MINUTES

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

# October 19, 2021

## BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Greg Browning, Chairman Alternate Board Member City of Roanoke Rapids

Bobbie Jones, Vice-Chairman Mayor Town of Princeville

Miranda Boykin, Sec./Treasurer Mayor Town of Sims

Randy Beale Mayor Town of Woodland

Roy Bell Mayor Town of Garysburg

Natalie Bess Alternate Board Member Edgecombe County

Phillip Boone Alternate Board Member Town of Dortches

Eddie Braxton Mayor Town of Scotland Neck

Eddie Coats At-Large Board Member Nash County

Alice Delbridge Mayor Town of Gaston

Mark Frohman At-Large Board Member Nash County

Reginald Harris At-Large Board Member Wilson County

Doug Hughes At-Large Board Member Northampton County

Brenda Lucas Commissioner Town of Spring Hope

Martha Lucas Commissioner Town of Momeyer

Sherry Lucas Commissioner Wilson County

Joshua Pair At-Large Board Member Northampton County

Stacie Shatzer Assistant Manager Nash County

Tracy Shearin Administrator/Clerk Town of Red Oak

Barbara Simmons At-Large Board Member Halifax County

Grady Smith Mayor Town of Elm City

Denise Stinagle Manager Wilson County

Robert Sykes Mayor Pro-Tem Town of Hobgood

Barbara Taylor Alternate Board Member Town of Pinetops

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**

John White Mayor Town of Halifax

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

James Alston Mayor Town of Castalia

Wayne Anderson Mayor Town of Enfield

Fred Belfield, Jr. Commissioner Nash County

Michael Bell Council Member City of Wilson

Brenda Brown Mayor Town of Nashville

Tony Brown Manager Halifax County

Stevie Cox Town Administrator Town of Sharpsburg

Samuel Davis At-Large Board Member Edgecombe County

Eric Evans (Alt. attended) Manager Edgecombe County

Carl Ferebee (Alt. attended) Mayor Pro-Tem City of Roanoke Rapids

Steven Flythe Commissioner Town of Lasker

Norlan Graves At-Large Board member Halifax County

Wilbert Harrison Mayor Town of Speed

Charles Jackson Manager Northampton County

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

Julia Meacham Mayor Town of Weldon

Jason Morris Mayor Town of Jackson

Jesse Petteway Commissioner 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

Elaine Saunders Commissioner Town of Saratoga

Owen Scott Mayor Town of Littleton

Mack Smith Mayor Town of Black Creek

Marcelle Smith Commissioner Halifax County

Dennis Sugg (Alt. attended) Commissioner Town of Pinetops

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

Steward Woodard Commissioner Town of Conway

**STAFF**

Robert Hiett Executive Director

Michael Williams Workforce Development Program Director

Mary Marlin Area Agency on Aging Program Director

Mark Hill Finance Director

Kelly Skinner Executive Assistant/Clerk to the Board

Ben Farmer Economic Development Planner

Alexis Whitley Administrative Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Browning called the virtual meeting of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Board of Directors to order at 6:25 p.m. He welcomed all in attendance and introduced special guests which included Holly Jones and Mike Hawkins, who are our presenters for the meeting. 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 August 17, 2021, minutes, approval of the budget amendments for Workforce Development and Aging, approval of financial reports, approval of the Tri-COG Mega-Region Food System Development Study (if awarded) and approval of the CEDS Strategy Development Group Nomination List. A Motion was made by Ms. Miranda Boykin and seconded by Mr. Othar Woodard. Those voting in favor included: Greg Browning, Bobbie Jones, Miranda Boykin, Randy Beale, Roy Bell, Natalie Bess, Phillip Boone, Eddie Braxton, Eddie Coats, Alice Delbridge, Mark Frohman, Reginald Harris, Doug Hughes, Brenda Lucas, Martha Lucas, Sherry Lucas, Joshua Pair,

Stacie Shatzer, Tracy Shearin, Barbara Simmons, Grady Smith, Denise Stinagle, Robert Sykes,

Barbara Taylor, Ralph Webb, John White and Othar Woodard. There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

Holly Jones, NCDOJ Public Protection Section and Mike Hawkins, Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice Member, gave a presentation on the Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice. They discussed the formation of the task force and background information as well as local policy recommendations going forward. Lastly, they discussed implementation initiatives for the formation of local policy committees and gave contact information for help or questions.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Chairman Browning shared that he and Mr. Hiett had recently attended a meeting of the NCARCOG in Marion, NC. He discussed some of the guest speakers and the issues that were addressed. He elaborated on some of the obstacles that are still on-going with the pandemic and also discussed ARPA funding. He invited all members to contact the COG if they have specific questions or need assistance.

