# Minutes
# Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission
# Executive Committee Meeting
# Virtual by Teams
# March 4, 2026, 4:30 p.m.

**Attendance**

| | **City of Lexington** | | **Rockbridge County** | | **Staff** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ✓ | Frank Friedman | ✓ | Chris Slaydon | ✓ | Ann Cundy |
| | **City of Staunton** | | **Rockingham County** | ✓ | Kimberly Miller |
| ✓ | Sharon Angle | | Rachel Salatin | ✓ | Donnie Kern |
| | **City of Waynesboro** | | | | |
| ✓ | Terry Short | | | | |

**Call to Order**
The Executive Committee meeting of March 4, 2026, was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Chairperson Frank Friedman.

**Consideration of Minutes**
Chair Friedman presented the minutes from August and November. It was noted that two sets of minutes were included in the packet for consideration, as August 18, 2025, minutes had been deferred from the November meeting due to lack of quorum. There being no objections to approving either set of minutes as presented, August 18, 2025, and November 12, 2025, Executive Committee meeting minutes were approved.

**Public Comment**
Chair Friedman opened the floor for public comments. There were no public comments.

**Review of Draft 2026–2030 CSPDC Strategic Plan (EC Memo #26-01)**
Ms. Cundy provided an overview of the draft 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, titled "Forging a Digital Region," developed with BBTx Consultants. She noted that the plan grew out of the agency's recent SERDI assessment and stakeholder input, and that the last strategic plan was completed in 2019. The Executive Committee is reviewing the draft ahead of the full Commission meeting on April 20, 2026, when BBTx principal Grant Tate will present the final plan in person.

Ms. Cundy asked the committee to focus on three areas: whether the five strategic goals and their priority order accurately reflect the needs and priorities of the region and member jurisdictions; whether any significant issues or opportunities are missing; and whether the mission statement and core values reflects their expectations for the organization.

*Discussion of Strategic Goals*
The committee expressed general support for the five strategic goals as presented. Members noted that the goals reflect the breadth of work the PDC performs and provide a sound framework for the next planning period. Mr. Short noted that housing is appropriately called out as a priority, consistent with the challenges facing the region. Mr. Slaydon agreed, noting that Goal 2 in particular reflects issues

being actively discussed in the Rockbridge area, including recent workforce housing efforts led by the local EDA. Chair Friedman noted that the goals align well with what member communities are looking for from the PDC and affirmed the value of the PDC's role as a convener and information hub.

Ms. Cundy explained that Goal 4 includes implementation of a two-tier Objectives and Key Results (OKR) system. In response to a question, she clarified that OKR is a project and program management framework used to track objectives and key results, and that BBTx will provide standalone training to staff on its use.

*Regional Description – Suggested Additions*

Ms. Angle offered observations about the regional description on page three of the draft, noting that the role of agriculture, including its important connection to food processing, is a defining feature of the region that deserves explicit recognition. She also noted that tourism is a significant asset not only in the Lexington-Rockbridge area as currently described, but throughout the broader region, including Staunton, Waynesboro, and Augusta County. Ms. Cundy welcomed the feedback and confirmed that these additions would be incorporated into the document.

*Mission Statement*

The committee reviewed the proposed mission statement in section 4.2 of the draft. Members expressed support for the statement, noting that it is well-written and appropriately captures the organization's collaborative role.

*Next Steps*

The committee agreed to provide any additional written comments or edits to staff by end of day Friday, March 13, 2026. BBTx will incorporate Executive Committee feedback into the final draft prior to the April 20, 2026, Commission meeting, at which Grant Tate will present the final plan.

**Update on Joining the Virginia Retirement System (EC Memo #26-02)**

Ms. Cundy introduced the VRS joining update and noted that the actuarial study prepared by Gabriel, Roeder, Smith & Company (GRS), dated January 7, 2026, was attached for review.

*Cost Overview*

Mr. Kern summarized the cost comparison between the agency's current Empower retirement plan and the proposed transition to VRS, referencing the tables on pages three and four of the Memo.

*Employee Impact:* Under the current plan, employees contribute a mandatory total of 9.1% of their pay. Under VRS with Social Security, the mandatory total would increase to 12.65%, reflecting 6.2% for Social Security (FICA), 1.45% for Medicare, and 5% toward VRS (4% defined benefit and 1% defined contribution). Employees may also make voluntary contributions of up to an additional 4% to the VRS defined contribution component, with a corresponding employer match.

*Employer Impact:* The agency currently contributes a mandatory total of 15.3% of covered payroll (13.85% to Empower plus 1.45% for Medicare). Under VRS and Social Security, the mandatory employer total would decrease to 11.34%, reflecting 7.65% for FICA and Medicare and 3.69% toward VRS (2.69% defined benefit and 1% defined contribution). If all employees participate in the maximum voluntary defined contribution option, the employer total would be 13.84%, representing a decrease of 2.46% compared to the current plan.

Mr. Kern noted that the agency would be required to make an initial upfront contribution of just over $28,000 for the defined benefits portion upon joining VRS, based on current covered payroll.

