



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
**GROWTH &
OPPORTUNITY**
IN EACH REGION

AGENDA
VIRGINIA GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY BOARD
GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

September 15, 2026

9:30-10:30AM

[Virtual Link](#)

LOCATION:

Brightpoint Community College
13101 Route 1, Chester, Virginia
Nicholas Center Ballroom, N102B

- I. OPENING
 - a. Call to order Chair
 - b. Roll Call Cody Anderson
 - c. Public Comment Chair
- II. Consent Agenda – **Action Item** Chair
 - a. Approval of May 19, 2026, Meeting Minutes
- III. Discussion Items Chair
 - a. Talent Attraction Strategies
 - i. Presentation - VEDP Talent Attraction Debbie Melvin, VP of Talent and Partnerships
 - ii. Future Talent Attraction applications – **Action Item**
 - b. Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy (SCALE) Board referred scope and budget categories for alignment and review
- IV. Information Item
 - a. Board Membership Turnover Report Cody Anderson
- V. Discussion Item - Future Meeting Schedule Chair
- VI. ADJOURNMENT Chair

2026 Committee Meeting Calendar
Tuesday, November 17 (virtual)



VIRGINIA INITIATIVE FOR
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VIRGINIA GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY BOARD GOVERNANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

May 19, 2026

11:00 AM

Virtual

Members Present

Jim Cheng
Cliff Fleet
Heywood Fralin
Kenneth Johnson

Members Absent

Joel Griffin
Senator L. Louise Lucas
Delegate Luke Torian

Call to Order

Mr. Cliff Fleet, Chair of the Virginia Growth and Opportunity (GO Virginia) Board of Governance and Policy Committee, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Mr. Cody Anderson, GO Virginia Program Administrator for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), called the roll and noted that a quorum was not present.

Mr. Fleet noted that a member was running behind and that the Consent Agenda would be moved to later in the agenda so that quorum would be achieved to take action.

Public Comment

Mr. Fleet opened the floor for public comment.

No members of the public appeared before the Committee for the public comment period.

The public comment period was closed.

Staff Report

Mr. Fleet recognized Mr. Anderson to provide the staff report.

Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission (JLARC) items that remained for consideration by the Governance and Policy Committee.

Mr. Anderson noted that Policy Consideration 2, which referred to a recommendation that the GO Virginia Board revise its policies to allow smaller organizations, which meet criteria set by the Board, to receive a portion of their GO Virginia award at the start of the grant period, was the last JLARC related item delegated to the committee for consideration.

Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the reimbursement-based grant disbursement model that the GO Virginia program utilizes. Mr. Anderson noted that the program requires a proof of expense and a proof of payment for reimbursement for project aligned expenditures to be processed. Mr. Anderson explained that DHCD has an additional flexibility option that allows organizations with cash flow challenges to receive reimbursement on proof of expense without proof of payment, on a case-by-case basis. Mr. Anderson explained that this process has been employed for many years but has not been officially documented in guidance but will be included in fiscal year 2027 guidance updates.

After discussion, Mr. Fleet noted that with the update to fiscal year 2027 guidance to memorialize the reimbursement model's flexibility options, the concerns related to fiscal capacity of smaller organizations are addressed through program policy.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Fleet noted that the consent agenda includes the minutes of the March 24, 2026, meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Fralin and seconded by Mr. Cheng to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed.

Discussion Items

Mr. Fleet noted that during the March 24, 2026, meeting of the GO Virginia State Board, the Board discussed the efficacy of talent attraction and retention related efforts. As part of that discussion, the Board referred the topic to the Governance and Policy Committee for further consideration. Mr. Fleet welcomed Nicole Overley, Commissioner of Virginia Works and Debbie Melvin, Vice President of Talent and Partnerships, to present on the topic.

Mr. Anderson provided a brief overview of talent attraction and retention efforts that have been funded by the GO Virginia

program to date. Mr. Anderson noted that the Board had funded three projects related to this topic, including three talent attraction related web portals.

Ms. Overlay provided an overview of the talent retention efforts that Virginia Works is engaged in, including self service digital tools, synchronous virtual learning opportunities, group sessions and workshops, and workforce center enrollment and coaching opportunities.

Ms. Melvin provided an overview of information related to talent attraction efforts. Ms. Melvin provided baseline data regarding talent migration trends and provided a review of two talent attraction pilots launched by VEDP, the launch of the Start in Hampton Roads landing page and an expansion of Roanoke's Get 2 Know the Noke web portal.

