

**MINUTES**  
**UPPER COASTAL PLAIN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**August 20, 2024**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dia Denton, Vice-Chairperson	County Manager	Halifax County
James Alston, Secretary/Treasurer	Mayor	Town of Castalia
Randy Beale	Mayor	Town of Woodland
Fred Belfield	Commissioner	Nash County
Michael Bell	Council Member	City of Wilson
Derrick Bennett	Alternate Member	Northampton County
Vicky Bennett	At-Large Board Member	Northampton County
Natalie Bess	Alternate Member	Edgecombe County
Phillip Boone	Alternate Member	Town of Dortches
Eddie Braxton	Mayor	Town of Scotland Neck
Gregory Browning	Adjustment/Planning	City of Roanoke Rapids
Delane Bryant	At-Large Board Member	Edgecombe County
Paolo Ceyrolles	At-Large Board Member	Wilson County
Eddie Coats	At-Large Board Member	Nash County
Mark Frohman	At-Large Board Member	Nash County
Doris Garner	Mayor	Town of Weldon
Jenny Hinnant	Commissioner	Town of Conetoe
Meredith Holdford	Commissioner	Town of Halifax
Deborah James	Mayor	Town of Gaston
Bobbie Jones	Mayor	Town of Princeville
Currie Joyner	At-Large Board Member	Wilson County
Geraldine Langford	Mayor	Town of Seaboard
Marshall Lassiter	Commissioner	Town of Severn
Matthew Lassiter	Commissioner	Town of Jackson
Doris Lindsey	Alternate Member	Town of Whitakers
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
Julian Phillips	County Manager	Northampton County
Sandra Russ	Commissioner	Town of Red Oak
Elaine Saunders	Commissioner	Town of Saratoga
Stacie Shatzer	County Manager	Nash County
Barbara Simmons	At-Large Board Member	Halifax County

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Barbara Taylor	Commissioner	Town of Pinetops
T. J. Walker	Alternate Member	City of Rocky Mount
Ralph Webb	Commissioner	Edgecombe County
Lori Winstead	Alternate Member	Wilson County
Othar Woodard	Mayor Pro-Tem	Town of Tarboro
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
Miranda Boykin, Chairperson	Mayor	Town of Sims
Brenda Brown	Mayor	Town of Nashville
Joshua Pair	At-Large Board Member	Northampton County
Walter Wells	Mayor Pro-Tem	Town of Bailey

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Beverly Davis	Commissioner	Town of Sharpsburg
Eric Evans (Alt. attended)	Manager	Edgecombe County
Dannie Flanary	Mayor	Town of Hobgood
Steven Flythe	Commissioner	Town of Lasker
Sammy Hopkins (Alt. attended)	Mayor	Town of Whitakers
Ron Hunt (Alt. attended)	County Manager	Wilson County
Jeff Johnson	Mayor	Town of Lucama
Richard Joyner (Alt. attended)	Council Member	City of Rocky Mount
Luther Lewis, Jr.	Mayor	Town of Middlesex
Victoria Newcombe	Mayor	Town of Rich Square
Coley Rhodes	Mayor	Town of Stantonsburg
Mondale Robinson	Mayor	Town of Enfield
Cathy Scott	At-Large Board Member	Halifax 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
Stewart Woodard	Mayor Pro-Tem	Town of Conway

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**GUESTS**

Bryashia Buggs	Office of Rep. Don Davis
Carmelitia Coleman	Town of Seaboard
Tamica Gray	Town of Whitakers
Marla Jerman	Town of Seaboard
Trey Lewis	Office of U.S. Senator Thom Tillis
John Tayloy	Office of U.S. Senator Ted Budd

**STAFF**

Robert Hiett	Executive Director
Michael Williams	Workforce Development Program Director
Rhonda Sommer	Assistant Finance Director
Mary Marlin	Aging Director
Ben Farmer	Planning and Development Services Director
Liz Raskopf	Community Development Manager
Kelly Skinner	Executive Assistant/Clerk to the Board
Ginger Morris	Administrative Assistant

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairperson Denton called the meeting of the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments Board of Directors to order at 6:49 p.m. She welcomed all in attendance, introduced special guests and thanked them for taking the time to attend. Roll was called and attendance was duly noted.

