



Eastern Carolina Council

Minutes

General Membership Board Meeting

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Third Floor Conference Room

233 Middle Street, New Bern, NC

Executive Committee in Attendance:

Jay Bender, Caucus Rep., Jones County (Pollocksville)
Roland Best, Lenoir County Commissioner
Kyle DeHaven, County Manager Caucus Rep., via Zoom (Greene County)
Jessie Dowe, Duplin County Commissioner
Frank Emory, 2nd Vice President (Jones County Commissioner)
Bennie Heath, Greene County Commissioner
Mark Price, Onslow County Commissioner
Ed Riggs Jr, President (Pamlico County Commissioner)
Bill Taylor, Treasurer (Town of Morehead City)
Shane Turney, Caucus Rep. Craven County (Town of Trent Woods)
Danny Wooten, Caucus Rep. Pamlico County (Town of Vandemere)

General Membership Board in Attendance:

John O'Daniel, Town of Atlantic Beach
Ryan Kelley, Town of Indian Beach
Clark Edwards, Town of Pine Knoll Shores
Billy Ward, Town of Faison
Charles "Twig" Rollins, Town of Magnolia
Lorraine Washington, Town of Snow Hill
Shawn Condon, Town of LaGrange (via Zoom)
Aaron Ritter, Town of Holly Ridge
Trudy Solomon, Town of Surf City
Linda Marshall, Town of Alliance
Allen Price, Town of Oriental (via Zoom)

ECC Staff in Attendance:

David Bone, Executive Director
Melinda McGuire, Assistant Executive Director/Finance Director
Heather O'Connor, AAA Director/Deputy Finance Director
January Brown, Deputy Aging Director
Kim Baker, Lead Aging Programs Consultant/Finance Specialist
Larry Faison, Planning Director

Guest in Attendance:

Knox Proctor, Attorney, Ward & Smith

1. **Welcome, Invocation, and Call to Order** – Ed Riggs, Jr., President, called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. President Riggs spoke about former 1st Vice President Arthur Robinson, Sr., who served on the ECC Board for over ten years before his passing. He spoke about his commitment to his community and about his family. Commissioner Heath provided the invocation. Introductions were made around the room.
2. **Adopt Agenda** – President Ed Riggs asked to add a brief closed session at the end of the meeting to consult with the attorney. The closed session will be added as 9a to the agenda. *Commissioner Heath motioned to adopt the amended agenda, seconded by Commissioner Dowe; the motion was approved unanimously.*

3. **Consent Agenda**

- a. **Minutes** – General Membership Board – October 12, 2023
- b. **Contribution Based Benefit Cap Report**
- c. **Area Agency on Aging Update**
- d. **C.E.D.S. Update**
- e. **Community Planning/Technical Assistance Update**
- f. **Transportation Update**

President Riggs asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. Lorraine Washington stated that she attended the October meeting, but her name was not included in the minutes. *President Riggs asked that the minutes be amended to reflect Ms. Washington's attendance. Mayor Bender motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Best; the motion was approved unanimously.*

4. **Budget & Audit Committee Report**

- a. **Check Register**
- b. **Financial Statements**
- c. **Committee Information & Recommendations**

Treasurer Bill Taylor stated the Budget and Audit Committee met with a quorum, so they were able to discuss items from the last meeting. They were able to review the check register and financial statements. He stated they received an update on the audit for 21/22. He asked Assistant Executive Director / Finance Director Melinda McGuire to give the board an update on the budget and audit process. Ms. McGuire stated that we are working on the 21/22 audit. We have had some setbacks. Key contacts at our auditor's office have moved on and left the company for other positions. She stated we are working through it, and hopefully it will end soon.

5. **Review of ECC Dues Structure** – Executive Director Bone went over the summary included with the agenda packet which included the current ECC membership dues structure and history. He noted that the rate for the dues has not increased for 17 years. All businesses need revenue to operate. He said ECC's revenue is about 90% reliant on grants. Most of these grants are on a reimbursement basis, monthly or quarterly. ECC is floating some of our programs for three or six months or more. He said it has been challenging to deal with the cash flow issues this creates. Mr. Bone said ECC is at the point where we feel like we need to have some additional financial resources to be able to contain what we've done and continue to grow our programs and services for our members and for our community. Mr. Bone spoke about a spreadsheet that gives a scenario of what the potential dues increase would look like for each local government entity going forward. This is for discussion purposes only. Mr. Bone noted that the counties pay a lot for cities and

municipalities. He said staff is suggesting increasing the municipal rate from \$0.353 to \$0.40. The county rates would go down to \$0.20, but counties would potentially pay the Aging, Transportation and Economic Development matches on top of that. Mr. Bone stated that the general consensus from the County Managers is that with the increased services Eastern Carolina Council is providing, more resources are needed, and the counties should give more. Greene County Manager DeHaven spoke up and said he agreed with Director Bone.

