MINUTES

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

# March 21, 2023

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobbie Jones, Chairman Mayor Town of Princeville

Miranda Boykin, Vice-Chair Mayor Town of Sims

Dia Denton, Secretary/Treasurer County Manager Halifax County

James Alston Mayor Town of Castalia

Randy Beale Mayor Town of Woodland

Fred Belfield Commissioner Nash County

Michael Bell Council Member City of Wilson

Roy Bell Mayor Town of Garysburg

Vicky Bennett At-Large Board Member Northampton County

Eddie Braxton Mayor Town of Scotland Neck

Brenda Brown Mayor Town of Nashville

Delane Bryant At-Large Board Member Edgecombe County

Eddie Coats At-Large Board Member Nash County

Mark Frohman At-Large Board Member Nash County

Doris Garner Mayor Town of Weldon

Ron Hunt County Manager Wilson County

Deborah James Mayor Town of Gaston

Matthew Lassiter Commissioner Town of Jackson

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

Julian Phillips County Manager Northampton County

Esterine Pitt Town Administrator Town of Whitakers

Cathy Scott At-Large Board Member Halifax County

Barbara Simmons At-Large Board Member Halifax County

Leo Taylor Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Tarboro

Ralph Webb Commissioner Edgecombe County

Stewart Woodard Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Conway

\*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**

Dillon Bissette Commissioner Town of Bailey

Tracy Shearin Town Administrator/Clerk Town of Red Oak

John White Mayor Town of Halifax

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Vacant Manager Town of Littleton

Beverly Davis Commissioner Town of Sharpsburg

Eric Evans Manager Edgecombe County

Carl Ferebee Mayor Pro-Tem City of Roanoke Rapids

Steven Flythe Commissioner Town of Lasker

Reginald Harris At-Large Board Member Wilson County

Wilbert Harrison Mayor Town of Speed

Jeff Johnson Mayor Town of Lucama

Andre’ Knight Council Member City of Rocky Mount

Geraldine Langford Mayor Town of Seaboard

Marshall Lassiter Manager Town of Severn

Luther Lewis, Jr. Mayor Town of Middlesex

Gerry Lynch Mayor Town of Conetoe

Coley Rhodes Mayor Town of Stantonsburg

Mondale Robinson Mayor Town of Enfield

Elaine Saunders Commissioner Town of Saratoga

Stacie Shatzer County Manager Nash County

Mack Smith Mayor Town of Black Creek

Robert Sykes Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Hobgood

Barbara Taylor Commissioner Town of Pinetops

Emily Turner Mayor Town of Macclesfield

Charles Tyner Board Chairman Northampton County

Jackie Vick Mayor Town of Dortches

Reginald White Mayor Town of Rich Square

Tim Wiggs At-Large Board Member Wilson County

**GUESTS**

Lola Ausby Commissioner Town of Garysburg

Thomas Everette Town Administrator Town of Scotland Neck

Heidi Hogan Mayor Town of Littleton

Jean Wooten-Jiles Commissioner Town of Macclesfield

**STAFF**

Robert Hiett Executive Director

Michael Williams Workforce Development Program Director

Mary Marlin Aging Program Director

Kelly Lancaster Finance Director

Ben Farmer Planning and Development Services Director

Kelly Skinner Executive Assistant/Clerk to the Board

Ginger Morris Administrative Assistant

Mary Jane Lyonnais Regional Planner

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jones called the meeting of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Board of Directors to order at 6:45 p.m. He welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for taking the time to attend. He introduced special guests in attendance and recognized new Board members. Roll was called and attendance was duly noted.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Jones called for a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda items which included approval of the January 17, 2023, meeting minutes, Financial Reports (December, 2022 and January, 2023), the Workforce Development Budget Amendment, Acceptance of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant, Acceptance of the Duke Energy Resilience Accelerator Grant, application for and acceptance of the USAging Aging & Disability Vaccination Collaborative and the proposed pay plan update for FY2023. Chairman Jones called for a Motion to approve the consent agenda items. A Motion was made by Mr. Eddie Braxton and seconded by Mr. Eddie Coats. All voted in favor. The Motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

**UCPCOG Tri-COG Feeds Presentation – Mary Jane Lyonnais, Regional Planner**

First on the agenda was an informational presentation about the Tri-COG Feeds (Food Ecosystem Economic Development Strategy) presented by Mary Jane Lyonnais. She explained the food system including drivers, outcomes and food system activities and actors. She gave an overview of the project which included the background, the short term goals, and the process. She shared insights from both the interview and focus groups and the member government survey insights. Lastly, she explained the COGs role and how the COG can help. She closed by summarizing the takeaways and gave contact information for more information.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

**Nominating Committee Discussion/Appointments**

Chairman Jones reported that it is time for us to appoint a nominating committee for Board officers for next year. It was decided to keep the same members as last year and all agreed to serve. Nominations will be made at the June meeting.

