructure;
- We see intentionality at work;
- We understand better how we stack up;
- NOVA is creating an opportunity; and
- Other parts of Virginia are ramping up.

Strategies under consideration include:

1. Attract More Subsea Cables
2. Get a Subsea Cable Protection Zone in Place
3. Rethink Data Center Sites
4. Get I-64 Corridor's Cities and Counties Global Internet Hub-Ready
5. Advance Tech Talent Pipeline

Slides #29-68 in the presentation deck contain additional details.

The Global Internet Hub Strategic Plan will be the main topic at the next Board/MIC meeting on April 26, 2023.

Featured Topic: Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Jason El Koubi, President and CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), provided an update on VEDP's work in transforming Virginia into a national growth leader. (Details are included in the video recording of this meeting from 51 minutes to 1 hour and 26 minutes.)

Mr. Koubi's comments included:

- VEDP is investing time and improving the overall Virginia economic development ecosystem. He wants to cultivate more supportive relationships and roles among and between state, regional, and local economic development agencies.
- It is imperative that Virginia invest in getting sites ready. VEDP has put a lot of energy into having a portfolio of project-ready sites for industrial development projects. But Virginia has been losing deals in this area for many years, particularly for large advanced manufacturing projects simply because the state does not have the sites identified and available.
- Virginia has only two megasites currently available; the Commonwealth needs more and needs to be developing those sites now.
- Virginia has seen significant growth in data center investment activity in recent years, largely after the state provided data center operators with tax break incentives. But those tax breaks are set to expire in 2035. Studies have shown that 90% of data center investment would not have occurred without the state's sales and use tax exemption. He said the evidence is very clear that the state needs to be thinking about extending the tax exemption.
- VEDP's data center study report is about to be released. The report will show that data centers are a big win-win for the state, for communities, and for the 13,000 employees who directly work in that sector.
- VEDP values the work of partners like RVA757 Connects and wants to work even closer because of the value that the organizations bring.

A robust Q&A session commenced with the full group.



Thank You and Wrap Up

Thomas R. Frantz, Co-Chair of RVA757 Connects, thanked Jason El Koubi for his presentation and to board directors and MIC members for their attendance and support. He reflected on the evidence of Virginia's leadership focusing on connectivity and collaboration to create positive growth. Each company's strategic decisions make an impact on the megaregion and the Commonwealth.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:02 p.m.