Information Items

Mr. Anderson provided an overview of the Board Membership and Turnover Report. Mr. Anderson noted that three members would have their terms expiring in 2026: John King, Kenneth Johnson, and Jon Peterson.

Mr. Anderson explained that Speaker Don Scott, who is empowered by the Code of Virginia to appoint three legislators to serve on the GO Virginia State Board, chose not to reappoint himself to the Board. Additionally, Delegate Michelle Maldonado, who's appointed term by the Speaker is coincidental with her term of office, resigned from the House of Delegates, ending her term on the GO Virginia Board as well.

Mr. Anderson noted that Speaker Scott appointed Delegate Virgil Thornton, Sr., to the GO Virginia State Board to replace the seat that the Speaker vacated. At the time of the meeting, Speaker Scott had not chosen a new appointee to replace Delegate Maldonado.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.



Memorandum

TO: Governance and Policy Committee

FROM: DHCD Staff

RE: Talent Attraction Strategies

DATE: 09/15/2026

Background

Beginning in April of 2022, the GO Virginia Program and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) have invested in talent attraction strategies at various stages of project maturity. Further information on each approved GO Virginia talent attraction project and any relation to VEDP activity is described below.

Roanoke's "Get2KnowNoke"

On December 15, 2021, the GO Virginia State Board initially considered the Regional Talent Strategy Implementation project. At the time, the Board chose to defer the application due to concerns regarding traded sector industry focus. On April 21, 2022, the GO Virginia State Board reconsidered the project after the applicant, the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board, included a new activity focused on sector specific strategy roundtables and additional project structure focusing on specific occupations aligned with the GO Virginia priorities.

A portion of the funds for this project went to the development of a talent attraction web portal called "[Get2KnowNoke](#)". The application dedicated \$75,000 of a total \$315,918.80 request for funds to be used to develop a regional talent attraction portal for the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands areas.

Aside from this activity, GO Virginia funds were also used to create a toolkit for employers, outreach towards K-12 institutions and businesses, out-of-market conferences, implementation of a shared Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system between project partners, and salaries, fringe, equipment, and training for associated staff.



The committed versus achieved outcomes are listed below. Note that this project is an outlier because a smaller subset of the project's scope was a web portal. The other projects that follow are focused on the web portal as the only component of their scope of work.

Outcome Name	Committed	Achieved
People Trained	50	128
Employees Upskilled*	20	361
Jobs Created/Filled**	40	106
Businesses Served	100	40

*This metric is no longer considered a core outcome of the GO Virginia Program

**These outcomes are now two distinct outcome categories and are now tracked separately

After the close of this project, the Western Virginia Workforce Development Board partnered with VEDP to execute a talent attraction pilot focused on the Get2KnowNoke asset. This pilot included enhanced paid targeting and an organic social strategy. Top audiences for the pilot included tech talent, healthcare workers, and teachers. Additionally top geographic audiences included New York City and California. The key insight gleaned from the pilot was that lifestyle messaging outperformed job-focused messaging.

Below are the outcomes that were tracked for the VEDP Get2KnowNoke pilot project:

Outcome Name	Achieved
Impressions	4,000,000+
Website Sessions	62,000
Conversations/Interest Form Submissions	850

Hampton Roads Region's "Start in Hampton Roads"

From 2025-2026, the Hampton Roads Region, in partnership with VEDP, launched the Start in Hampton Roads Pilot. Unlike Get2KnowNoke, there was no existing web portal asset to focus the pilot on, so a branding and micro-site was developed called "[Start in Hampton Roads](#)". In addition to these activities, a targeted marketing campaign was launched to drive interest in the region. The Target audiences for this pilot were engineers, maritime talent, and transitioning military. Similarly to the Get2KnowNoke project, the primary audiences for the portal were New York City and California. The key insight gleaned from the pilot was that paid media is essential for launching new talent brands and generating early traction.

Below are the outcomes that were tracked for the VEDP Start in Hampton Roads pilot project:

Outcome Name	Achieved
Leads Generated	1,400
Paid Media Multiplier	Paid media drove 8x more traffic than organic



Following the VEDP pilot for Start in Hampton Roads, a follow up project was approved by the GO Virginia State Board on March 24th, 2026, to further expand the startinhamptonroads.com micro-site. This project is designed to transform the micro-site into a regional talent marketing and attraction portal with concierge style matchmaking for talent to in-region industries. This concierge style matchmaking is designed to bridge the gap from leads expressing interest in the region to in-demand employment opportunities.