**NORTH CAROLINA REGIONAL COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENTS (NCARCOG) UPDATE – Mr. Robert Hiett**

In the absence of Mr. Browning, Mr. Hiett gave a brief overview of the NCARCOG activities. He discussed the 2023 Policy Agenda and reported that NCARCOG anticipates that prosperity zone realignment legislation will be introduced in the NC Senate. There also appears to be support to provide funding for finance administration and support activities so COGs can assist member governments with finance related matters. He further reported that funding will be requested for the Ombudsman program as well as ARMS replacement. Lastly, he shared that the NCARCOG as well as our local COG has done a lot of ARPA assistance including workshops and helping 18 local governments in our region.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Hiett began his report by calling the Board’s attention to the Executive Director’s report beginning on Page 17 of the agenda packet. He briefly highlighted a few items in his report. First, he reported that the NC Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) has started to work on its statewide flood blueprint, and they have created technical advisory groups (TAGs). The blueprint will lead to a set of projects and funding strategies that the State and other government entities can implement to reduce flooding, mitigate the impacts of flooding when it does occur, and recover afterward. Director Hiett has been asked to serve as the Chairman for the DEQ partnership and funding TAG. The UCPCOG has also been assigned to participate in the Neuse River advisory TAG.

Next, he gave an update on the “Greater Rocky Mount, Greenville, and Wilson Area Regional Plan Study.” The purpose of the study is to provide a regional approach to transit planning for a 10-county region. She shared a fact sheet as well as an estimated plan timeline.

Lastly, he reported that the UCPCOG conducted a “funders Workshop” for local governments in Halifax County in January. The purpose of the workshop was to provide training to local officials and local government staff about available programs, grant requirements, and other items that factor into a viable grant. These workshops will be held in other counties throughout the Region. Please let us know if there is specific information that you need for us to cover in your area.

**IMPACT REPORTS**

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

Ms. Marlin called the Board’s attention to the Aging report located on Page 52 of the Agenda packet. She reported that the 20th annual Barton Caregiver Conference was held in person on March 7th and provided dementia education to approximately 65 attendees. Next she shared the save the date information for our Annual Aging Conference which will be held on June 15th at Edgecombe Community College – Tarboro campus. Speakers have been confirmed and registration will be opening soon. Lastly, she reported that our new Information & Options Counselor has provided I&OC services to over 200 individuals since the program started in October, 2022.

**Planning and Development Services – Ben Farmer, PDS Director**

Mr. Farmer referred the Board to the PDS Impact Report beginning on Page 53 of the Agenda Packet. He began by highlighting the numbers at the beginning of the report, calling attention to the $43.56M in new awards. He highlighted a few of the housing and water/sewer projects currently in development. He also discussed the City of Wilson’s Greenlight Community Broadband expansion project, which will connect fiber internet to Saratoga, Stantonsburg, Black Creek and Lucama. Lastly, he reported that an ARPA workshop for Wilson County will be held at the end of March. We will do one of these workshops for each county in the Region.

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

Mr. Williams referred the Board to the Turning Point Workforce Development Impact Report located on Page 59 of the Agenda Packet. He review the numbers, highlighting the 168 newly registered unemployed. Next, he reported that the new NCWorks Career Center in Halifax County is open and operating in Roanoke Rapids. This is a good location and a nice facility. He further reported on the Federal audit conducted by the US Department of Labor and stated that they got a good review. Lastly, he called attention to the current Labor Market information.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Jones announced that our next meeting will be held on May 16th at the Rocky Mount Event Center at 6:45 and called for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Ms. Brenda Lucas and seconded by Mr. Leo Taylor. All voted in favor. There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

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Bobbie Jones, Chairman Dia Denton, Secretary/Treasurer