



Resilience Coordination Working Group

Meeting Summary March 28, 2023

Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda Review

Workgroup Charge Review

This Working Group is being established by the Chief Resilience Officer in furtherance of Governor Youngkin's goal of addressing challenges related to flooding and resilience, and in the spirit of engaging collaboratively with the General Assembly on this important issue. The Working Group will have the following purposes:

- To consider and assess strategies and policies for the Commonwealth to improve intergovernmental and interagency coordination; and
- To maximize the procurement of federal and private funding opportunities in planning for and implementing flood resilience throughout the Commonwealth.

Information Sharing: Enabling Collaboration and Breaking Down Silos: Best Practices for Interagency Resilience Coordination

Presented by the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), Grace Tucker, Senior Analyst, Virginia Coasts & Watersheds

A discussion on the presentation followed including the following supplemental information:

In Louisiana, counties generally work with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) and Chief Resilience Officer (CRO). The Coastal Master Plan is a state plan and therefore, most work is completed at the state level; most counties do not have the capacity and skill set to undertake this work on their own.

The private sector in Louisiana is engaged in resiliency efforts via:

- Coast Builders Coalition in their efforts to restore and protect the coast

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- A Carbon Emission Reduction Program working with state industries
- Engagement with various Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development organizations tracked via a “report card”
- Greater New Orleans Foundation frequently partnering with industry

The EDF noted they work closely with VA and NC state legislatures to help with the development of flood blueprints and identifying funding needs and opportunities. There was a discussion about the nature of being a Dillon Rule state and how it affects resiliency planning at the state and local levels.

There was a discussion about opportunities for academic institutions taking a formal role in resiliency coordination. While not implemented at this time, it was acknowledged academic institutions do play a key role in resiliency efforts.

Question and comments regarding funding completed the presentation with the following topics being discussed:

- Success stories where significant funding was not available, such as Rhode Island
- Louisiana, Colorado, and New Jersey experienced acute events that increased focus on collaboration and resiliency awareness
- North Carolina relies on funding from FEMA and HUD and currently does not budget for resilience. Nonprofits are directing that more funding is needed from the state legislature for resiliency efforts.

Information Sharing: Initial Summary of Resiliency Survey Results

Presented by the Performance Management Group (PMG)

A summary review of the resiliency survey results including the following information:

- 29 survey responses (76%) were received. Note: these numbers do not include a response received after the survey deadline and the final analysis will reflect all responses.
- Based upon the analysis of the survey results specific to workgroup participation, the results and meeting discussion indicate there is little if any overlap or redundancy related to workgroup purpose and membership. A group discussion suggested The Eastern Virginia Groundwater Management Advisory Committee

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may have some overlap with other workgroups as might the Chesapeake Bay Program Climate Resiliency Workgroup.

- Many of the agencies and organizations have informal or undefined data sharing practices. This is potentially an issue if the connection between the entities sharing data is based on individual relationships; in the event someone changes roles and responsibilities, access to data may be at risk.
- Analysis of the partnership information provided in the survey suggests a large number of partnerships between agencies and organizations are either informal or undefined versus a formally defined relationship. There was some feedback from meeting participants that the meaning of the term “partnerships” was unclear and therefore survey responses may be inconsistent based upon the respondent’s interpretation of the meaning of partnerships.

A discussion followed the survey overview including the following topics:

A significant number of studies over several years have been completed but there appears to be a reluctance to implement study recommendations. Given the nature of Virginia’s governance structure where a change happens every four years can impact plans regardless of party affiliation. The need for reliable funding sources as well as maintaining institutional knowledge is essential to the success of resiliency planning. There also needs to be change in expectations regarding the plans and that a goal of perfection is not realistic and shouldn’t delay implementation of viable strategies.

Availability of data was also discussed with a specific mention of the desire to access federal data related to the military studies/plans for the area given the size of their operational footprint in the area. Another data-related discussion topic included the need to identify the authoritative sources of data as there is sometimes confusion regarding where to find data and if the incorrect source is used, the value of the related findings is likely limited.