Next, Mr. Browning announced that the Board officers have made the difficult decision to cancel this year’s annual banquet. Due to contractual obligations, a decision had to be made quickly and they felt it best to not have the banquet at this time.

Lastly, Mr. Browning reported that we do currently have an audit in progress and as soon as we receive the audit report, the Executive Committee will have to convene in order to review and approve the report. This should happen in late November or early December.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Hiett referred the Board to his report located on Page 24 of the agenda packet. He began by sharing that the COG has received three National Excellence Awards (NADO awards). One was for the Aging CARES which included foods, technology and animatronic pets for seniors, one was for the PDS digital inclusion plan and one was for the PDS Healthy Food Access Mapping project. He congratulated staff for their efforts on all of these projects.

Next, he stated that the CEDS SDG nomination list is located on Pages 19 - 22 of the agenda packet for the Board’s review. He urged all Board members to feel free to pass along any additional prospective members to this preliminary list by contacting Ben Farmer.

He then discussed ARP funding and he shared that there have not been any major changes since our last Board meeting. He stated that currently we are waiting on legislative updates and will keep you posted as changes occur. He urged all members to please feel free to contact us for technical assistance if necessary.

Mr. Hiett reported on the City/County manager’s meeting which was held last week. It was a very successful informational session and we look forward to having more in the future.

Lastly, Mr. Hiett shared that we are sharing all grant and funding opportunities as we get them with our member governments by including them in the Board packet and the monthly newsletter and also by direct e-mail. Please feel free to call us with any questions or if you need any additional information.

**IMPACT REPORTS**

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

Ms. Marlin referred the Board to the Aging Impact report located on page 37 of the agenda packet. She reported that the next RAAC meeting will be held virtually on December 8 at 10:00. She further stated that we are recruiting members to serve on the Community Advisory Committee. If you know of anyone who may be interested, please contact her.

Next, she reported that the SCSEP participants have all returned to their host agencies and they will soon be holding the first virtual job club meeting. She also reported that they do have a verbal acceptance for the COVID-19 outreach position and that person is expected to begin on November 3.

Lastly, Ms. Marlin reported that they are in the beginning stages of the next round of CSA food box distribution and look forward to working on that initiative in the near future. She further reported that the food that will be used for these boxes will for the most part be locally grown.

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

Mr. Townley referred the Board to the PDS Impact report located on page 40 of the agenda packet. He reported on the numbers included in the Impact Summary and stated that these are very significant in the region.

He further discussed the CEDS SDG nomination list included in the agenda packet and again asked if anyone has any suggested additions to the list to please contact Ben Farmer. He went on to report that his staff continues to be involved in disaster recovery and mitigation training, some of which are being held this week.

He reported that we are currently administering the Broadband EDA award to connect Black Creek, Saratoga, Stantonsburg and Lucama. He then gave an update on the Housing section, stating that the applications had been submitted for Garysburg, Sharpsburg, Hobgood, Speed and Saratoga for the FY2021 grant round.

Next, Mr. Townley discussed the Healthy Food Access Mapping Project (Healthy FAM) and the new Healthy FAM website, which can be reached from the COG homepage. He also discussed the Tri-COG Mega-Region Food System Development Study and what a huge impact that would have on our region if approved.

Lastly, Mr. Townley reported that seven water and sewer grant applications were submitted on September 30th totaling $7.5 million in requests and commended his staff for a job well done.

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

Mr. Williams referred the Board to the Workforce Development Impact Report located on Page 37 of the agenda packet. He began by reporting that youth enrollments are stable, due to the fact that training sites are back up and running. He further reported that new in-person claims have dropped, but virtual services are increasing as people are taking advantage of the new digital services being offered by the career centers. He also stated that the UI rate has dropped, but stated that these numbers by themselves can be deceiving.

Mr. Williams then discussed the partnership with the PDS department for the Premier Virtual Platform which allows virtual career fairs. There was a pilot which was very successful and the employers were very pleased. He reported that there will be a regional virtual career fair held on November 10th and they look forward to that being a huge success as well.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Browning announced that our next meeting will be on January 18th, 2022, location to be determined and called for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Ms. Miranda Boykin and seconded by Mr. Bobbie Jones. Those voting in favor included: Greg Browning, Bobbie Jones, Miranda Boykin, Randy Beale, Roy Bell, Natalie Bess, Phillip Boone, Eddie Braxton, Eddie Coats, Alice Delbridge, Mark Frohman, Reginald Harris, Doug Hughes, Brenda Lucas, Martha Lucas, Sherry Lucas, Joshua Pair, Stacie Shatzer, Tracy Shearin, Barbara Simmons, Grady Smith, Denise Stinagle, Robert Sykes, Barbara Taylor, 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