MINUTES

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

# October 17, 2023

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Bobbie Jones, Chairman Mayor Town of Princeville

Randy Beale Mayor Town of Woodland

Fred Belfield Commissioner Nash County

Roy Bell Mayor Town of Garysburg

Derrick Bennett Alternate Board Member Northampton County

Vicky Bennett At-Large Board Member Northampton County

Phillip Boone Alternate Member Town of Dortches

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

Ophelia Gould-Faison Alternate Member Town of Littleton Jenny Hinnant Commissioner Town of Conetoe

Deborah James Mayor Town of Gaston

Geraldine Langford Mayor Town of Seaboard

Marshall Lassiter Manager Town of Severn

Matthew Lassiter Commissioner Town of Jackson

Luther Lewis, Jr. Mayor Town of Middlesex

Brenda Lucas Commissioner Town of Spring Hope

Martha Lucas Commissioner Town of Momeyer

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

Sandra Russ Commissioner Town of Red Oak

Cathy Scott At-Large Board Member Halifax County

Stacie Shatzer County Manager Nash County

Barbara Taylor Commissioner Town of Pinetops

Leo Taylor Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Tarboro

Charles Tyner Board Chairman Northampton County

Ralph Webb Commissioner Edgecombe County

Lori Winstead Alternate 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**

Elaine Saunders Commissioner Town of Saratoga

Barbara Simmons At-Large Board Member Halifax County

John White Mayor Town of Halifax

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

James Alston Mayor Town of Castalia

Michael Bell Council Member City of Wilson

Dillon Bissette Commissioner Town of Bailey

Miranda Boykin, Vice-Chair Mayor Town of Sims

Beverly Davis Commissioner Town of Sharpsburg

Dia Denton, Secretary/Treasurer County Manager Halifax County

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

Ron Hunt (Alt. attended) County Manager Wilson County

Jeff Johnson Mayor Town of Lucama

Andre’ Knight Council Member City of Rocky Mount

Sherry Lucas Commissioner Wilson County

Coley Rhodes Mayor Town of Stantonsburg

Mondale Robinson Mayor Town of Enfield

Mack Smith Mayor Town of Black Creek

Robert Sykes Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Hobgood

Emily Turner Mayor Town of Macclesfield

Jackie Vick (Alt. attended) Mayor Town of Dortches

Bobby Wheeler Town Administrator Town of Speed

Reginald White Mayor Town of Rich Square

Tim Wiggs At-Large Board Member Wilson County

Stewart Woodard Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Conway

**GUESTS**

Joyah Bulluck Regional Director Rep. Don Davis

Trey Lewis Regional Director Senator Thom Tillis

Dr. Josh Levy Senior Policy Analyst NC Dept. of Commerce

Carmelitia Coleman Commissioner Town of Seaboard

Marla Jerman Planning & Adj. Board Chair Town of Seaboard

Jean Wooten-Jiles Commissioner Town of Macclesfield

Brenda Harrell Mayor Town of Pinetops

**STAFF**

Robert Hiett Executive Director

Michael Williams Workforce Development 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

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Bobbie 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 new Board member Jean Wooten-Jiles, Commissioner, Town of Macclesfield, and special guests in attendance. 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 the approval of the meeting Minutes from May 16, 2023 and June 20, 2023, the June, July and August 2023 financial reports, approval of the Workforce Development budget amendment, approval of the fixed asset policy update, acceptance of the EDA Regional Comprehensive Housing Study Grant (if awarded), acceptance of the EDA Recompete Pilot Program Phase 1 & 2 Grant (if awarded), CEDS annual update, Regional Mobility Management Pilot Project Authorizing Resolution, and approval of the August 2023 Board action Item remote vote and results summary. A Motion was made by Mr. Mark Frohman and seconded by Mr. Eddie Coats. All voted in favor. The Motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION AND UPDATE**

Dr. Josh Levy, Senior Policy Analyst with the NC Department of Commerce presented to the group. He shared detailed Labor Market Information specific to the region, population trends in the region and the impacts of COVID-19 to the workforce. He reported that Rocky Mount was one of two MSAs with current jobs below Pre-COVID levels and gave some possible explanations. He also discussed the aging population and slowing growth trends. Lastly, he discussed commuting patterns and wages in the region. He shared some resources for more information.

Mr. Trey Lewis, Regional Director with Senator Thom Tillis’ office, also gave a few general Legislative updates. He shared contact information with the group and asked everyone to please feel free to contact their office if they can be of assistance in any way.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Chairman Jones discussed his concerns about our public education system regarding literacy and reading comprehension. He shared some of the challenges that we are facing and possible ways that we can help.

**NCARCOG UPDATE**

In the absence of Mr. Browning, Mr. Hiett shared that we hosted the October meeting of the NCARCOG in Rocky Mount. He shared that we will be continuing to offer ARPA support and also reported that we will be offering several trainings for local government staff on resiliency and recovery. These trainings will begin in December. Lastly, he discussed the AAA managed care rollout and the need for us to be proactive.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Hiett called the Board’s attention to his Executive Director’s report beginning on page 33 of the agenda packet. He discussed the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and shared that SCRC’s mission is to build sustainable communities and strengthen economic growth across the Southeast Region. The UCPCOG will be able to apply for and receive a non-competitive grant to serve as a Local Development District (LDD) for the region.

Lastly, Mr. Hiett briefly discussed the NCDOT “Greater Rocky Mount, Greenville, and Wilson Area Regional Transit Plan Study” and shared the data from the public survey. He also shared specific themes that were mentioned that are relevant to our area.

**IMPACT REPORTS**

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

Mr. Farmer called the Board’s attention to his Impact Report located on page 59 of the agenda packet. He reported that We will host Mr. John Sugg as Resilience Project Coordinator. John will be a NC Climate Action Corps AmeriCorps member run by the Conservation Trust for NC through a grant. John will be available to assist all member governments with resilience initiatives. He will also carry out regional initiatives related to climate resilience and hazard mitigation. He can be reached at jsugg@ucpcog.org.

He highlighted several grant applications and gave updates on several ongoing grant projects in the region.

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

Mr. Williams referred the Board to his Impact report located on Page 66 of the agenda packet. He reported that they have been through the RFQ process for the contractors in the Workforce Centers and that there have been some changes. He thanked the Board for their support in working through these changes.

He also reported that there have been some closings and layoffs in the region but due to rapid responses, several of those laid off have transitioned back to employment. Several have chosen this opportunity to further their education. Lastly, he reported that they have completed the State programmatic monitoring, but have not received the final report.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Jones announced that our annual business meeting will be held on November 21st at Smith’s Pavilion in Dortches. He then called for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Mr. Leo Taylor and seconded by Mr. Mark Frohman. 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