

General Membership Board Meeting

6:30 p.m. - Thursday, February 10, 2022

Third Floor Conference Room

233 Middle Street, New Bern, NC

AGENDA

- 1. Welcome, Invocation, and Call to Order**
- 2. Adopt Agenda - *Jay Bender, President***
- 3. Consent Agenda – *Jay Bender, President***
 - a. Minutes – General Membership Board Meeting – January 13, 2022**
- 4. Executive Director’s Report – *Tim Ware, Interim Executive Director***
 - a. Finance Director Update**
 - b. EDA Grant Proposal**
- 5. Future of ECC – *Ed Riggs, 1st Vice President***
- 6. Closed Session – *NC G.S. 143-318-11(a)(6)***
- 4. Adjournment**

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Minutes

Executive Committee in Attendance:

Bill Taylor, Morehead City Commissioner

Jim Kohr, City of Havelock Commissioner

Shane Turney, Treasurer

Ed Riggs, Jr., 1st Vice President

Jay Bender, President

Arthur Robinson, 2nd Vice President

Bennie Heath, Greene County Commissioner

Steve Wiggins, Mount Olive Commissioner (via Zoom)

Pat Prescott, Pamlico County Commissioner (via Zoom)

Bob Cavanaugh, Carteret County Commissioner (via Zoom)

General Membership Committee in Attendance:

Carolyn Kenyon, Mayor of Faison

Todd Clark, Town of Beaufort Manager

Dominic Sparado, Town of Newport Representative

Mariana Hollinshed, Town of Beaufort Commissioner (via Zoom)

John Nash, Town of Cedar Point Commissioner (via Zoom)

Patty Leonard, Town of River Bend Commissioner (via Zoom)

Diane Brown, Town of Greenevers Commissioner (via Zoom)

ECC Staff in Attendance:

Tim Ware, Interim Executive Director

Leighann Morgan, Deputy Finance Director

Heather O'Connor, AAA Director

January Brown, AAA Deputy Director

Kim Baker, Aging Program Consultant

Angelia Pridgen, Lead Regional Ombudsman

Ginger Sims, Aging Program Consultant (via Zoom)

Guest in Attendance:

Knox Proctor, ex-officio, Attorney, Ward & Smith
Micheal James, Lenoir County Manager
Kyle DeHaven, Greene County Manager
Jeff Adyette, County Compass
Franky Howard, Jones County Manager (via Zoom)
Jim Youngquist, SERDI (via Zoom)
Tommy Burns, Carteret County Manager (via Zoom)

1. Welcome, Invocation, and Call to Order

Jay Bender called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Quorum was met. Jim Kohr gave the invocation. Jay Bender requested to go around the room and introduce everyone.

2. Adopt Agenda - Jay Bender, President

Bill Taylor motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Bennie Heath, motion was carried unanimously.

3. Consent Agenda – Jay Bender, President

- a. General Membership Board Minutes—June 30, 2020
- b. Financial Statement
- c. 2022 Calendar

Arthur Robinson motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Ed Riggs, Jr., motion was carried unanimously.

4. Budget & Audit Committee Report – Shane Turney, Treasurer

Shane Turney stated the Budget & Audit Committee met to discuss the check register and financial statements. They discussed the retirement of Finance Director Jenny Miller. Her retirement has left gaps and grey area for the Auditors. Jenny has showed a willingness to come back and contract till June 2022. They have asked Tim to contact and figure out the details. The group was all in favor of this decision.

**5. NC Associations of Regional Councils of Governments Forum Member –Tim Ware,
Interim Executive Director**

Tim Ware discussed the NC Association of Regional Councils of Governments Forum and asked for a volunteer to sit on the forum as well as an alternate.

6. SERDI Assessment – Tim Ware, Interim Executive Director

Jim Younquist, SERDI

Jim Younquist discussed the process of the SERDI assessment of ECCOG. Virtual interviews were setup across the region and focus groups were held with Chairs of Commissioners and Managers. Online surveys were administered to local government managers and administrators. An in-person group of county and city managers were held at the ECC office.