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Small Group Discussion on the Following Topics:

Meeting participants were organized into groups by sector/subject matter expertise (Academic/Research, Industry, State Government and Regional) to discuss the following topics.

- 1) What strategies are in place to support resilience planning coordination and collaboration?
 - within your sector
 - with other sectors
- 2) What is working well? What could be improved?

Reports From the Small Group Discussion to the Working Group

Academic/Research

The collaboration between academic institutions was noted as working very well with examples of Virginia Sea Grant, Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency (CCRFR) and Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) being highlighted. The Virginia Tech Coastal Collaborator Center in Hampton and the 4-VA collaborative partnership between eight Virginia universities were also highlighted.

It was acknowledged that silos within the academic community do exist and they are being addressed where possible. The recent example of University's \$60 million investment to focus on a collaborative approach to climate change was provided and it was unclear to the working group if these funds would be accessible by other institutions.

Examples of effective collaboration provided included

- DEQ in the groundwater work group (in the 1990s)
- Virginia Geographic Information Network (VGIN and the quarterly meetings to share findings

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Opportunities identified by the Academic/Research Group included:

- Developing mandates/directives from General Assembly (with input from universities)
- When engaging universities and state agencies on initiatives, defined funding sources need to be included in the effort
- While every agency has a role in resilience, there is likely value in clear direction from the State especially related to authority and authoritative sources of data

Industry

Given the diversity of industries in the state, coordination and collaboration is challenging. The permit needs for heavy industry are site-specific but it was acknowledged there may be some value. Agriculture and farming organizations already collect data relevant to their immediate needs (rainfall, etc.) and may not be applicable to other industries. Another issue noted was the timeliness of data as it is often used for planning seasonal needs rather than a long-term planning window needed for effective resiliency planning (30-40 years). For a majority of businesses, while they may be aware of resiliency needs (e.g., locating businesses), the strategic planning window is typically 5 years and are profit focused rather than resiliency needs.

The group did note that while there is not a dedicated effort for resiliency coordination amongst organizations and state agencies, there are indications that coordination with academic institutions is developing.

Opportunities identified by the Industry Group included:

- Providing businesses with access to “resiliency technical support,” e.g., agriculture organizations may benefit from a partnership with Soil and Water Conservation Districts.
- There may be value in adding “an insurance industry representative” to the Working Group as businesses require insurance to operate and get funding.

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State Government

Examples of effective collaboration included:

- Technical Advisory Committee for Coastal Resilience (although limited to the coast)
- Virginia Coastal Policy Team (similar representation to this Working Group)
- VEST (VDEM program)
- Risk Consultation meetings
- Coordination such as Virginia Military Advisory Council where resiliency is often a discussion topic
- The VDEM emergency operations plan includes training and documentation so participants understand their roles and responsibilities. For example, in the event of a landfill fire, there is one phone that can be called to initiate a response.
- Broadband expansion by DHCD that required coordination with property owners, railroads, etc. to install longitudinal infrastructure.

Challenges highlighted by the group included:

- Collaboration with the federal government related to funding is linear where states pass through the funds to the localities yet localities may have limited capacity or skill sets to capitalize on the funding opportunities.
- Multiple agencies are involved with a multitude of representatives which increases the complexity of identifying solutions and strategies
- Regions differ between agencies, i.e., a region can have different geographical boundaries covering a widespread area
- There is a need to address collaboration within the federal agencies as well as collaboration across state agencies.

Opportunities identified by the group included to increase collaboration included:

- Build on the DEQ knowledge sharing events (e.g., brown bag lunches)
- Identify ways the State can reduce the burden on the localities for handling funding requests and “pain points”
- Identify private funding sources to work and fund resiliency projects in coordination with other entities (state agencies, academic institutions, etc.)

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- Implement an approach similar to Louisiana's "No Wrong Door" for access to residency resources
- Emphasize interagency coordination that formalizes existing, valuable, interpersonal relationships
- Where possible, tailor projects to capitalize on funding opportunities that initially might not meet 100% of the funding requirements

Regional

The group shared that from their perspective the localities currently coordinate many resiliency activities.