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice Chairperson Denton called for a Motion to approve the Consent Agenda items which included approval of the June 18, 2024 meeting minutes, May and June, 2024 financial reports, PDS budget amendment, travel/meal policy revision, EPA community change grant, clean fuels and advanced technology grant, NCORR housing study grant, Pew charitable trust fiscal land use and 3d modeling project and artificial intelligence (AI) governance policy. A Motion was made by Mr. Eddie Braxton and seconded by Mr. Ralph Webb. All voted in favor. The Motion carried and the consent agenda was approved.

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**SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS**

Bryashia Buggs, Regional Director from the office of U.S. Representative Don Davis, Trey Lewis, Northeast Regional Representative from the office of U.S. Senator Thom Tillis, and John Tayloe, Northeast Regional Director from the office of U.S. Senator Ted Budd all gave an update of matters of concern that are taking place in our Region. Each speaker urged anyone that needed assistance to feel free to reach out to their respective offices.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Vice Chairperson Denton gave an update from the Bylaws committee. She shared that after several meetings and much deliberation, we will be presenting the proposed new Bylaws to the Board at the October meeting. She outlined some of the major changes and opened the floor for questions.

Next, she reported that in an effort to conserve funding, we have decided not to have our annual banquet in November. The regularly scheduled October meeting will be used for staff recognition and awards.

**NCARCOG UPDATE**

Mr. Gregory Browning shared a brief update from the North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Government. Although there hasn't been a forum meeting since our last Board meeting, Mr. Browning shared the progress of several items that we have been advocating for in the State Legislature. He reported that he is very proud of the progress that is being made.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Robert Hiatt, Executive Director**

Mr. Hiatt called the Board's attention to his report beginning on Page 29 of the agenda packet. He briefly highlighted a few items in his report including his work with Rocky Mount leaders to design a commuter bus program that would connect workers to employment centers. He also discussed declining Aging funds and potential approaches to securing more funding.

Next, he discussed his artificial intelligence (AI) training to date and how this would benefit all member governments in the future. He discussed the "Train the Trainer" model to develop in-house expertise and developing strategic partnerships to deliver services and opportunities for member governments.

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**PROGRAM IMPACT REPORTS AND UPDATES**

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

Ms. Marlin referred the Board to her impact report on page 40 of the agenda packet. She reviewed the service numbers for the previous fiscal year. She also reported that the Wright’s Center has secured a grant of \$250,000 and she looks forward to seeing the great impact this funding will have in our region. She closed by announcing that the next RAAC meeting will be held via zoom on September 24, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

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

Mr. Farmer referred the Board to his impact report beginning on Page 41 of the agenda packet. He introduced our newest employee, Ms. Liz Raskopf, who will be the new Community Development Manager. He spoke about the upcoming CEDS strategy Development Group (SDG) workshop to be held on August 27 from 11 – 2 at Nash Community College and urged all Board members to attend. He closed by reviewing regional and local project highlights.

**Workforce Development Services – Mr. Michael Williams, Workforce Development Director**

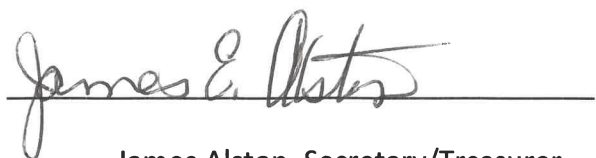
Mr. Williams referred the Board to his impact report located on page 47 of the agenda packet. He reviewed the service numbers for May through July, 2024 and the Regional Labor Market Overview. He spoke of several new employment opportunities, as well as a few employer layoffs in the region. He was excited to announce that many of the workers being laid off had secured new employment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Vice Chairperson Denton announced that our next meeting will be held on October 15, 2024, in the Brown Auditorium on the campus of Nash Community College at 6:45 p.m. She then called for a Motion to adjourn. A Motion was made by Mr. Eddie Braxton and seconded by Mr. Eddie Coats. All voted in favor. The Motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.



Miranda Boykin, Chairperson



James Alston, Secretary/Treasurer