The results from the surveys and interviews ranged from total disengagement to desiring to have a full service working COG. A desire to have grant writing, planning, ordinance and zoning advisement, personnel searches, community economic development information and convening the region of opportunities challenges.

Discussion of the results from SERDI, the misconceptions, and the future of ECC
In four weeks there is to be a presentation and plan on how to push forward in growing and making ECC successful.

7. Member Comments

8. Closed Session - NC G.G. 143-318-11(a)(6)

Bill Taylor motioned to go into closed session, seconded by Ed Riggs, Jr. and motion was carried unanimously.

9. Adjournment

Closed session ended at 8:47 p.m. and on motion duly made and seconded meeting was adjourned.

COUNTY LOGO

A RESOLUTION BY THE COUNTY OF _____
IN SUPPORT OF THE EASTERN CAROLINA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

WHEREAS, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments is one (1) of sixteen (16) multi-county planning and development regions in North Carolina which serve a population of approximately 645,000 residents living in Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico and Wayne counties; and

WHEREAS, the stated mission of the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments is to improve the region's quality of life by providing planning, economic development and senior services to local governments and area residents by maximizing resources and collaborating regionally; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments can serve an invaluable role in being the neutral platform where local governments can come together and shape planning area-wide, be a champion for the entire region and work to strengthen our region's competitive advantage on the national and international stage; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments recognizes the weakness of the organization currently and are conducting a thorough reassessment of its core principles and strategic purpose; and

WHEREAS, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments will make any and all efforts to re-engage their local governments, expand services available to members and make institutional changes needed to recruit the talent and leadership that will build a regional council on par with what is available to other communities across North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, true regionalism cannot exist without strong participation and collaboration among local governments, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments is requesting input, guidance and commitment from its member governments. This level of engagement will ensure that we all have available to us a regional council that can serve the unique needs of each community, while still addressing our shared challenges.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; that the _____ Board of Commissioners, do hereby support the efforts of the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments to preserve the regional partnership and implement necessary changes to build an organization that can more effectively address the needs of the local governments they serve.

Adopted this the 18th day of January, 2022



A RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EASTERN CAROLINA
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

IN SUPPORT OF THE EASTERN CAROLINA COUNCIL OF
GOVERNMENTS EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND
IMPLEMENT NECESSARY CHANGES TO BUILD AN ORGANIZATION THAT CAN
MORE EFFECTIVELY ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS THEY
SERVE

WHEREAS, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments is one (1) of sixteen (16) multi-county planning and development regions in North Carolina which serve a population of approximately 645,000 residents living in Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow, Pamlico and Wayne counties; and

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WHEREAS, true regionalism cannot exist without strong participation and collaboration among local governments, the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments is requesting input, guidance and commitment from its member governments. This level of engagement will ensure that we all have available to us a regional council that can serve the unique needs of each community, while still addressing our shared challenges.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED; that the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments Board of directors, do hereby support the efforts of the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments to preserve the regional partnership and implement necessary changes to build an organization that can more effectively address the needs of the local governments they serve.

Adopted this 10TH Day of February. 2022



Date : February 7, 2022
From : Edward Riggs, Jr.
Subject : ECC Study Group

A committee formed by the Executive Committee of the Eastern Carolina Council (ECC) was tasked to review the Assessment of the Council by the South East Regional Directors Institute (SERDI). This assessment included meetings with elected officials and managers from member counties and towns. Additionally, a letter signed by 8 of 9 county managers which reinforced several of the SERDI recommendations was presented to the Executive Committee. The Assessment outlined several areas of concern that representatives from member governments would like to see addressed, including services, governance structure, and general operations.

