MINUTES

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

# March 15, 2022

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobbie Jones, Vice-Chairman Mayor Town of Princeville

Miranda Boykin, Sec./Treasurer Mayor Town of Sims

James Alston Mayor Town of Castalia

Wayne Anderson Mayor Town of Enfield

Natalie Bess Alternate Board Member Edgecombe County

Phillip Boone Alternate Board Member Town of Dortches

Eddie Braxton Mayor Town of Scotland Neck

Brenda Brown Mayor Town of Nashville

Delane Bryant Alternate Board Member Town of Conetoe

Eddie Coats At-Large Board Member Nash County

Dia Denton Interim Manager Halifax County

Mark Frohman At-Large Board Member Nash County

Geraldine Langford Mayor Town of Seaboard

Brenda Lucas Commissioner Town of Spring Hope

Martha Lucas Commissioner Town of Momeyer

Sherry Lucas Commissioner Wilson County

Tawanda Moore Mayor Town of Elm City

Joshua Pair At-Large Board Member Northampton County

Stacie Shatzer County Manager Nash County

Barbara Simmons At-Large Board Member Halifax County

Denise Stinagle Manager Wilson County

Barbara Taylor Commissioner Town of Pinetops

Gail Wade Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Conway

Ralph Webb Commissioner Edgecombe County

Othar Woodard Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Tarboro

\*If your name is missing, you may not have been included in the roll call. Please let us know so we can make that correction.

**MEMBERS PRESENT BY PROXY**

Roy Bell Mayor Town of Garysburg

Elaine Saunders Commissioner Town of Saratoga

Tracy Shearin Town Administrator/Clerk Town of Red Oak

John White Mayor Town of Halifax

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Randy Beale Mayor Town of Woodland

Fred Belfield Commissioner Nash County

Michael Bell Council Member City of Wilson

Beverly Davis Commissioner Town of Sharpsburg

Eric Evans (Alt. attended) Manager Edgecombe County

Carl Ferebee Mayor Pro-Tem City of Roanoke Rapids

Steven Flythe Commissioner Town of Lasker

Norlan Graves At-Large Board member Halifax County

Reginald Harris At-Large Board Member Wilson County

Wilbert Harrison Mayor Town of Speed

Deborah James Mayor Mayor of Gaston

Jeff Johnson Mayor Town of Lucama

Andre’ Knight Council Member City of Rocky Mount

Marshall Lassiter Manager Town of Severn

Luther Lewis, Jr. Mayor Town of Middlesex

Gerry Lynch (Alt. attended) Mayor Town of Conetoe

Julia Meacham Mayor Town of Weldon

Esterine Pitt Mayor Town of Whitakers

Coley Rhodes Mayor Town of Stantonsburg

Thomas Richards Mayor Town of Bailey

Dennis Sanderson Mayor Town of Macclesfield

Owen Scott Mayor Town of Littleton

Mack Smith Mayor Town of Black Creek

Robert Sykes Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Hobgood

Charles Tyner Board Chairman Northampton County

Jackie Vick (Alt. attended) Mayor Town of Dortches

Reginald White Mayor Town of Rich Square

Tim Wiggs At-Large Board Member Wilson County

**STAFF**

Robert Hiett Executive Director

Michael Williams Workforce Development Program Director

Mary Marlin Area Agency on Aging Program Director

Mark Hill Finance Director

Kelly Lancaster Assistant Finance Director

Ron Townley Planning and Development Services Director

Ben Farmer Senior Regional Planner

Kelly Skinner Executive Assistant/Clerk to the Board

Alexis Whitley Administrative Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Jones called the virtual meeting of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Board of Directors to order at 6:30 p.m. He welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for taking the time to attend. He congratulated Ms. Dia Denton on becoming the new County Manager of Halifax County. He also recognized and introduced several newly appointed Board members and welcomed them. These included Town of Gaston Mayor, Ms. Deborah James, Town of Elm City Mayor, Ms. Tawanda Moore and Town of Conetoe Mayor, Mr. Gerry Lynch. Roll was called and attendance was duly noted.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice-Chairman Jones called for a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda items which included approval of the January 18, 2022 Board Meeting minutes, Approval of the Financial Reports and approval of the Rural LISC Enfield Broadband Study. A Motion was made by Ms. Miranda Boykin and seconded by Mr. Ralph Webb. Those voting in favor included: Bobbie Jones, Miranda Boykin, James Alston, Wayne Anderson, Roy Bell, Natalie Bess, Phillip Boone, Eddie Braxton, Brenda Brown, Delane Bryant, Eddie Coats, Dia Denton, Mark Frohman, Geraldine Langford, Brenda Lucas, Martha Lucas, Sherry Lucas, Tawanda Moore, Joshua Pair, Elaine Saunders, Stacie Shatzer, Tracy Shearin, Barbara Simmons, Denise Stinagle, Barbara Taylor, Gail Wade, Ralph Webb, John White and Othar Woodard. There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Mr. Hiett gave a brief Chairman’s report in the absence of Chairman Browning. He gave a NCARCOG update and reported that the State had given direct appropriations to COGs to provide technical assistance with ARPA funding and they are working on a final contract with the State in order to be able to receive those funds. He reported that new PDS staff has been hired to assist with the ARPA funding. He also reported that the Aging State database platform (ARMS) needs to be updated and the NCARCOG is advocating for additional funding to help with that effort.

