MINUTES

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

# May 10, 2022

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Gregory Browning Alternate Board Member City of Roanoke Rapids Bobbie Jones, Vice-Chairman Mayor Town of Princeville

Miranda Boykin, Sec./Treasurer Mayor Town of Sims

James Alston Mayor Town of Castalia

Fred Belfield Commissioner Nash County

Roy Bell Mayor Town of Garysburg

Natalie Bess Alternate Board Member Edgecombe County

Phillip Boone Alternate Board Member Town of Dortches

Brenda Brown Mayor Town of Nashville

Eddie Coats At-Large Board Member Nash County

Dia Denton Manager Halifax County

Mark Frohman At-Large Board Member Nash County

Doris Garner Mayor Town of Weldon

Deborah James Mayor Town of Gaston

Jeff Johnson Mayor Town of Lucama

Martha Lucas Commissioner Town of Momeyer

Sherry Lucas Commissioner Wilson County

Tawanda Moore Mayor Town of Elm City

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

Tim Wiggs At-Large Board Member Wilson County

\*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**

Eddie Braxton Mayor Town of Scotland Neck

Joshua Pair At-Large Board Member Northampton County

Elaine Saunders Commissioner Town of Saratoga

Tracy Shearin Town Administrator/Clerk Town of Red Oak

John White Mayor Town of Halifax

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Wayne Anderson Mayor Town of Enfield

Randy Beale Mayor Town of Woodland

Michael Bell Council Member City of Wilson

Beverly Davis Commissioner Town of Sharpsburg

Eric Evans (Alt. attended) Manager Edgecombe County

Carl Ferebee (Alt. attended) 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

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

Brenda Lucas Commissioner Town of Spring Hope

Gerry Lynch Mayor Town of Conetoe

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

Stacie Shatzer County Manager Nash County

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

Othar Woodard Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Tarboro

**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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Browning 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 recognized and introduced our newly appointed Board member, Ms. Doris Garner, Mayor of the Town of Weldon, and welcomed her. Roll was called and attendance was duly noted.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Browning called for a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda items which included approval of the March 15, 2022, Board Meeting minutes, approval of the Financial Reports, approval of changing the name of the EDA Revolving Loan Fund, approval of the Aging Budget Amendment, and approval of the Audit Contract. A Motion was made by Ms. Miranda Boykin and seconded by Mr. Ralph Webb. Those voting in favor included: Gregory Browning, Bobbie Jones, Miranda Boykin, James Alston, Fred Belfield, Roy Bell, Natalie Bess, Phillip Boone, Brenda Brown, Eddie Coats, Dia Denton, Mark Frohman, Doris Garner, Deborah James, Jeff Johnson,

Martha Lucas, Sherry Lucas, Tawanda Moore, Barbara Simmons, Denise Stinagle, Barbara Taylor, Gail Wade, Ralph Webb, and Tim Wiggs. There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Presentation of First Budget Draft and Set Public Hearing – Mark Hill, Finance Director**

Mr. Hill referred the Board members to the draft budget which was included as an attachment in the agenda packet. He reviewed the budget in detail, which did include a proposed 8% COLA increase for employees, as well as some funding set aside to be used at the Executive Director’s discretion for retention increases. There were no questions, and the Chairman call for a Motion to accept the draft budget as presented and to set the public hearing. A Motion was made by Miranda Boykin and seconded by Bobbie Jones. Those voting in favor included: Gregory Browning, Bobbie Jones, Miranda Boykin, James Alston, Fred Belfield, Roy Bell, Natalie Bess, Phillip Boone, Brenda Brown, Eddie Coats, Dia Denton, Mark Frohman, Doris Garner, Deborah James, Jeff Johnson, Martha Lucas, Sherry Lucas, Tawanda Moore, Barbara Simmons, Denise Stinagle, Barbara Taylor, Gail Wade, Ralph Webb, and Tim Wiggs. There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the draft budget was approved and the public hearing was set.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Chairman Browning began by reporting that we are in the process of nominating new Board officers for the next fiscal year. The nominating committee will be meeting and the officers will be presented at the June meeting. Next, he briefly reminded the Board members that the COG has available staff to help with the spending and reporting of the ARPA funds. If you have any questions, or need assistance, please reach out to the COG. Lastly, he gave a brief update on the NCARCOG. They will be holding a Legislative Day on June 7 and will be discussing several important issues with our local legislative representatives. He urged everyone to please be sure and vote in the upcoming election.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Hiett referred the Board to his report which begins on Page 15 in the agenda packet. He gave a brief update on the workforce development system realignment. The NC Works Commission voted on a voluntary realignment of local workforce areas. This cannot happen without the support of member counties and our region has elected to remain intact. This was a victory for us. Mr. Hiett assured the Board that we will have a continued presence in each of the five counties in our region.