A question was raised regarding how employees with prior VRS service would be treated. Ms. Cundy clarified that the actuarial study identified three employees with prior VRS vesting service who would re-enter under Plan 2. The remaining employees would enter under the Hybrid plan. No employees would be entering under Plan 1.

*Disability Coverage*

Ms. Cundy noted two open questions related to disability coverage that require Executive Committee input:

- *Plan 2 employees:* Plan 2 members are not eligible for the Virginia Local Disability Plan (VLDP). The agency will need to determine whether to maintain supplemental disability coverage for these three employees on an ongoing basis.
- *Hybrid employees:* Hybrid plan members are not eligible for VLDP until they have completed one year of VRS participation. The agency will need to determine whether to provide supplemental coverage for employees during this one-year waiting period.

Ms. Miller summarized the agency's current disability coverage through Lincoln Financial which includes short- and long-term disability benefits beginning after a 30-day waiting period, replacing 60% of base salary, as well as life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Staff will research the cost of supplemental options and return to the committee with specific proposals.

Committee members expressed support for protecting employees through the transition period and agreed that the agency should make every reasonable effort to avoid a gap in coverage.

Members also suggested surveying staff to determine how many employees might already have disability coverage through other means. The committee noted that the net savings to the agency of approximately 3% in retirement contributions provides some financial room to address these benefit gaps.

It was also noted that health insurance premiums are increasing by 10% this year for the agency. The committee discussed ways to help offset the combined financial impact on staff of joining Social Security and VRS. Ms. Cundy indicated staff would develop options for the committee's consideration.

*Transition Sequence*

Ms. Cundy outlined the required transition sequence, targeting a VRS effective date of July 1, 2026:

1. April – Commission approves resolutions to dissolve the current Empower plan, join Social Security, and join VRS. The number and structure of resolutions required will be confirmed with general counsel.
2. April–May – VRS conducts individual employee counseling sessions following Commission action.
3. May – Empower plan is dissolved. All participants move funds to individual accounts.
4. June – Social Security coverage becomes effective. VRS requires documentation confirming the Empower plan has been dissolved and the organization has joined Social Security before VRS enrollment can begin.
5. July 1, 2026 – VRS coverage becomes effective, aligned with the start of the fiscal year.

Ms. Cundy noted that staff are in weekly communication with VRS and are working to confirm the detailed timeline. She indicated that staff would seek clarification from general counsel regarding the sequencing and timing requirements for ending the current plan and entering Social Security and VRS.

*Direction from Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee expressed support for moving forward with the VRS transition and directed staff to bring the necessary resolutions to the full Commission at the April 20, 2026, meeting. The committee affirmed its support for taking care of employees through the transition and asked staff to return with specific cost options related to disability coverage and other transition benefits prior to the April meeting.

*Action Items:*

- Staff research and present options for disability coverage for Plan 2 employees and for all employees during the one-year VLDP waiting period, including estimated costs.
- Staff to explore options for mitigating employee financial impact, including a potential one-time contribution to 457(b) equivalent accounts and increased agency contribution toward family health insurance premiums.
- Staff to seek confirmation of the required sequencing and timing for dissolving the current plan, entering Social Security, and joining VRS.

**Other Business**

*FOIA Policy*

Ms. Cundy reported that the agency has been receiving an increased volume of FOIA requests and that, while the agency has been handling them appropriately, it does not currently have a written FOIA policy. Staff have drafted a policy adapted from a template provided by the Virginia FOIA Council and used by a peer PDC. Ms. Cundy noted that the agency's general counsel has indicated that the policy should be approved by the full Commission rather than adopted administratively, given that it pertains to state law. She indicated she will confirm this recommendation with general counsel before proceeding.

The committee agreed that the policy should be established as soon as practicable. Given the time-sensitive nature of a pending FOIA exemption request related to an internet service provider under a broadband grant, Ms. Cundy indicated that a brief additional Executive Committee meeting may be needed in the coming weeks to act on the policy prior to the April 20th Commission meeting.

*Executive Committee Vacancies*

Ms. Cundy noted that the Executive Committee currently has two vacancies following the departure of Pam Carter (Augusta County) and Tyson Cooper (Buena Vista), neither of whom returned to the Commission. A special election will be held at the April full Commission meeting to fill both vacancies. Additionally, a new Vice Chair will need to be elected at the next Executive Committee meeting, as that role was held by Mr. Cooper.

Ms. Cundy also noted a broader concern about quorum for the April Commission meeting, given a combination of unfilled Commission seats and appointed commissioners who have not been attending. She indicated that the issue has become more pronounced recently and may require outreach to the relevant local governing bodies to encourage appointments and attendance. The committee agreed that such outreach would carry more weight coming from elected officials on the Executive Committee than from staff and offered to make direct contact with the relevant jurisdictions before April. Chair Friedman and Ms. Cundy agreed to coordinate on this outreach.

**Adjournment**
There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Miller

Kimberly Miller, Commission Clerk