Challenges highlighted by the group included:

- Many grants are structured to be reimbursable and localities with limited funding cannot utilize them as there are often limitations on covering indirect costs. Applying for grants requires staff and related funding.
- Success can require "political will/courage" and where that exists, progress can be made.

Opportunities identified by the group included to increase collaboration and resiliency planning included:

- Develop appropriate mandates at the local level that require action
- Evaluate opportunities for "advanced draws" to provide funding
- Evaluate any "rule changes" that would allow faster, broader, more effective, and more collaborative responses

Additional Large Group Discussion

The meeting participants discussed including Insurance information at a future meeting and members were going to review their network of contacts and suggest an appropriate representative by the next meeting. Topics would include:

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- National Flood Insurance for homeowners
- Localities approach to meeting standards to improve Community Rating System (CRS) scores
- Private insurance - casualty coverage, property damage, business interruption insurance (big issue for flooding), impacts industry and small business
- Environmental insurance - designed to address management of materials
- Agricultural programs for property programs, crop damage and loss, etc.

A discussion occurred related to risk management and how it affects bond ratings for localities. Localities need assurance when developing resilience plans through policies and funding means. Comments were provided suggesting Virginia is more proactive in these areas than other states.

Public Comment

After the group discussions, there was an opportunity for public comment. No public comment was received.

Next Steps

All future working group meetings will be in-person and the next meeting will be on April 28th at the Patrick Henry Building in Richmond (1111 E Broad St, Richmond, VA 23219).

Adjourn

Recommendation Themes from Meeting Discussions

- A number of resiliency studies have been completed over the years and there is a strong desire to implement recommendations to address the findings of those studies
- The authoritative source of data is often unclear and can result in incorrect/unusable analysis. There needs to be a catalog of data including the authoritative source to ensure information is consistently used in analysis.
- Localities and businesses need guidance and support on identifying and implementing resiliency planning. Areas of focus should include technical analysis, information sharing, and assistance with the acquisition of funding

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- Collaboration between state agencies and between agencies and localities could be strengthened
- Political will and political courage are often needed to accomplish resiliency goals and without those, mandates from the General Assembly are likely needed

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Working Group Members and Alternates in Attendance

Organization	Workgroup Representative	Alternate
William and Mary - VCPC (W&M)	Elizabeth Andrews	
Soil and Water Conservation Board (SWCB)	Chuck Arnason	Stephen R. Hill
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ)	Sharon Baxter	Evan Branosky
Home Builders Association of Virginia (HBAV)		Speaker Pollard (also represented the Virginia Manufacturer's Association)
Virginia Agribusiness Council (VAC)	Brad Copenhaver	
Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs (VADA)		Assistant Secretary Jordan Stewart
Virginia Resources Authority (VRA)	Shawn Crumlish	
Virginia Department of Housing & Community Development (VDHCD)	Bill Curtis	
Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)		Chris Swanson
University of Virginia - IEN (UVA)	Tanya Denckla Cobb	
Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF)	Jay Ford	
Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC)		Rachael Peabody
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR)		
Virginia Department of Energy (VDE)	David Hawkins	
Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP)	Angie Jenkins	
Virginia PACE Authority (VPA)		
Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission (CSPDC)		
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC)	Whitney Katchmark	
Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC)		
Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC)	Lewis Lawrence	
Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS)		
Virginia Farm Bureau (VFB)	Martha Moore	
Virginia Department of the Treasury		
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Districts (VASWD)	Robert Pickett	
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Nikki Rovner	
Mount Rogers Planning District Commission (MRPDC)		
Environmental Defense Foundation (EDF)	Emily Steinhilber	Grace Tucker
Clark Nexsen	Chris Stone	

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Organization	Workgroup Representative	Alternate
Virginia Tech - CCS (VT)	Wendy Stout	
Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)		Robbie Coates
City of Alexandria		
Virginia Manufacturer's Association (VMA)		See HBAV
Port of Virginia		
Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources (SNHR)		
Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC)		Debbie Milton
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR)	Director Matthew Wells	
Old Dominion University (ODU)	Jess Whitehead	
VCU Performance Management Group Facilitators		
Gina Barber		
Sarah Jackson		
Wheeler Wood		