With the approval of the ECC Board the following recommendations to begin this process are as follows:

1. There is a need for strong leadership to restructure ECC. A new Executive Director, preferable with COG experience, should be hired with a comparable salary. The Executive Director salary should not be required to raise funds to sustain their salary. The new Executive Director will need guidance as to which direction to take ECC. With this guidance the new Executive Director will be able to rebuild ECC, by meeting with member governments, by hiring key personnel, and by ensuring services are provided to meet the needs of the member governments.
2. The recruiting process for the Executive Director will include a nationwide search and a hiring committee made up of 8 individuals. These individuals will include 2 county managers, 2 city or town managers, and 4 members of the executive committee. This approach will allow the best opportunity to find the right candidate for the job. It is important to allow a cross section of managers and elected officials in this process. The four members from the executive committee should be made up with two county commissioners and two city/town board members or mayors. All 8 individuals should be from different counties if possible.
3. The advertising and hiring of a new finance officer for ECC should continue. The finance officer should be under the direct supervision of the Executive Director. Currently, this position is also vacant. It is important to find the right candidate and

hire that person as soon as possible. Under the current structure, the Finance Officer is hired and fired by the Board. It is recommended that the Executive Director have the authority to hire and fire all staff, including the finance officer.

4. There are seven services the ECC should provide, in addition to the Area Agency on Aging, RPO, and EDA. These services are:

1. Grant writing and Administration
2. Planning Service
3. Mapping and GIS service
4. Training and workshops
5. Local Government Administration and support
6. HR Services
7. Disaster Recovery

There will be a need to hire staff in key positions to jump start services. These could be department heads. Services, particularly to begin with, may be contracted services from the private sector or neighboring COG's. These are the services most requested by member governments. While some services may be provided free of charge to member governments, it is expected that most services will be available for a fee.

5. ECC will prepare a Technical Assistance Grant Proposal to EDA for assistance to Restructure, Restore, and Rebuild the Council to Relevancy to the member governments in the region. If awarded, this grant assistance will help absorb initial cost in restarting and rebuilding services.

6. It should be recognized that the ECC Board may need to revisit the membership dues structure during this rebuilding process. At this point, there is no way to predict future needs or cost, but it should be noted that the way the current due's structure is set up, it may not sustain the organization long term. To explain, the dues for each member government is based on population. Counties are charged matches for Aging, RPO, and the remainder of their dues goes toward the EDA match. When a county only pays matches for Aging and RPO and not the remainder in order to "not be a member", they are really not paying their portion of the EDA match, which puts the burden on other member governments. Most of the dues charged to the cities and towns currently go toward the EDA match. ECC does have a fund

balance in which a portion could be allocated toward this restructure of the Council.

7. The General membership Board of the ECC should meet on a quarterly basis, and the Executive Board should continue to meet on a regular basis. Currently, the general membership normally meets twice a year. General membership and Executive Committee meetings should be held, from time to time, in different locations in the region. This will give a more active role to the member governments in the decision-making process.

8. An Advisory Board of County Managers from member counties should be formed. This advisory board would meet and advise staff and the board from time to time to address issues and to aid and give council in the policy making decisions. In addition, it is recommended that the ECC Board meet, from time to time, with the aging advisory board and the RPO boards for information and input on operations.

9. The following changes to the Executive Board should be made

a. Each member city/town with a population of 18,000 or more shall appoint a member. Currently, the population threshold is 20,000.

b. The County managers from member counties will caucus and appoint one member to the Executive Committee. This will increase the maximum number of members from 23 to 24.

c. Whenever possible, when electing the 4 officers of the Executive Committee, 2 should be county commissioners and 2 should be city/town appointees. The four officers are the President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, and Treasurer. This will aid in preventing the perception that the governance of the council leans one way or the other.

10. Explore the option of hiring a consultant to spearhead the reorganization of the ECC. There is history with a neighboring Council of Governments using an outside consultant to help their restructuring process, which was very successful. An Outside firm could assist the Board (and new Executive Director when hired) in continuing the study SERDI started, by looking at current procedures of the governance of the council, the projected cost in providing these services to the member governments, and to help relay information and help answer questions member governments and elected officials may have.

This process will require considerable time and hard work to be successful. It is important to know that there is still an interest in the ECC and that there is a desire for this Council to grow and rebuild. Elected officials and managers from our region

participated in the SERDI study and provided this feedback. A Resolution of Support from governments in our region is requested to confirm the needs identified in the SERDI study.