At the meeting in which the GO Virginia Board approved this project, the Board discussed the efficacy of talent attraction projects. The Board noted that talent attraction activities were not prohibited by the Board and approved the project with the caveat that these activity types should be further studied, which led to the referral of talent attraction to the Governance and Policy Committee.

This project is currently in the early stages of development, with contracting for an entity to expand the micro-site underway, so no outcomes have been realized to date. The following are the committed outcomes for the project:

Outcome Name	Committed
New Interns Placed	20
Jobs Created	70
Businesses Served	35

Lynchburg Region’s “Say Yes to LYH Region”

In September of 2025, the GO Virginia Board approved this project with a talent attraction web portal aspect. The project name was the LRBA Regional Talent Portal with an intended portal branding “Say Yes to LYH Region”. As the name implies, Say Yes to LYH Region will be focused on the Lynchburg region and aims to attract talent to the region with a particular focus on the advanced manufacturing industry.

This project is currently in the early stages of development, with contracting for an entity to develop the portal underway, so no outcomes have been realized to date. The following are the committed outcomes for the project:

Outcome Name	Committed
Jobs Created	50
Businesses Served	20

Staff Recommendation:

Because there are several projects currently underway with talent attraction portals as the focus, staff recommends taking action to move a recommendation to the GO Virginia Board to place pause on talent attraction projects emphasizing talent attraction portals. The pause should remain in effect until recently funded projects focusing on this topic close and the Board is able to consider the efficacy of the funded portals.

Memorandum

TO: Governance and Policy Committee

FROM: DHCD Staff

RE: Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading energy (SCALE) Board Referred Scope and Budget Categories for Alignment and Review

DATE: 09/15/2026

Background

At the June 9, 2026, meeting of the GO Virginia Board, the Board took action to partially approve the Region 4 and 5 per capita project "Strategic Cluster Advancement for Leading Energy (SCALE). The partial approval was in line with the application workgroup reviewer recommendation, which stated:

"Based on the workgroup discussion and application review, the workgroup recommends approval of the application at a reduced award amount of \$154,391. This amount will be cost shared by Regions 4 and 5 utilizing their Per Capita Fund allocations.

This would support an amended budget and scope that includes completing the market study to validate the program focus, establishing the Energy Growth Council, developing an interactive energy mapping tool, and conducting Soft-Landing activities. Activities and outcomes will be adjusted based on the revised scope at the time of contract.

Further, the committee recommends with this approval that the remaining scope and budget categories be referred to the Governance and Policy Committee for alignment review with the GO Virginia Board Policies and Program Guidelines."

The remaining scope of work referred to in the workgroup recommendation were the following items:

- Trade Shows
- Conference/Trade Show Travel
- Contract services for external lead generation consultants and logistics and planning consultants
- Computer software and hardware
- The second year of salary for the Director of Ecosystem Development and a 2nd year of salary for the Program and Business Development Representative
- Fringe and additional salary costs



Program Alignment:

Out of the four investment strategies endorsed by the GO Virginia Board (talent development, site development and infrastructure, entrepreneurship and innovation, and cluster scale-up), the activities identified in the project's scope most closely relate to the cluster scale-up investment strategy.

Of the remaining activities that were omitted from the initial funding request, none are expressly outlined as fundable activities by GO Virginia Board Policy or program guidelines, however conversely, none are expressly prohibited activities.

The GO Virginia Program Manual outlines what a Cluster Scale-Up project is envisioned to be:

4.4 CLUSTER SCALE-UP

GO Virginia supports projects that help existing businesses scale or accelerate the development of emerging industry subclusters within targeted industry clusters. Cluster scale-up focuses on second-stage companies—businesses that have moved beyond startup and are ready to grow, commercialize proven products, and reach new markets or legacy industries. Firms in these industry clusters may need help with:

- *Retooling or expanding production*
 - *Strengthening supply chains*
 - *Accessing capital or workforce*
 - *Reaching new customer or supplier networks*
- Scale-up projects must align with a region's priority industry sectors and show how growth in one business or area can trigger growth in related sectors, such as distribution, logistics, or services.*

GO Virginia may also support efforts to accelerate emerging or nascent industries that are new to the region or in early stages of commercialization. These projects should be collaborative and demonstrate the same high standards for impact, job creation, and return on investment as other implementation projects.