He also reported that nominating committee appointments will be made in March. The nominating committee consists of five members – one person from each County. The list of potential upcoming Board officers will be presented to the Board at the May meeting.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Hiett began by discussing the Workforce Board realignment and referred the Board to the map and information included on Pages 15 – 21 of the agenda packet. He shared that resolutions have been given to the State to favor retaining COG boundaries as opposed to prosperity zones. He indicated that there is an upcoming meeting on March 30th, where we expect to see some recommendations on the preliminary study. He will keep us updated.

Next, Mr. Hiett discussed the ARPA rollout. We are waiting on the final version of the state contracts so that the money can be disbursed. He reported that our PDS department has hired new staff to assist with this effort. Mr. Ron Townley is working on a survey that will be sent to all member governments to assess what type of assistance they anticipate requiring so that we can put together a plan to move forward.

Lastly, Mr. Hiett recognized the two new hires. Mr. Brian Atkinson has been hired as the new Youth NextGen Program Service Manager. Ms. Betsy Kane has been hired as a Senior Planner and will primarily focus on providing member governments technical assistance with the ARPA allocations.

**IMPACT REPORTS**

**Aging Department – Mary Marlin, Aging Director**

Ms. Marlin referred the Board to the Aging Impact report located on page 29 in the agenda packet. She reported that we are very excited to be hosting the Aging Conference at Edgecombe Community College this year. This will be a hybrid conference with virtual attendance being offered for the ones that prefer that option.

Next, Ms. Marlin shared that we are currently seeking host agencies and participants for our Senior Community Service Employment Program. Any referrals would be appreciated.

Ms. Marlin also shared that our Opioid Navigator position has been posted. We have also applied to host a UNC fellow for another Opioid Navigator position to service the additional counties so that the entire region will be covered. They will begin in August.

Lastly Ms. Marlin reported that the Rural Opportunities Institute has selected the UCPCOG Family Caregiver Support Program to participate in the second cohort of the trauma and ACES education program. That will kick off tomorrow.

**Planning and Development Services – Ron Townley, PDS Director**

Mr. Townley referred the Board to the PDS Impact report beginning on page 30 of the agenda packet. He covered the numbers included in the Impact Summary and stated that these are very significant in the region. He stated that we have hired a Senior Planner that will be focusing on ARPA technical support and will be out visiting counties very soon. He also discussed the ARPA rollout and federal reporting requirements that go along with that.

Next, Mr. Townley reported that the Broadband task force is wrapping up, but they will continue to meet quarterly. He also discussed housing and reported that we have received funding for five new grants, with ten member governments engaged. Mr. Townley also reported that we have received the funding for the Tri-COG food effort and will be working alongside Triangle J and Kerr-Terr Councils of Government.

Next, he reported that we are still continuing efforts on the regional data services project. There will be one public portal as well as a portal to be used by member governments that will house important information such as water and sewer information and maps.

Lastly, Mr. Townley reported that we are submitting at least nine new water and sewer grant applications. These are due by May.

Next, Mr. Townley discussed the CEDS and shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Board. He discussed the purpose of the CEDS, and the various committees involved in writing the CEDS. He covered the 2022 CEDS, the four goals that were included and gave examples of these goals being met, which shows the importance of the CEDS. He also stated that we are looking for new ways to organize our thoughts and priorities by using a tier ranking system. A draft CEDS will be presented in July with final approval in October.

**Workforce Development – Michael Williams, Workforce Director**

Mr. Williams referred the Board to the Workforce Development Impact Report located on Page 57 of the agenda packet. He reported that we are excited about the continued increase in enrollment in services in both the Youth and Adult programs. He also shared that we are happy to have Mr. Brian Atkinson working with the Youth program to continue this increase.

He shared the LMI which was included in the agenda packet and reported that current UI claims are at 4.9% which is down from the previous 5.1%. He also shared that additional funding will be provided from the state for the displaced QVC workers. Mr. Williams shared how proud he was of his staff for the way this rapid response was handled.

Lastly, Mr. Williams discussed the new Premier Virtual platform which is being used for virtual career fairs. He stated that it has been very well received and shared a YouTube video created by Duna Long, Special Project and Outreach Coordinator with the Turning Point Workforce Development Board. Mr. Hiett emphasized that this platform could also be used by member governments to host job fairs and well as other events in the region. He stated that we will be glad to provide training and support as needed.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Vice-Chairman Jones announced that our next meeting will be held on May 10th, 2022, location to be determined, and called for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Mr. Ralph Webb and seconded by Ms. Miranda Boykin. Those voting in favor included: Bobbie Jones, Miranda Boykin, James Alston, Wayne Anderson, Roy Bell, Natalie Bess, Phillip Boone, Eddie Braxton, Brenda Brown, Delane Bryant, Eddie Coats, Dia Denton, Mark Frohman, Geraldine Langford, Brenda Lucas, Martha Lucas, Sherry Lucas, Tawanda Moore, Joshua Pair, Elaine Saunders, Stacie Shatzer, Tracy Shearin, Barbara Simmons, Denise Stinagle, Barbara Taylor, Gail Wade, Ralph Webb, John White and Othar Woodard.

There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

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Gregory Browning, Chairman Miranda Boykin, Secretary/Treasurer