

## Enabling Legislation

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### **CHAPTER 964**

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 27 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 7, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2720 through 2.2-2724, relating to the Center for Rural Virginia.

[H 1213]

Approved April 15, 2004

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 27 of Title 2.2 an article numbered 7, consisting of sections numbered 2.2-2720 through 2.2-2724, as follows:

Article 7.

The Center for Rural Virginia.

§ 2.2-2720. The Center for Rural Virginia; purpose.

The Center for Rural Virginia, hereinafter referred to as "the Center," is hereby created as an independent local entity without political subdivision status, for the purpose of sustaining economic growth in the rural areas of the Commonwealth.

§ 2.2-2721. Center for Rural Virginia Board of Trustees established; membership; terms; vacancies; chairman, vice chairman, secretary and other officers as necessary; quorum; meetings.

A. The Center shall be governed by a board of trustees consisting of 18 members that include six legislative members and 12 nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; two members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; six nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and two nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Board shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

B. Legislative members shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office. Initial appointments of nonlegislative citizen members shall be staggered as follows: four members for a term of three years appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; two members for a term of two years appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; and one member for a term of two years appointed by the Governor. Thereafter, nonlegislative citizen members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates or the Senate Committee on Rules shall be appointed for a term of two years, and nonlegislative citizen members appointed by the Governor shall be appointed for a term of four years. Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms. All members may be reappointed. However, no nonlegislative citizen member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates or the Senate Committee on Rules shall serve more than four consecutive two-year terms, and no nonlegislative citizen member appointed by the Governor shall serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. The remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in determining the member's eligibility for reappointment. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments.

C. The Board of Trustees shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and such other officers as may be necessary from among its membership. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum. The meetings of the Board shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the members so request.

§ 2.2-2722. Compensation; expenses.

Legislative members of the Board shall receive such compensation as provided in § 30-19.12, and nonlegislative citizen members shall receive such compensation for the performance of their duties as provided in § 2.2-2813. All members shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. Funding for the costs of compensation and expenses of the members shall be provided from such funds as may be available to the Center.

§ 2.2-2723. Powers and duties of the Board of Trustees and the Center.

A. The Board of Trustees shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Manage, control, maintain, and operate the Center;
2. Establish the Center as a nonstock corporation exempt from taxation pursuant to § 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code to perform the duties and responsibilities set out in this section;

3. Establish bylaws as may be necessary for the governance and conduct of business of the Board;
4. Employ and establish the qualifications and duties, and fix salaries and compensation of staff of the Center from such funds as may be available to the Center;
5. Seek federal funds available to state rural development councils, pursuant to the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, P.L. 107-171;
6. Seek, accept, administer, and expend gifts, grants, donations, bequests, and any other funds on behalf of the Center to support and facilitate its work;
7. Accept, administer, and expend donations, bequests, or devises of real and personal property for the endowment of the Center or for any special purpose designated by the donor that is consistent with the purposes of the Center set forth in this article;
8. Have, in addition to its other powers, all the corporate powers given to corporations by the provisions of Title 13.1. The Board shall also have the power to accept, execute, and administer any trust in which it may have an interest under the terms of the instrument creating the trust;
9. Enter into contracts with respect to the duties and responsibilities imposed upon the Center herein;
10. Report annually concerning the status, needs, and accomplishments of the Center to the Governor and the General Assembly; and
11. Perform any lawful acts necessary or appropriate to carry out the purposes of this article.

B. The Center shall have the following powers and duties:

1. Develop a broad-based constituency to advocate for the interests of rural Virginia in the formulation of the Commonwealth's public policies;
2. Coordinate and facilitate research on rural issues and analyze the effect of public policies and private sector interests on rural communities;
3. Prepare a detailed analysis of rural Virginia economies annually for submission to the Board, together with feasible and appropriate alternatives designed to sustain economic growth in rural areas of the Commonwealth;
4. Facilitate public-private investments in the infrastructure of rural Virginia;

5. Develop programs designed to train local elected officials and community leaders for effective leadership in rural communities;
6. Foster innovative strategies that promote the development and prosperity of rural communities in the Commonwealth;
7. Provide for the collection, organization, storage, and dissemination of documents, data, and other information concerning issues relevant to the needs and continuous development of Virginia's rural areas, including technical and research assistance to rural localities in the development and implementation of their strategic plans;
8. Identify potential public and private resources for the Board's consideration and review that may be used to generate additional funds to support and facilitate the Center's work and foster the development of rural communities;
9. Submit to the Board of Trustees such reports regarding the Center's work, including, but not limited to, programs, activities, policy analyses, and financial statements, as may be requested by the Board; and
10. Perform such other acts as may be necessary to accomplish the objectives of this article.

§ 2.2-2724. Staffing.

The Board shall employ an executive director and such other persons as it deems necessary to assist it in performing its duties as set forth in this article, and, at its pleasure, remove such employees. The Board shall determine the duties of all staff and fix the salaries and compensation of such persons within the amounts allocated therefore from such funds as may be available to the Board.