Supported Activities:

Business Accelerators (for Second-Stage Companies):

These accelerators support businesses that are beyond the startup phase but need help commercializing products, scaling operations, or entering new markets. They provide access to mentors, investors, and technical resources, along with peer learning and connections to customers, suppliers, and infrastructure that supports growth.

Second-Stage Growth Programs:

Designed for more mature companies—typically operating for two or more years with consistent revenue—these programs help businesses expand into new markets, update business models, enhance production capacity, and improve readiness for commercialization.



R&D Partnerships:

These collaborations connect businesses with research institutions to accelerate innovation and the adoption of new technologies. Projects may support commercialization of new products, industry-academia technology transfer, or the modernization of manufacturing processes.

Supply Chain Initiatives:

Supply chain initiatives aim to strengthen regional supplier networks and fill logistical gaps. Activities may include developing platforms to connect suppliers with producers, identifying critical supply chain needs, and forming industry consortia or shared logistics networks.

Cluster Intelligence & Transition Strategies:

These projects help regions understand and refine their priority industry sectors. They often include economic and workforce assessments, analysis of regional assets and market trends, and recommendations for future scale-up strategies or investment priorities.

Cluster Pivot Strategies:

These initiatives help regions respond to economic shifts by leveraging existing assets and workforce capabilities. Projects may focus on transitioning skills from declining industries to emerging sectors or realigning regional infrastructure to support new cluster opportunities.

The following are the GO Virginia Core Outcome categories associated with Cluster Scale-Up:

Definitions

Number of jobs created	The number of jobs that will be created by businesses supported by the effort.
Number of businesses attracted	Total number of unique new businesses relocating to the region(s) as a result of the project's work.
Number of existing businesses expanded	The total number of existing businesses or startups that have demonstrated business growth specifically due to the effort
Number of businesses served	The number of unique firms provided with targeted and/ or individualized business assistance.
Total funds raised by businesses served	The total dollar amount in funds raised by the businesses served as part of the effort. This may include venture capital, research and development funds, SBIR funding, grants, private investment, or other sources of funds to be used by the businesses served.



Previously Funded Efforts by GO Virginia:

Previously, the GO Virginia Board approved two projects that included activities that were omitted by the workgroup from the project's budget.

The first, the Offshore Wind Supply Chain, which was funded by the Board on June 23, 2020, included the following items in the project's activities and budget:

- Salaries (\$425,288 over two years)
- Trade Shows (\$40,000)
- Conference/Trade Show Travel (\$15,000)

The second example is the Hampton Roads Playbook: Defense Implementation, which was funded by the Board on March 24, 2026. This project included the following items in the project's activities and budget:

- Contract services for International Representation (\$120,000)
- Contract services for Defense Tech Regional Trip Documentation and Report (\$50,000)
- Salaries (\$131,950 over two years)

Staff Recommendation:

The Committee should direct staff to issue guidance to clarify that cluster scale-up projects should be focused on a primary activity with marketing being a qualifying supporting activity for the initiative and that projects that are focused predominantly on marketing shall not be considered eligible for GO Virginia funding.



Memorandum

TO: GO Virginia Governance and Policy Committee Members

FROM: DHCD Staff

RE: Upcoming Expiring Terms and Board Membership Turnover Report

DATE: 9/15/2026

RECENTLY EXPIRED TERMS:

Kenneth Johnson, Expired 06/30/2026 – Eligible for Reappointment

UPCOMING EXPIRING TERMS:

House of Delegates Appointees:

Jonathan Peterson, Expiration 11/4/2026 – Eligible for Reappointment

Senate Appointees:

Heywood Fralin, Expiration 04/11/2027 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Benjamin Davenport, Expiration 04/11/2027 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Gubernatorial Appointees:

Nancy Howell Agee, Expiration 06/30/2027 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

Emily O’Quinn, Expiration 06/30/2027 – Eligible for Reappointment

Cliff Fleet, Expiration 06/30/2027 – Eligible for Reappointment

RECENT APPOINTMENTS:

Secretary Carrie Chenery, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

Secretary Katie Frazier, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

Secretary Jessica Looman, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

Secretary Jeffery Smith, Term Coincidental with Term of Office

John King, Expires 06/30/2030 – Not Eligible for Reappointment

FULL BOARD ROSTER:

