



Eastern Carolina Council

Minutes

General Membership Board Meeting

Thursday, June 13, 2024

Third Floor Conference Room

233 Middle Street, New Bern, NC

Executive Committee in Attendance:

Jay Bender, Caucus Rep., Jones County (Pollocksville)
Jessie Dowe, Duplin County Commissioner
Frank Emory, 1st Vice President (Jones County Commissioner)
Bennie Heath, Greene County Commissioner
Chadwick Howard, Craven County Commissioner
Karen Lewis, City of Havelock
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)
Billy Ward, Caucus Rep. Duplin County
Lorraine Washington, 2nd Vice President, Caucus Rep. Greene County (Town of Snow Hill)

General Membership Board in Attendance:

John O'Daniel, Town of Atlantic Beach, via Zoom
Courtney Barnhill, Town of Cape Carteret
Ryan Kelley, Town of Indian Beach
Bea Cunningham, Town of Peletier, via Zoom
Barbara Jones, Town of Cove City
Patty Leonard, Town of River Bend
Charles "Twig" Rollins, Town of Magnolia
Pete Parnian, Town of Holly Ridge
Danny Keel, Town of Mount Olive

ECC Staff in Attendance:

David Bone, Executive Director
Melinda McGuire, Assistant Executive Director/Finance Director
Heather O'Connor, Deputy Finance Director
Kim Baker, Finance Specialist
Joyce Hutchins, Administrative Temp
Larry Faison, Planning Director
David Rosado, Human Services Manager - AAA

Guest in Attendance:

Knox Proctor, Attorney, Ward & Smith
Kimberly Mack, Office of Congressman Don Davis
Courtney Norfleet, Guest, Town of Alliance, via Zoom

1. **Welcome, Invocation, and Call to Order** – Ed Riggs, Jr., President, called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. Commissioner Bennie Heath provided the invocation.
2. **Adopt Agenda** – President Ed Riggs asked for a motion to adopt the agenda. *2nd Vice President Lorraine Washington motioned to adopt the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Dowe; the motion was approved unanimously.*
3. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. **Minutes** – General Membership Board – March 14, 2024
 - b. **Economic Development Update – funded through E.D.A. Partnership Planning and Southeast Crescent Regional Commission**
 - c. **Human Services / Area Agency on Aging Update**
 - d. **Community Planning/Technical Assistance Update**
 - e. **Transportation Update**

President Ed Riggs asked if there were any questions about the consent agenda or any items for discussion. *Commissioner Heath motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Patty Leonard; the motion was approved unanimously.*

Kimberly Mack, from the Office of Congressman Don Davis, provided a brief update about the things going on with the Congressman. She invited everyone to join their mailing list for updates on the Farm Bill and the Defense Bill.

4. **Budget & Audit Committee Report**
 - a. **Check Register**
 - b. **Financial Statements**
 - c. **Committee Information & Recommendations**
 - i **Budget Amendments**
 - ii **Request for Placement of New Aging Technician Classification in the Classification Plan**

Treasurer Bill Taylor stated the Budget and Audit Committee were able to review the check register and financial statements. He referred any questions to Assistant Executive Director / Finance Director Melinda McGuire. Ms. McGuire went over three specific expenses that were on the check register.

- The first item was check number 99844315 for Eyeclik in the amount of \$24,009.16. She stated this check was for portable stands for the Obie systems. ECC previously purchased the Obie Interactive Projection Systems for each of the senior centers in our region.
- The next item was check number 99844324 for \$10,000.00 to Honor My Decisions. This check was a purchase for our Aging Department to buy 100 seats or activation codes for advanced care planning for older adults in our region. The seats will be split between our counties.
- The final item was four different checks written to Zan's Taekwondo. There were three checks for \$600 and one for \$400. Ms. McGuire stated these checks were paid for summer camp under the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program.

Ms. McGuire went over the Budget Amendment 4 for FY 2023/2024, which was requested for approval in the Agenda Packet. The budget amendment consists of two parts. The budget amendment for funds 001 has a \$7,110 increase (402 Administration) and a \$72,650 increase (406-440 Planning T/A). The budget amendment for funds 003 is a \$6,578.98 increase (714 EDA Partnership Planning). *Mayor Jay Bender motioned to approve the Budget Amendment, seconded by 1st Vice President Frank Emory; the motion was approved unanimously.*

Executive Director David Bone went over the request for placement of a new Aging Technician Classification in the ECC Pay Classification Plan. With initial funding of one year from the NC Division of Aging, ECC will be participating in a Digital Navigator program in 2024-25. This classification is being created for the Digital Navigator position. It is recommended that the Aging Technician position be placed at Grade 11. Mr. Bone stated that ECC intends to seek additional funding for this position in future years. *Mayor Jay Bender motioned to approve the request for placement of a new Aging Technician Classification in the ECC Pay Classification Plan, seconded by 2nd Vice President Lorraine Washington; the motion was approved unanimously.*

