

**MINUTES**  
**UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**March 19, 2024**

**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
Derrick Bennett	Alternate Member	Northampton County
Natalie Bess	Alternate Member	Edgecombe County
Phillip Boone	Alternate Member	Town of Dortches
Eddie Braxton	Mayor	Town of Scotland Neck
Brenda Brown	Mayor	Town of Nashville
Gregory Browning	Alternate Member	City of Roanoke Rapids
Delane Bryant	At-Large Board Member	Edgecombe County
Eddie Coats	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
Meredith Holdford	Commissioner	Halifax County
Deborah James	Mayor	Town of Gaston
Richard Joyner	Council Member	City of Rocky Mount
Marshall Lassiter	Commissioner	Town of Severn
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
Victoria Newcombe	Mayor	Town of Rich Square
Joshua Pair	At-Large Board Member	Northampton County
Esterine Pitt	Town Administrator	Town of Whitakers
Coley Rhodes	Mayor	Town of Stantonsburg
Mondale Robinson	Mayor	Town of Enfield
Sandra Russ	Commissioner	Town of Red Oak
Cathy Scott	At-Large Board Member	Halifax County
Stacie Shatzer	County Manager	Nash County
Barbara Simmons	At-Large Board Member	Halifax County

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Barbara Taylor	Commissioner	Town of Pinetops
Ralph Webb	Commissioner	Edgecombe County
Lori Winstead	Alternate Member	Wilson County
Jean Wooten-Jiles	Commissioner	Town of Macclesfield

\*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
Mark Frohman	At-Large Board Member	Nash County
Reginald Harris	At-Large Board Member	Wilson County
Geraldine Langford	Mayor	Town of Seaboard
Matthew Lassiter	Commissioner	Town of Jackson
Elaine Saunders	Commissioner	Town of Saratoga

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Michael Bell	Council Member	City of Wilson
Vicky Bennett	At-Large Board Member	Northampton County
Dillon Bissette	Commissioner	Town of Bailey
Beverly Davis	Commissioner	Town of Sharpsburg
Eric Evans (Alt attended)	Manager	Edgecombe County
Carl Ferebee (Alt attended)	Mayor Pro-Tem	City of Roanoke Rapids
Dannie Flanary	Mayor	Town of Hobgood
Steven Flythe	Commissioner	Town of Lasker
Ron Hunt (Alt attended)	County Manager	Wilson County
Jeff Johnson	Mayor	Town of Lucama
Luther Lewis, Jr.	Mayor	Town of Middlesex
Julian Phillips (Alt attended)	County Manager	Northampton County
Mack Smith	Mayor	Town of Black Creek
Charles Tyner	Board Chairman	Northampton County
Jackie Vick (Alt. attended)	Mayor	Town of Dortches
Bobby Wheeler	Town Administrator	Town of Speed
Tim Wiggs	At-Large Board Member	Wilson County
Othar Woodard	Mayor Pro-Tem	Town of Tarboro
Stewart Woodard	Mayor Pro-Tem	Town of Conway

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**GUESTS**

Bryashia Buggs	Rep. Don Davis' Office	
Carmelitia Coleman	Commissioner	Town of Seaboard
Tamica Gray	Town Clerk	Town of Whitakers
Sammy Hopkins	Mayor	Town of Whitakers
Marla Jerman	Planning & Adj. Board Chair	Town of Seaboard
Linda Mooring	Committee Member	Town of Stantonsburg
Steve Mooring	Alternate Board Member	Town of Stantonsburg
T. J. Walker	Alternate Board Member	City of Rocky Mount

**STAFF**

Robert Hiatt	Executive Director
Michael Williams	Workforce Development Program Director
Kelly Lancaster	Finance Director
Rhonda Sommer	Assistant Finance Director
Mary Marlin	Aging 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 members Victoria Newcombe, Town of Rich Square and Richard Joyner, City of Rocky Mount, 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 January 16, 2024, approval of the December 2023 and January, 2024 financial reports, approval of the Workforce Development budget amendment, and approval of the AARP Community Challenge Grant. A Motion was made by Mr. Eddie Coats and seconded by Ms. Sherry Lucas. All voted in favor. The Motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

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### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Approval of Resolution in Support of the Affordable Connectivity Program – Robert Hiett, Executive Director**

Mr. Hiett shared that the funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) was established during the COVID period to help bridge cost barriers so vulnerable populations could participate in the digital economy, and those funds are set to expire in April 2024 unless there is further action from congress to extend its funding. Without this assistance, most ACP program recipients will lose their ability to connect to the internet. Mr. Hiett is asking for approval of the Resolution in Support of the ACP. A Motion was made by Mr. Ralph Webb and seconded by Mr. Gregory Browning. There were no opposing votes and the Motion carried.