Name	Member Type	GOVA Region	Expiration of Current Term	Seat Requirements
Gubernatorial Appointees:				
The Honorable Carrie Chenery	ex-officio voting member	n/a	Coincident w/ office term	One of four Secretaries from Ag & Forestry, Commerce & Trade, Education, Finance, and Labor; ex-officio
The Honorable Katie Frazier	ex-officio voting member	n/a	Coincident w/ office term	One of four Secretaries from Ag & Forestry, Commerce & Trade, Education, Finance, and Labor; ex-officio
The Honorable Jessica Looman	ex-officio voting member	n/a	Coincident w/ office term	One of four Secretaries from Ag & Forestry, Commerce & Trade, Education, Finance, and Labor; ex-officio
The Honorable Jeffery Smith	ex-officio voting member	n/a	Coincident w/ office term	One of four Secretaries from Ag & Forestry, Commerce & Trade, Education, Finance, and Labor; ex-officio
Nancy Howell Agee*	non-legislative citizen member	2	6/30/2027	significant private-sector business experience
Emily O'Quinn	non-legislative citizen member	1	6/30/2027	significant private-sector business experience
Cliff Fleet	non-legislative citizen member	5	6/30/2027	significant private-sector business experience
Jim Cheng	non-legislative citizen member	9	6/30/2028	significant private-sector business experience
Reggie Aggarwal	non-legislative citizen member	7	6/30/2028	significant private-sector business experience
Fouad Qreitem	non-legislative citizen member	7	6/30/2028	significant private-sector business experience
William Dotson	non-legislative citizen member	6	6/30/2029	significant private-sector business experience
Thomas Ransom	non-legislative citizen member	4	6/30/2029	significant private-sector business experience
John King	non-legislative citizen member	8	6/30/2030	significant private-sector business experience
Kenneth Johnson	non-legislative citizen member	4	6/30/2026 Serves until reappointment	significant private-sector business experience

			and/or appointment is filled	
Virginia Senate Appointees:				
Benjamin J. Davenport Jr. *	non-legislative citizen member	3	4/11/2027	Appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules from different regions of the Commonwealth with significant private-sector business experience
Heywood W. Fralin*	non-legislative citizen member	2	4/11/2027	Appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules from different regions of the Commonwealth with significant private-sector business experience
Virginia House of Delegates Appointees:				
Jonathan M. Peterson	non-legislative citizen member	7	11/4/2026	Appointed by the Speaker of the House from different regions of the Commonwealth with significant private-sector business experience
Joel Griffin	non-legislative citizen member	6	01/20/2029	Appointed by the Speaker of the House from different regions of the Commonwealth with significant private-sector business experience
Virginia Senate Members:				
L. Louise Lucas	Senate Member - ex-officio	5	Coincident w/ office term	Chair of Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee
Creigh Deeds	Senate Member	9	Coincident w/ office term	Member of the Senate appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules
Ryan McDougle	Senate Member	4	Coincident w/ office term	Member of the Senate appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules
Virginia House of Delegates Members:				
Virgil Thornton Sr.	House Member	5	Coincident w/ office term	Member Appointed by the Speaker of the House

Luke Torian	House Member	7	Coincident w/ office term	Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations
Terry Kilgore	House Member	1	Coincident w/ office term	Member of the House appointed by Speaker of the House
Atoosa Reaser	House Member	7	Coincident w/ office term	Member of the House appointed by Speaker of the House
*Not Eligible for Reappointment				



Memorandum

TO: Governance and Policy Committee

FROM: DHCD Staff

RE: Future Meeting Schedule

DATE: 09/15/2026

Background

The meeting cadence for the Governance and Policy Committee is described in the Committee Charter as follows:

“The Committee shall meet at minimum twice annually preceding the regularly scheduled meeting of the Virginia Growth and Opportunity Board. The Committee may call special meetings that shall be conducted in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Virginia Conflict of Interest Act (COIA) unless exempt pursuant to §2.2-3711. A.48 of the Code of Virginia.”

At the December 15, 2025, meeting of the Governance and Policy Committee, the Committee adopted a meeting schedule including alternating physical and virtual meetings, in compliance with the Code of Virginia. In addition to the adopted schedule of meetings, the Committee met one additional time to discuss items referred by the GO Virginia Board.