5. FY2024-25 Budget Presentation – Assistant Executive Director / Finance Director Melinda McGuire gave a recap of the 2024-25 Proposed Budget. She stated that it was presented and reviewed by the Budget and Audit Committee on April 30, 2024, and again on May 9, 2024. The Executive Committee reviewed the proposed budget on May 9, 2024, and voted to recommend approval of the budget to the General Membership Board. This balanced budget includes estimated revenues and appropriations of \$7,653,593 and includes the operations of the Council's special revenue funds, as well as the General Fund. The following are some of the 2024-25 Proposed Budget highlights:

- The budget is based on membership rates established at the February 8, 2024, meeting:
 - Municipal Dues rate of \$0.40 per capita for 2024-25, with a minimum of \$300 and one-year only cap of \$11,000 for 2024-25.
 - Separate the grant matches from the county dues.
 - County Dues rate of \$0.20 per capita for 2024-25, with a one-year only cap for grant matches
- The revenue for Administrative and Technical Assistance is expected to grow.
- The budget includes funds for several fairly new programs/projects:
 - NCDPS – FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance Program
 - Digital Inclusion Plan project (through NCSU Institute for Emerging Issues)
 - Digital Navigator program (for seniors – through DAAS)
- A cost-of-living adjustment of 1% is included for employees, as well as the potential for a one-time salary enhancement of up to 5%, based on merit.
- Health insurance rates are increasing by 7%, while dental insurance rates are not increasing.
- Funds are included in the budget for additional office space for the growing staff.
- No use of fund balance is anticipated for this budget.

6. Public Hearing for the FY2024-25 Budget – Ed Riggs, Jr., President asked if there was a motion to open the public hearing. *Commissioner Heath motioned to open a public*

hearing and then to receive comments from the public on the proposed budget, seconded by Mayor Bender; the motion was approved unanimously. There was no public comment.

Commissioner Howard motioned to close the public hearing, seconded by 2nd Vice President Lorraine Washington; the motion was approved unanimously.

7. Adoption of the FY2024-25 Budget

Commissioner Heath motioned to adopt the FY 2024-2025 proposed budget, as presented, seconded by 1st Vice President Frank Emory; the motion was approved unanimously.

8. Strategic Priorities for FY2024-25 – Executive Director David Bone discussed the draft Strategic / Organizational Priorities for 2024-2025 handout included in the Agenda Packet. He also reviewed the Draft Department Goals that were part of the handout. Mr. Bone stated that a lot of the goals were ongoing and would be updated throughout the year. Mr. Bone asked the Board to adopt the Strategic Priorities for 2024-2025. *Commissioner Price motioned to adopt the Strategic Priorities for FY 2024-2025, as presented, seconded by Patty Leonard, the motion was approved unanimously.*

9. Report on the Status of the FY 2022-23 Audit / Request for Proposals / Contract – Assistant Executive Director / Finance Director Melinda McGuire gave a brief update to the Board on the status of the FY 2022-23 Audit. She stated that ECC's current auditor, PB Mares, is uncertain when they would be available to work on the FY 2022-23 Audit, so a Request for Proposal (RFP) for audit services was distributed. Three firms responded to the RFP that was due back May 30, 2024. ECC is in the process of reviewing the proposals.

10. Report on the Lease for Additional Office Space – Assistant Executive Director / Finance Director Melinda McGuire stated the lease was signed on May 29, 2024, and Finance staff started moving into the additional office space on Craven Street on June 1, 2024.

11. Report on a 3-Year Engineering / Planning Services Contract – Executive Director David Bone gave a brief update on the 3-year Engineering / Planning Services Contract. The RFQ responses have been scored. The next step is to have Firm presentations at the ECC offices.

12. Report on ECC's 501(c)(3) – Staff reported that on May 9, 2024, the Eastern Carolina Community Assistance Organization (ECCAO) submitted a Letter of Interest for a grant from the CarolinaEast Foundation for funds to complement the upcoming Digital Navigator program. The goal would be to provide the target population with digital devices and affordable connectivity to help reduce social isolation and remove digital barriers in Craven, Jones, Pamlico counties. Staff are waiting to hear back on the Letter of Interest. If successful, ECCAO will be asked to submit a grant application.

13. Executive Director's Report – Executive Director David Bone provided an Executive Director's report. The following are some highlights:

- ECC hosted another 1-day Disaster Recovery – FEMA Public Assistance Program training for local governments on May 21st in Morehead City and had 32 local government leaders participate!

- June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), and many of the communities in the ECC region host events to promote awareness.
- ECC is partnering with the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) to support our region's economic development/workforce development efforts with a Talent Attraction and Retention Strategies Workshop to be held on June 25th from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.
 - Follow-up Conversations – June 25-27: The facilitators will spend the afternoon of the 25th and all day on the 26th and the 27th meeting with stakeholders from individual counties or small groups of counties/cities to discuss how they may strengthen their talent attraction and retention efforts.

14. Member Comments

15. Adjournment – *A motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Bender at 7:45 p.m.; seconded by Charles "Twig" Rollins; the motion was unanimous.*

Respectfully Submitted,


Ed Riggs Jr., President


David Bone, Executive Director