President Riggs asked if there were any questions or comments. Commissioner Price asked if the potential amount of increase for Onslow County was due to the population. Mr. Bone said yes and noted that previously, there was a cap that capped the dues. If we do not utilize a cap, then that would be the potential amount for Onslow County. Mr. Bone mentioned that going forward there should be an annual inflationary or CPI increase. He stated that we are asking for everyone's input.

Mayor Bender, Town Manager Twig Rollins, and Town Clerk Linda Marshall all spoke up in agreement for increasing membership dues. They spoke about the value of services they receive from ECC. No action was requested.

- 6. Report from the Recent NC Association of Regional Councils of Government/ Forum Meetings** – Executive Director Bone spoke about the report included with the agenda packet. He gave a brief overview of the NC Association of Regional Councils of Government (NCARCOG). He noted that the COG Directors meet monthly. The Forum, which is an advocacy group for the NCARCOG, is made-up of Board Members from each council of government (COG).

Mr. Bone spoke about the consideration of the Community Care Hub Business Model. This is one of the major items being considered and discussed with the NCARCOG Board of Directors. A community Care Hub is a type of managed care. It could be a valuable opportunity for us to get some additional resources. On December 14, 2023, the NCARCOG Board of Directors voted to proceed with the creation of an associated nonprofit that could serve as a community care hub. Once the community care hub is established, ECC will have to decide if and to what extent to participate in it. Mr. Bone stated that we would have to hire staff and it could take three or four years to break even, if ECC participated as part of a Community Care Hub. There are a lot of unanswered questions. We are probably a year or two from having to make a decision. If ECC decides we cannot do it, someone else (another COG) will need to provide this for our area.

- 7. Executive Director's Report** – The following are some highlights of Executive Director David Bone's report:

- The Executive Committee has endorsed re-energizing a 501(c)(3) that was started about 7 years ago. Nonprofits can apply for some grants that government agencies cannot.
- Melinda McGuire was recently promoted to Assistant Executive Director/Finance Director.
- ECC is recruiting for a Human Services Manager. AAA Director Heather O'Connor is transitioning to Deputy Finance Director.
- ECC is currently working on a member/community survey to seek input about community needs/desired services. The survey will be distributed in the near future.

- There are several workshops that will take place soon.
 - Transportation training session (SPOT/STIP) on February 13, 2024.
 - Ethics class for Elected Officials on February 21, 2024.
 - We are tentatively planning a GIS workshop for February, as well.
- ECC is the designated EDA Economic Development District (EDD) for the region.

8. Member Comments

President Riggs spoke about the vacancy left from the passing of 1st Vice President Arthur Edwards. He noted that the new member cannot be from the same county as any of the current Executive Officers. President Riggs stated that the Executive Committee will be asking for volunteers and can appoint someone at the February board meeting.

Mayor Bender spoke about the new Grant Opportunity Newsletter that came from ECC via email. He asked that everyone review this email for the 17 grant opportunities.

Pine Knoll Shores Representative Clark Edwards spoke up to say thank you to ECC for all the help they provide to small towns.

- 9. Municipal Caucus Representatives to the ECC Executive Committee** – President Riggs stated that every two years the board appoints one municipal member for each county to the Executive Board. He would like to start the process tonight and hope to have it done by the next meeting. President Riggs and Executive Director Bone will talk to everyone after the meeting is adjourned to see who wants to continue and who wants to volunteer for vacancies. The current vacancies are in Greene, Lenoir, and Wayne counties.

- 9a. Closed Session** – A Closed Session was requested as per NC General Statute § 143-318.11 (a)(3) – Attorney-Client Privilege – President Riggs announced the closed session to consult with the attorney. *Mayor Bender motioned to go to closed session, seconded by Commissioner Dowe; the motion was approved unanimously.*

Mayor Bender motioned to come out of closed session, seconded by Commissioner Heath; the motion was approved unanimously.

- 10. Adjournment** – *A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Heath; seconded by Mayor Bender; the motion was unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,


Ed Riggs Jr., President


David Bone, Executive Director