Next, Mr. Hiett spoke about the recent ARPA reporting deadline. The COG helped to assist many of our local governments with this report, and we will be continuing to update and work with member governments in the future.

Mr. Hiett reported that we are helping the Town of Sharpsburg with a search for a new Town Manager, and it is going very well. He reminded Board members that we are happy to help any member government with talent searches as the needs arise.

He touched briefly on the work of the broadband taskforce and stated that this has been a help to many in our region. Efforts are continuing to ensure increased coverage in underserved areas.

Lastly, Mr. Hiett discussed the digital economy and referred the Board to the chart located on page 38 of the agenda packet. There was a meeting on April 13th which was organized to begin a preliminary discussion about the state of the UCPCOG digital economy specifically related to digital literacy and workforce development. There will be a small steering group that will focus on data collection that is needed to create an existing conditions analysis and to identify additional partners that may be willing to participate in a regional scale planning and implementation effort.

**AREA AGENCY ON AGING PRESENTATION – MARY MARLIN, AGING DIRECTOR**

Ms. Marlin gave a presentation on the Aging Department and highlighted some of the different services that are offered. Direct services include: advocacy, family caregiver support, home and community care block grant, senior community service employment, long-term care ombudsman, senior Medicare patrol, health-promotion and disease prevention, opioid navigator, and COVID-19 vaccine outreach. She discussed each of these programs and outlined the direct services provided by each.

Ms. Marlin also discussed the ARPA funded initiatives, which include transportation vouchers, healthy food access for seniors, expanded homecare independence programs, expanded family caregiver services and additional legal funding.

Lastly, Ms. Marlin discussed the Center on Maintaining Preferred Aging Services and Solutions (COMPASS). She explained that COMPASS was formed to work in conjunction with the Area Agency on Aging to inform, advocate and plan for community services on behalf of the disabled and older adults in our region and beyond. She closed by stating the COMPASS is continuing its work to address the lack of affordable housing in our region and will be starting a program soon to address unmet needs of older adults within the region.

**IMPACT REPORTS**

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

Ms. Marlin referred the Board to the Aging Impact report located on page 64 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 announced that the opioid navigator position is currently vacant and posted on NCWorks. Resumes can be sent to mmarlin@ucpcog.org.

Lastly, Ms. Marlin shared that ARPA plans are slated to begin on July 1, 2022. $460,000 will be used to continue the Consumer Supported Agriculture boxes through June, 2024.

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

Mr. Townley referred the Board to the PDS Impact report beginning on page 65 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, Betsy Kane, that will be focusing on ARPA technical support and has helped several member governments with the reporting and questions. He also discussed the ARPA rollout and federal reporting requirements that go along with that. We will continue to update and offer assistance as needed.

Next, he discussed the CEDS. He reported that the Strategy Development Group (SDG) continues to meet and develop the region’s next CEDS. He outlined the four “tier 1” focus areas and reminded all members to please complete the SWOT analysis survey if you haven’t done so already.

He reported that we have received a grant award from EDA for its “Tri-COG Feeds” economic adjustment assistance grant which funds a $297K mega-region local food system supply chain effort. He also reported that a new PDS regional planner, Mary Jane Lyonnais has been hired to lead this effort. She will begin on June 1.

Lastly, Mr. Townley reported that we have submitted 12 water and sewer applications for funding totaling $50 million. He will keep us updated on how many of these applications get funded.

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

Mr. Williams referred the Board to the Workforce Development Impact Report located on Page 69 of the agenda packet. He reported that the number of employer recruitments events has increased, as well as newly registered unemployed. There has also been an increase in the number of youth participants. He further reported that the unemployment rate has stayed the same.

Mr. Williams was excited to announce that they have received $1.7 million for the QVC disaster. He closed by announcing that the state plan has been submitted to the state and they are excited for the opportunities moving forward.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Browning announced that our next meeting will be held in person on June 21st at the Brown auditorium at Nash Community College and called for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Mr. Bobbie Jones and seconded by Ms. Barbara Simmons. Those voting in favor included: Gregory Browning, Bobbie Jones, Miranda Boykin, James Alston, Fred Belfield, Roy Bell, Natalie Bess, Phillip Boone, Brenda Brown, Eddie Coats, Dia Denton, Mark Frohman, Doris Garner, Deborah James, Jeff Johnson,

Martha Lucas, Sherry Lucas, Tawanda Moore, Barbara Simmons, Denise Stinagle, Barbara Taylor, Gail Wade, Ralph Webb, and Tim Wiggs. There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

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Gregory Browning, Chairman Miranda Boykin, Secretary/Treasurer