### **PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE**

Mr. Gregory Browning recently completed his tenure as the Chairman of the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Government Forum and was awarded a plaque in appreciation of his service. He will still serve as our delegate to the Forum.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Chairman Jones shared with the Board the members of the Nominating Committee which will be Greg Browning (Chair), Delane Bryant, Brenda Brown, Joshua Pair and Ron Hunt. He gave a charge to the Committee explaining their roles and responsibilities. The Nominating Committee will have a report at our May Board meeting.

Chairman Jones also shared with the Board the members of the Bylaws Committee which will be Miranda Boykin (Chair), Dia Denton, Mark Frohman, Roy Bell and Ralph Webb. He explained their roles and responsibilities as well. He charged this Committee with taking a comprehensive look at the current bylaws and making changes where needed. They will be meeting soon and will present proposed changes to the Board at the August Board meeting with adoption scheduled for October 2024.

### **NCARCOG UPDATE**

Mr. Gregory Browning shared an update from the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Government. He shared that the Forum has not met since our last Board meeting, but they do have an upcoming meeting in April, and he will share at the Board meeting in May. NCARCOG Legislative Day will be held in June.

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**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Hiatt referred the Board to his Executive Director’s Report beginning on Page 18 of the agenda packet. He highlighted a few items in his report. The first item was the NCARCOG 2024 Policy Agenda items which include finance administration for local governments, disaster resiliency planning and transit planning. In his opinion, these policies have the best opportunity to advance in the short session of the general assembly.

Next, he discussed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act reauthorization and asked Mr. Michael Williams to come up and speak more on this topic. Mr. Williams explained some of the challenges with the proposed changes. More information will be forthcoming.

Next, he discussed the Older Americans Act reauthorization and asked Ms. Mary Marlin to further expand on that. She discussed some of the concerns with the language in the reauthorization and asked for everyone to help with advocacy where possible.

Next, he discussed the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission and asked Mr. Ben Farmer to elaborate on that. This was their first application period and hopefully we will be better positioned for the next round of funding. We will send out more information as it becomes available.

Lastly, he discussed the Economic Development Association funding and continuation. He reported that NCARCOG has become aware that there may be provisions in federal legislation to discontinue funding of EDA which would result in the elimination of the department and local economic development districts (EDDs). We will keep you apprised of new information as we receive it.

**IMPACT REPORTS**

**Aging – Ms. Mary Marlin, Aging Director**

Ms. Marlin called the Board’s attention to the Aging Impact report located on page 36 of the agenda packet. She reported that we have closed the regional needs assessment with over 600 responses from within the region, and the top need identified in the region was prevention of depression and loneliness. We will be working to address this need and additional mental health needs for older adults. She also reminded everyone about the upcoming Regional Aging Conference which will be held on June 13, 2024, at Edgecombe Community College in Tarboro.

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

Mr. Farmer called the Board’s attention to the Planning and Development Services Impact Report beginning on Page 37 of the agenda packet. He highlighted the department's new grant total which is \$14.5 million. There were three new CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization awards. The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund applications are currently underway. He also reported that they had a very successful workshop on disaster recovery financial administration. We should hear soon about the recently submitted EPA Brownfields application.

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

Mr. Williams called the Board’s attention to the Workforce Development Impact Report on Pages 45 – 47 of the agenda packet. We continue to have increases in enrollment. He highlighted several Business Services items. There are two closings in Wilson County, and we have been working closely with these employers. We will be hosting several upcoming career fairs. He also shared the news that there is a new pharmaceutical company coming to Wilson and they will start breaking ground by the end of this year. They will hire approximately 400 workers.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Chairman Jones announced that our next meeting will be held on May 21st at The Power House on the campus of Rocky Mount Mills at 6:45 p.m. He then called for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Mr. Fred Belfield and seconded by Ms. Miranda Boykin. All voted in favor. There were none opposed. The Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.



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Bobbie Jones, Chairman



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Dia Denton, Secretary/Treasurer